

The Messenger



**The bi-monthly magazine from
St Michael's, West Hill**



**February – March 2024
delivered FREE
to every home in the village**

St Michael the Archangel

part of the Otter Vale Mission Community

Bringing Jesus Christ to our Community

We are here to help in any way we can – so please contact us.

Getting Married? ... Considering Baptism?

Please contact our Team Vicar, Revd. Mark Ward 01404 814282
revmarkward@btinternet.com

Could someone else from the Church help you?

Other West Hill Clergy Revd. Mac Dick 371064
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jandaturner@btinternet.com

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annyates12@btinternet.com

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PLEASE NOTE The last date for copy for the April/May edition is
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An online version of this magazine is available to download from our website.

The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the opinions of St Michael's Church. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, we can accept no liability for errors. The Editors' decisions are final.

A Letter from our Team Vicar



I am sure that we all remember Professor Chris Whitty - he of “next slide please” fame. If we had forgotten him, he popped up in the news again during the Covid inquiry. He was there as Chief Medical Officer for England and Chief Medical Adviser to the UK Government. He has served in this role since 2019 - the year that named this coronavirus Covid-19.

In November last year, Professor Whitty, as Chief Medical Officer, published his annual

report for 2023: ‘Health in an ageing society’. The report placed a great deal of emphasis on putting quality of life before quantity of life. It recognised that, sometimes, interventions to extend life can have a detrimental effect on quality of life.

For people of all ages we have an increasing awareness that quality of life is closely linked to mental health and wellbeing. And for most people, a key element of this is to have healthy relationships and interactions with other people. Social isolation, on the other hand, is not good for any of us.

The Age UK website has a series called ‘Staying Sharp’. In an article headed, ‘Social connections and the brain’ it says:

‘A wealth of evidence shows that positive relationships and shared activities contribute to our wellbeing. Conversely, loneliness and social isolation increase health risks in older people.’

One of the things I love about parish churches is the community. When you become part of a church, you become part of a family. You can go to a cinema, a theatre, a restaurant, even a café or pub - you could go every week - and not have any interaction with other people. Or you could go to a club in which everyone shares the same interest. A church is different. The people have different interests, different personalities, and different likes and dislikes. But they are a family. People look out for one another and care for one another. And with a parish church, you can just turn up. There is no charge and there are no entry requirements.

But what about faith? Well, I make no secret of the fact that I would like to see everyone coming to faith in Jesus Christ. But this is not a requirement for becoming part of the church family. Anyone can come to church services and other activities and find a warm welcome. As with a biological family, they may sometimes drive you crazy, but they just might improve the quality of your life.

Mark

Children's Page



Eggs

Do you know why we give eggs at Easter? It's because Easter is a time of new life and eggs are where new life comes from. On the very first Easter, Jesus died for us and his body was put in a cave. That was on Good Friday, which doesn't sound like a 'good' day and people were very sad. The good thing is that on Easter Day, they found the cave empty because Jesus was alive! The chocolate Easter eggs that we give are often hollow, which represents the empty tomb. Jesus came to give us new life and hope for the future.

Hot Cross Buns

What's special about a hot cross bun?

- The cross on the bun represents the cross on which Jesus died
- The four quarters of the bun represent the four corners of the world
- The spices in the bun suggest the spices used to anoint the dead
- The yeast in the bun makes it rise, and reminds us that Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday

Dates for your Diary

Friday 23rd February (3.45 – 5.30pm)

Messy Church (theme – Healing/Jairus' Daughter)

Sunday 10th March (10am)

Mothering Sunday service led by Messy Church

Friday 15th March (3.45 – 5.30pm)

Messy Church (theme - God's Love/The Lost Sheep)

Messy Church is generally for the 3 – 11 years age group but everyone is welcome. Children must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

For more information email Rosemary HUDSONROSEMARY@HOTMAIL.COM



Easter Word Search

S	U	E	X	I	W	R	K	Y	B	C
I	A	C	I	D	B	X	V	U	R	S
B	D	V	E	J	K	T	N	O	R	N
J	N	P	I	B	V	N	S	E	E	G
M	E	J	H	O	Y	S	W	S	Q	L
R	N	M	E	V	U	O	I	V	X	S
N	O	C	D	I	L	R	T	N	A	U
C	T	L	S	F	A	E	G	G	S	S
I	S	E	H	B	J	A	U	D	W	E
D	N	V	Y	Y	A	D	N	U	S	J
D	O	S	W	T	T	O	M	B	X	S

RISEN
SUNDAY

CROSS
FLOWERS

TOMB
EGGS

JESUS
STONE

SAVIOUR
BUNNY

Colouring



Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays

We continue to meet every Friday at 8.45 am at the Village Hall during school term time. We are really looking forward to welcoming some new faces: Toddlers and Pre-Schoolers, Mums, Dads, Grandparents and Nannies, who can enjoy a cup of tea, coffee or fresh milk, and some toast and marmalade (or jam); and you don't have to have a small person in tow!

If you have enjoyed coming along, do bring your friends and neighbours, old and young alike.

Give us a ring if you want to know more: **Ann** (813886) **Pam** (814096).

Monday Afternoon Bible Study

What does the word "prayer" make you think of? Many may answer that it's a religious activity for old people and vicars, or that it's a weird superstitious ritual . . . or something that you've done in a moment of desperation! For some Christians, the word often conjures up a sense of duty, something that we struggle to do.



HOTLINE

We have recently completed our study of the Book of Revelation, and now, on Monday afternoons we plan to follow a seven-week course called "**Real Prayer**". It's not about a formula or technique for praying, but simply about connecting with God. It's something for the whole church, and anyone else who wishes to come along will be very welcome.

The course begins on **January 29th** at **2pm** in the narthex at the back of the church.

Further dates are:

February 5th, 19th and 26th, and March 4th, 18th and 25th.



Ann Turner

Hospiscare News

Hospiscare is a local independent hospice charity looking after adults over the age of 18 across Exeter, Mid and East Devon. Our community services are free and our 12-bed ward at Searle House offers 24-hour specialist care for people needing symptom control and end of life care 365 days of the year.

Local people deserve fair hospice funding

For over 40 years, Hospiscare has provided this specialist end-of-life care. But now – despite the difference the hospice makes to the lives of many Devonians and the determined support of thousands of local people – **we are facing a £2.5 million funding gap which could force us to axe services.** The hospice costs almost £10 million a year to run and we have to raise 82% of that amount through charitable fundraising every year, with the Devon Integrated Care Board (ICB), the local organisation that allocates government healthcare funding, providing just 18%. **This is well below the national average of 37% that other hospices receive.**

Andrew Randall, Chief Executive of Hospiscare, explains:

"Residents in our area deserve the very best care at the end of their lives

and it's not right that existing services should be cut. We've had frank discussions over the last 12 months with the Devon ICB about increasing our funding fairly in line with other hospices, but so far they have refused to increase our funding in line with the national average.

Unless the local funding body increases our funding in line with other hospice providers, we'll sadly be forced into reducing our services."

We urge our supporters to write to Dr Sarah Wollaston and Bill Shields, Chair and CEO of the ICB, to ask them to fund Hospiscare fairly so we can continue to provide outstanding-rated care to local patients and families living with terminal illnesses. You can find a template letter at <https://www.hospiscare.co.uk/support-our-work/fundraise/fair/> or telephone 01392 688000 for more information.

Otter Vale Friends of Hospiscare Events

Soup and Pudding Lunch

Saturday 17th February (12 noon – 2pm). The Institute, Yonder St., EX11 2HH. £8 per person, Vegetarian and gluten free option available.

Raffle, *Quality Books*, Jigsaws

For more information telephone Pam Joy 01404 813820

Coffee Morning

Saturday 20th April (10am – 12 noon). RBL, West Hill

Come and meet our volunteers!

Raffle Donations wanted

Do you have any new and unwanted Christmas gifts that Hospiscare could use as raffle prizes?

Please contact Toni on the number below.

Your generosity truly makes a difference to local people

If you are interested in the work of Hospiscare, please contact:

Toni Hiscocks – Area Fundraiser

Tel: 01392 688067 Mobile: 07921 845615

Email t.hiscocks@hospiscare.co.uk

Hospiscare Quiz Night

Otter Vale Friends and Otter Vale Rotary invite you to their West Hill Quiz

West Hill Village Hall

Friday Feb 9th

Prompt start for 7:30

£10 per person includes a light food platter (vegan/Vegetarian option available, please pre order)

Teams of 6

Bar

Raffle

Please telephone Steve Percy 01404 811335 to book your place.

The truth...and why you should live it

It is often said that we live in a post-truth age. That there are many versions of the truth or that reality and objectivity are somehow just options to describe what we know to be verifiably so.

It is not my intention here to expose the lies and falsehoods that proliferate and are foisted upon us by vested interests. In any case, you *know* what is true and what is not. My reason for writing is to point out something more corrosive than even the wholesale attempt to dupe our society - as if that were not bad enough! And that is the effect that denying the truth, cleaving to lies and living as if truth were unimportant, will have upon your very soul.

In his essay, 'Live not by lies', Alexander Solzhenitsyn urged his fellow Soviet citizens to stop acquiescing to the lies of the Government. His thesis was that the effect of accepting and internalising state propaganda diminishes each and every individual to the point that they are effectively held hostage and controlled by the State. The truth is that if we continue to parrot lies, give them space in our psyche, even glorify them, then they will simply grow and devour us, hollow us out and take more of our peace and our self-respect.

The child that confesses to taking the cookies after denying it for a period, feels a physical weight lifted from him. By 'coming clean' he can reset his relationships and gain a new self-respect and trust, upon which to develop his character. But if he sticks to the lie, then he has to tell other lies to corroborate the first one. His character, his personality takes a hit and those around him trust him that little bit less.

On a small-scale these things are retrievable – what child has not been forgiven for lying, by loving parents and brought back into the fold? But when it happens on a wider, societal basis by people you should be able to trust and when the object of the exercise is to make you lie to *yourself*? Well now you are in a whole different scenario, one from which only you can extract yourself.

We cannot change the world on our own but what we *can* do is to refuse to lie to ourselves and have the integrity to speak truth to others. If we all decided to do this today, and evermore, just think how much society would benefit!

Here's to the truth in 2024!

Nick Gordon

Welcome Cafés

Our December Café at the end of 2023 was a quiet one. It was lovely to see everyone who was able to come on 29th, after a busy Christmas week.

Our Cafés started after the Covid restrictions were lifted and have become a very popular monthly meeting for regulars and newcomers on the last Friday of each month. If you haven't joined us so far, please do come along - a warm welcome awaits you with lots of chatter and friendship, not to mention the delicious homemade cakes!

We are hugely grateful to everyone who supports these Cafés, whether it is by making a cake, helping in the kitchen, or coming along. Our team of volunteers is small, but very loyal. We are always happy when new helpers volunteer and were delighted to welcome a few last year. If you would like to help in any way, but haven't done so before, please contact me on 812370. We would love to have you on board. The more people available, the fewer times their names appear on the rota to share the activities.

The February Café will be on Friday 23rd but please note the change of March date to the third Friday (22nd), to avoid Good Friday on 29th. In March, we will also be offering a Soup Lunch, details of which will appear on the Messenger website, What's on in West Hill and village posters.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope to see you at the first of the Welcome Cafés on 26th January.

Sue Bonnie

West Hill and St Michael's On-line

There are now two websites to keep you informed about local events and organisations.

www.ottervalechurches.org covers all the information and news about the twelve churches in the Otter Vale group, including St Michael's. It includes a full schedule of services and events; information on life events – baptisms, confirmations, weddings, blessings and funerals; activities and services for children and families; and on-line services, sermons and prayers.

www.whmessenger.info covers news and events across our West Hill community. There is information on all our community social groups; news of events and activities; information on local services – the parish council, village hall, village school and RBL. Advertising of social events for local clubs and societies is available free of charge. The site is provided by The Messenger team who will be continuing to publish the magazine free for every household six times a year.

West Hill Primary School

Happy New Year to you all.

School returned on Tuesday 2nd January 2024 with staff attending a teacher training day then pupils returned on Wednesday 3rd January. It was lovely to see everyone again after the 2-week Christmas break.

This half term our school value is Achievement and in our Wednesday assemblies, we will be looking at achievement in school, achievement out of school and achievement of famous people.

The Spring term is always much shorter than the Autumn term but nevertheless, we have many exciting activities planned:

- Dance lessons for all classes.
- Year 3 swimming lessons.
- Year 6 residential at PGL Beam House, Great Torrington for 4 nights.
- Fire Service Visit for Year 2 and Year 5.
- World Book Day takes place on Thursday 7th March when we are very pleased to have an author visit by Andy Seed. If you are interested in his books, please visit: <https://www.andyseed.com/> Pupils and staff always dress up as a book character and spend the day immersing themselves in book related activities.
- World Book Day dance workshop for all classes.
- British Science week.
- Red Nose Day.
- Class assemblies for Year 1 and Year 2.
- Parents evenings.
- Year 2 animation workshop.
- Year 3 trip to RAMM, Exeter.
- Easter service by Year 3 and Year 4 pupils.

Before we know it, the end of term and Easter will be here! It's scary how the Easter eggs have already started to appear in the shops and it's only the first week of January! Chocolate eggs first appeared at the court of Louis XIV in Versailles and in 1725 the widow Giambone in Turin started producing chocolate eggs by first filling empty chicken eggshells with molten chocolate. In 1873, J.S Fry & Sons produced the first hollow chocolate egg using egg moulds. It was 1875 when Cadbury created the modern chocolate Easter egg after developing a pure cocoa butter that could be moulded into smooth shapes. In Western cultures, the giving of chocolate eggs is now commonplace, with 80 million Easter eggs sold in the UK alone. Formerly, the containers Easter eggs were sold in contained large amounts of plastic, although in the United Kingdom this has gradually been replaced with recyclable paper and cardboard.

As we move into the spring, hopefully we will start to get some warmer weather and sunshine after some very wet and cold winter weather.

Until next time, take care.

Cheryl Boulton, Headteacher

Ottery St. Mary Floral Art Club

Although the Club doesn't meet during the colder months of January and February, some members still get together for a coffee catch up on the third Tuesday of the month at 11am at Otter Nurseries – for any members reading this, that will be Tuesday 20th February this year. Hopefully several of you will be able to make it.

You may have noticed that our name has changed slightly to Ottery St Mary Floral Art Club. This is something we have been thinking about for some time and feel that it gives a better indication of the broad variety of demonstrations, workshops and other events enjoyed by the Club.

Our Club nights for 2024 begin on Tuesday 19th March when Rosy Elesmore from Tavistock will be joining us. Rosy, a florist, took over her parents' shop in 2012, when she was just 18, after getting interested in flowers and foliage from a young age and working at one of London's top florists. She was also awarded the prestigious bronze medal at the Chelsea Flower Show in the "Young Florist of the Year" competition. During the evening Rosy will bring us several designs based around her title "Spring Days" and, at the end of the demonstration, all Rosy's creations will be raffled to be taken home and enjoyed by the lucky winners!

Angie, our Programme Secretary has worked hard on our 2024 schedule. We have some great demonstrators lined up along with a "Pot Luck" workshop in April, a garden visit in June and our "Lonely Bouquet" initiative, also in June.

We are a friendly group who share an interest in, and love of, working with flowers, foliage, and other elements to create something to be enjoyed, whether by ourselves or others (as in the table arrangements we provide each month for the Ottery Memory Café).

We are looking forward to getting our 2024 floral year started! Visitors are always welcome to come along and enjoy the evening with us. Why not join us for Rosy's demonstration at **West Hill Village Hall, Beech Park, West Hill, EX11 1UQ – 7.30 pm on Tuesday 19th March** to see what the Club can offer?

A reminder to members that the title for the competition in March is "**Easter Nest**". Subs (and Flower Arranger monies, if relevant to you) will be due at the meeting please.

Any enquiries:

Karen Taverner, Club Secretary – 01404 811807

Councillor's Column



Planning Appeal hearing for 23 houses at Oak Road – Wednesday 28th February 2024 (10am)

I have always opposed this development – and overwhelming numbers of residents are also hoping that the appeal will be unsuccessful. Normally, appeals are decided by written representations but, along with the Parish Council, I have called for this to be decided by a hearing to enable the discussions to take place in public, because of the level of public concern. This will allow an opportunity for objectors to

speak (you will need to let the inspector know at the start of the hearing). Even if you do not wish to speak, please come along to hear proceedings.

The hearing will take place in EDDC's Council chamber at the Council Offices, Blackdown Houses, Border Road, Heathpark Industrial Estate, Honiton EX14 1SJ.

West Hill currently faces unprecedented levels of speculative development

In the decade I have represented West Hill as a councillor, I have never known the village to be under such development pressures. In December 2023, I tabled a notice of motion proposing that EDDC seek advice from the Planning Advisory Service to enable EDDC to produce the most robust reports possible in order to resist speculative applications. I was pleased that this was passed.

The current planning applications include a proposal for 36 houses on Windmill Lane, 5 houses on Lower Broad Oak Road, 5 houses at Westhayes, and a further application (on the same Oak Road site which is currently at appeal) for 9 houses. These applications all come on top of a development at Eastfield for 30 houses which unfortunately was recently granted.

In addition, EDDC is re-consulting on a long-running application for a McDonalds and service station at Daisymount roundabout.

The Otter Trail – a proposed multi-use trail from Feniton to Sidmouth

I am keen to see this Trail progressed and have raised questions at Devon County Council. Whilst I know that Devon County Council's finances are stretched, I am arranging to meet with the portfolio holder Cllr Stuart Hughes and the Otter Trail group to discuss this important scheme.

And finally.....

As your Devon County Councillor, I currently have an annual locality budget of £5000, which I can contribute towards projects that benefit the community.

Please get in touch with me if you are interested in finding out more. Alternatively, full details can be found on

www.devon.gov.uk/democracy/councillors-nav/locality-budgets/.

This year's budget closes on 15th February. I am keeping my fingers crossed that County Councillors will again receive £5000 for the next council year which starts in April.

Cllr Jess Bailey

Tel: 01404 814056

Email: **Jessica. Bailey@devon.gov.uk**

Honiton, Ottery and District Association of the National Trust

All are welcome to attend the following meetings. Admission - £3

TALKS

Wednesday 31st January (2.30pm), The Institute, Ottery St Mary
'Devon Surnames' by the well-known speaker, Robert Hesketh.

Thursday 15th February (2.30pm), The Royal British Legion, West Hill
'How to tell if you have cash in the attic' by Duncan Wills, who runs an auction gallery in Wincanton.

Thursday 14th March (2.30pm), The Methodist Church, Chapel Lane, New Street, Honiton
AGM followed by a talk on 'The History of the Gardens at Killerton' by Nick Cox.

OUTINGS

Friday 19th April - Oakham Treasures near Bristol - A fascinating collection of domestic and other objects, which is guaranteed to stir many memories of times gone by.

Monday 13th May - Old Bowlsh House, Shepton Mallet - Dating from the first half of the 17th century and re-modelled in the Palladian style around 1720, it is full of interesting features and antiques, with a spring in the cellar and a ghost or two.

Thursday 6th June - Hall, Bishop's Tawton - A neo-Jacobean house with an imposing staircase, a hall with a hammer beam roof and other interesting architectural features.

Monday 8th to Saturday 13th July - Holiday to the West Midlands

Details available from Richard Coley.

Richard Coley Tel: 01404 813163 Email richardcoley71@gmail.com

The Royal British Legion West Hill

Movie Nights

Doors open at 7pm, Film starts at 7.30pm, Admission free. All welcome!

5th February	Miss Potter
12th February	Leap Year
19th February	Meet Joe Black
26th February	Fracture
4th March	Over Her Dead Body
11th March	Barbie
18th March	The Happening
25th March	Uncle Buck

Bingo Nights

Sundays 4th, 18th February and 3rd, 17th, 31st March

Jazz (with City Steam Jazz Band)

Sundays 11th February & 10th March (3pm for 3.30pm)

Dads' Nights

Fridays 9th February & 8th March

Mums' Nights

Fridays 23rd February & 29th March

Opera Nights (7pm for 7.30pm)

Wednesday 28th February – Verdi's *A Masked Ball*

Wednesday 20th March – Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*

Pop-Up Restaurants

Saturday 3rd February BIG BRUNCH 0930-1200

Wednesday 14th February Valentine's Dinner 1900-2100

Sunday 25th February Sunday Roast Lunch (Beef) 1200-1430

Wednesday 6th March Curry Night 1900-2100

Sunday 24th March Sunday Roast Lunch (Chicken) 1200-1430

Rotary Quiz Night

Thursday 7th March (In the Snug)

Codfather – Fish & Chips

Every Thursday from 1600-1900

Pastoral Care at St Michael's

At St Michael's, an important part of our mission is to offer Pastoral Care which includes helping others, being a good neighbour and serving those around us in love.

All our care for others is done in the name of Jesus Christ and our motivation is Jesus' command to become the servant of all and to show, by our love, that we are his disciples. This care is offered to the community through our many services, ministries, activities, prayer and personal contact. Pastoral care is provided by both the clergy and the whole people of God depending on the particular pastoral need.

For those ill at home, or in hospital, this is often a frightening time and the prayer and support of the church can make a big difference. We have good relationships with the chaplains at the Exeter hospitals and the hospice and can visit or arrange for you to be visited by a Chaplain if you become an in-patient.

Home Communions can be arranged for those people who are less physically or mentally able as church worship can become too difficult to access.

Making friends - many people can experience loneliness at times in their lives, through a move, changed circumstances or loss. There are many opportunities for finding friends at various church services and activities like the Welcome Café.

Prayer is one of the key ways in which we offer pastoral care and we carry each other's burdens when we pray for one another. Prayer can be private and confidential or more public as people are prayed for by name in church.

Bereavement support - the Church of England has been helping people mark the end of life for generations. Often people have to plan a funeral with little or no prior experience of death, whilst in the midst of sorrow and loss. The clergy works closely with families when preparing a funeral either in the run up to a death or after a death has occurred. Funerals in church are very special, as the loss of a loved one is placed in the context of the promise of Jesus of eternal life and the hope and comfort that brings. We also offer an annual special service of remembrance around the Festival of All Souls at the end of October.

As churches we care for those in need. We have a food bank in Ottery St Mary with drop off points in West Hill Church and Morrisons and our local clergy can refer you to the food bank.

More information, including a form, can be found on ottervalechurches.org.

Fiona Rimmer (Churchwarden)

Reflection

February is the month when it's all about love!

The shops will be full of cards for Valentines Day - we get to celebrate, thank, and declare our love to someone we know. There'll be boxes of chocolates and bunches of flowers, 'date nights' and meals out.

However, St Valentine's story isn't about romantic love. A Saint in the 3rd century, Valentine's story comes to prominence when, under house arrest of Judge Asterius he prays for healing for the Judge's daughter. She is healed and the Judge, his family and 44 members of his household are baptised. Then, under Claudius II, he is again arrested for preaching the Gospel and martyred in 269AD.

It's only an anecdote of a letter written to Judge Asterius' daughter shortly before his death, that gives his story any link with romantic love. Far more prominent in his story is his love of the good news that Jesus had come to seek and save the lost. God expresses his unconditional love for us through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Valentine's commitment was to tell of this sacrificial '*agape*' love of God as far and as wide as he could, no matter the cost.

1 Corinthians 13 is all about love. The word for love used here is also '*agape*' (in the original Greek). It's an active love, not just a feeling. The passage reminds us that without this love, life loses its meaning and shine; we become simply a resounding gong or clanging cymbal. This love is our response to God's saving work in Jesus. '*Agape*' love is expressed in our lives through loving God and loving our neighbours as ourselves.

The life of St Valentine challenges us that a life of love is the way of the cross. But his impact on Judge Asterius and his family encourages us that a life of love means that others can come to know God's love for them. "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends." (*John 15:13*)

Many people haven't yet heard of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and of God's love for them. Where are we, as churches and as individuals, being called to express God's love today?

Rev'd Claire Reynolds, Diocesan Advisor for Disabilities and Additional Needs

Sidmouth National Trust Supporters Group

The group has an interesting programme of outings and speakers this year.

On February 7, Harvey Edgington, NT Senior Filming and Locations Manager will be speaking on ***National Trust and Filming - Bargain Hunt to Bridgerton***. All Saints Church Hall, All Saints Rd, Sidmouth, 2.30pm.

On March 13, after the Group's AGM, our speaker is Philip Smart, General Manager of the Killerton Estate who will give a talk entitled ***Killerton 2050 - the transformation of a traditional lowland estate***.

Our outings begin on Tuesday, April 9, with a trip by coach to visit the NT property Lanhydrock, near Bodmin. Later trips will include Caerhays Castle and Kingston Lacy. The group will be celebrating its 50th anniversary this summer so watch out for further events.

For details of membership or further information, please email ntsidmouth@gmail.com

West Hill Men's Supper Club

In December our speaker representing the In Focus Charity based in Exeter gave the club an insight into the work of the charity which offers education, care and support to young people with visual impairment as well as other related complex needs.

Our speakers in the near future are :

Monday 12th February Brian Fernley (SW Airfields Trust) – The Battle of Britain

Monday 11th March Professor James Dyke – Climate Change & Net Zero Science

Monday 15th April Aylwyn Bowen - Life as a commercial artist in Exeter

The club meets in the church hall attached to St Michael's Church in Bendarroch Road. The evening starts around 6.45pm and ends around 9.30pm.

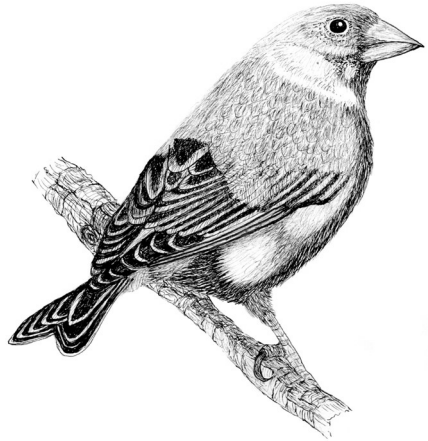
We have wonderful caterers providing a superb 2 course meal accompanied by wine or non-alcoholic drinks for a cost of £20 per head. If you wish to attend please call Peter Keith on 01404 812201 or send an e-mail to peterkeith29@btinternet.com as early as possible prior to the date of the supper.

The West Hill Men's Supper Club looks forward to welcoming you to the next supper.

The Birds of West Hill

In winter hopefully a range of birds visit your garden, especially if you have feeders. One such bird is the Greenfinch. This finch has a general-purpose beak that enables it to eat a variety of seeds. Feeding birds seeds in winter helps them to survive a season of natural food shortage. Also, providing drinking water is crucial, especially in frosty weather. Some advise that providing seed food should stop as breeding commences in spring as chicks cannot digest seeds.

Birds have an accurate internal clock and breeding in spring is triggered by the brain detecting increasing light levels. This releases hormones causing the male to start singing in earnest to attract a mate and defend potential nesting territory. Both male and female undertake a partial moult (of the body feathers) to look resplendent for attracting a mate and to rejuvenate their feather condition. The gonads re-activate (having been dormant since the last breeding season). As birds switch their diet from seeds to insects the stomach



decreases in length, as insects are easier to digest. All this activity commences in early March, providing the weather is not too severe. The male attracts a mate through a combination of song (the louder and more intricate the better), attractive plumage (indicating a good diet) and a suitable nesting site for the pair to raise their young.

Birds can suffer mass infections and in 2006 Greenfinch numbers fell dramatically due to an infectious parasite, trichomonosis, also known as canker, which prevented birds from swallowing their food. Thankfully numbers are recovering but the infection has spread to its near cousin the Chaffinch.

The Greenfinch's scientific name is *Chloris chloris* which refers to its green colouration (more noticeable in the male) linked to chlorine gas, which is green.

Please keep feeding your birds and providing them with water.

Extracted from "British birds – their fascinating stories" published by Geoff Green, available from him (813127), on Amazon (search for the title) or The Curious Otter bookshop.

West Hill Garden Club

After so much rain this winter, we shall be hoping for some drier days soon so that we can get out into our gardens and prepare for the coming seasons. With tools ready and seeds purchased, we are keen to start planting again as the days lengthen and the soil gets warmer. The Club's year has only just begun so why not think about coming along to a meeting and enjoy the Friendship, Speakers and Outings booked for 2024. If only we could book sunshine too!

On Thursday 8th February at 7.30pm in the Village Hall (upstairs), we will be holding our annual garden related Fun Quiz with Bring & Share Supper and complimentary glass of wine. You don't have to be a gardening expert to take part and there is no sign of a Latin name! The format is to join a team of four from those present and agree on the answers. The Quiz will be followed by a very tasty assortment of savoury and sweet finger food, accompanied by a glass of wine. The winning team members will each receive a prize. A raffle will conclude the evening.

On Thursday 14th March at 7.30pm in the Village Hall (upstairs), we look forward to welcoming Karl Emeleus, the Head Gardener at Killerton, who will be talking about the Trees and Gardens there. As Killerton is our nearest National Trust property, it promises to be an interesting opportunity to hear about all there is to see around the garden, as well as to learn about its history and hear how the resident gardeners plan their annual tasks throughout the grounds.

Note for members with Daffodil bulbs for this year's competition – time to check on your bulb's progress so that it reaches perfection by the April meeting, when it will be judged.

We welcome visitors and new members to all our meetings. Any enquiry please contact:

Chairman Sheila Gillam 01404 814074

Secretary Pauline Wade 01404 813191.

Monica Highnam

Treasurer wanted

Richard Bonnie, previously St Michael's PCC Treasurer, stepped down from the post at the end of the financial year (31st December 2023). We are so grateful for all his time and effort over recent years.

We are now urgently looking for someone to take on that job. Could that person be you? There is plenty of support and relevant training available.

If you are interested, please contact Richard and he will be glad to discuss it with you: **Richard Bonnie** Tel: **812370** or Email: **westhillpcc@gmail.com**

Women's World Day of Prayer 2024

The Women's World Day of Prayer service will be on Friday 1st March (2pm) at the Methodist Church in Ottery St Mary. This annual event, which brings together people from the local churches, will have the message of "I beg you, bear with one another in Love".

All are welcome. Refreshments will be served.

The origins of World Day of Prayer date back to the 19th century when Christian women in the USA and Canada initiated a variety of cooperative activities in support of women's involvement in mission, at home and abroad. It is from such roots as these that WDP has taken its present shape - *a worldwide ecumenical movement of Informed Prayer and Prayerful Action*.

If you need any more information, please contact Sue Lock 01404 812947.

West Hill Arboretum Group

Our first walk of the new year will be on 1st April (Easter Monday) exploring more of our beautiful surroundings. We will start from RBL at 10.30am and suggest you bring boots and a drink. The walk is the extension to Walk 2 on your Arboretum leaflet.

Recent planning applications mean our beautiful environment is under pressure from development at an even greater rate than before. Dense development in the outer areas of the village put pressure on our trees, reducing privacy levels and spoiling the character of the village. We all need to contact the planners where we have concerns for any potential loss of the village's character.

Some hedges are getting overgrown and reducing visibility in the lanes, which is dangerous for pedestrians. From now until mid March is the time to do any essential maintenance work on trees, hedges and shrubs but not when it is frosty. Note that under the Countryside Act it is an offence to cut trees, hedges and shrubs during the bird nesting season. Please clear away all cuttings from roads and paths to compost as they become slippery and dangerous if left.

We have had a few enquiries regarding work to trees and hedgerows from residents. These are always welcome and members of our group will try to provide advice wherever possible.

If you have concern for West Hill's environment and the reduction of trees and hedges then please get in touch, new members of the group are very welcome.

Contact: eileen555@hotmail.co.uk (Village Tree Warden) or alan.b.cook@btinternet.com

West Hill Village Hall

Registered Charity No. 1160370

The Trustees of West Hill Village Hall wish to express their best wishes for 2024 to all users of the hall and to all residents of West Hill and the surrounding area.

At the end of 2023 we had a very busy festive season with Christmas events enjoyed by local children and adults alike. I would like to thank Mike Hemming and Tony Fryer for erecting our Christmas tree and Sarah Woolfries for dressing it so beautifully.

Thank you to everybody who attended our annual pantomime **Jack and the Beanstalk**, which was staged on Friday 15th December by Wonder Productions, in their 12th year with us. It was an excellent performance, which we hope was enjoyed by the whole audience.

A big thank you goes out to all volunteers who assisted us in lifting the marquee roof, erecting the stage and putting out the seating and to those who assisted us to dismantle everything and put it away on Friday night and Saturday morning. Thanks also to all committee members and family members who assisted us at the pantomime and for donating the raffle prizes. In particular, I'd like to thank Chris Pitman who personally supplied the tea, coffee and biscuits, which he then served before washing up and putting it all away.

We run the pantomime as entertainment for the children and to raise some much-needed money for West Hill Village Hall. We selected Friday 15th for the performance as this was the last day of school and the beginning of the children's Christmas holiday. We were very disappointed however with the response as only 43 children attended (41% of the total audience) and we just managed to cover our costs.

I would like local residents to contact me (colinveale@btinternet.com) to let me know your views concerning this annual event. Is it now out-dated and should we stop staging it? Can you give us any ideas that are more likely to attract a younger audience?

Visit our website www.westhilldevon.org.uk/villagehall.html for details of the full range of clubs and activities on offer at the hall, or call Sarah Woolfries on 01404 814216 (9am and 5.30pm). You may also contact Sarah by e-mail on bookings@westhillvillagehall.co.uk.

Colin Veale, Chairman, Village Hall Trustees

West Hill Parish Council

Precept

At the WHPC meeting on 3rd January 2024, Councillors formally voted to leave the Parish precept unchanged for the fourth year running at £56,875. This represents a Council Tax band D equivalent of £48.95 (subject to the tax base which varies year to year). There will be a small shortfall against the projected 2024-25 budget, which Councillors agreed to fund from reserves, and some project costs will be funded from Section 106 grants, Community Infrastructure Levy or reserves, as appropriate. Councillors were mindful of the cost of living and other inflationary pressures on residents.

Planning

The end of 2023 brought a flurry of new planning applications to West Hill, as developers continually seek to take advantage of the East Devon District Council's inability to demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply. Nevertheless, development deemed "inappropriate" can still be refused and appeals successfully challenged where the adverse impacts of a proposal significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. Recent planning applications include:

- An appeal against a refused application to build two dwellings on land off Toadpit Lane (23/0325/PIP) was dismissed by the Planning Inspector in December, who concluded that "the site is not suitable for residential development, having regard to its location, the proposed land use and the amount of development." The Appeal Decision noted that "the proposal would cause material harm to the character and appearance of the area and would not reduce the need to travel by car". Cllrs were pleased to note that the application was considered to be contrary to policies West Hill + Ottery St Mary Neighbourhood Plan.
- An appeal regarding the application to build 23 dwellings on land north of Oak Road (22/2533/MOUT) is due to be conducted by public hearing on 28th February 2024. The developer also submitted an application for 2-9 dwellings on the same site (23/2505/PIP), which WHPC objected to.
- 23/2612/OUT to build 5 dwellings on land at Lower Broad Oak Road. Councillors strongly objected to this at the WHPC meeting on 3rd January 2024. There is no further news at present.
- 23/1143/MFUL to build 34 dwellings on land south of Windmill Lane. To the frustration of WHPC and residents, amendments to the application were only made available on the planning portal on 2nd January 2024, giving Councillors virtually no time to examine them before the WHPC meeting on the 3rd. WHPC continues to object.
- 23/2535/PIP to build 2 dwellings on land at Elsdon House – WHPC objected and the EDDC decision is not yet known.

- 23/0727/MOUT – erection of 30 dwellings on land north of Eastfield. The EDDC Planning Committee resolved to approve with conditions.

WHPC has been working hard to keep the community informed and ensure the views of residents are represented. It's encouraging to see residents themselves getting involved, both by attending WHPC meetings to give their views and by submitting comments directly to EDDC. Planning applications currently in progress could see the development of a further 100 (approx.) houses in West Hill without any additional infrastructure or services. The Parish Council encourages residents across the village to get involved and make your views heard by East Devon District Council. Planning applications for West Hill are listed on the Council's website and on each Council meeting agenda.

Information is correct at the time of writing. Residents are advised to check for planning application updates on the EDDC planning portal under the respective reference numbers.

Councillor vacancies

Cllr Neil Bromley resigned from the Parish Council in December 2023. We were sorry to lose a valued member of our team but understand that it can be difficult to balance the demands of running a business, looking after a family and being a Councillor, not to mention Neil's railway restoration interests. We wish Neil well and thank him for his service to West Hill.

There are currently two Councillor vacancies. We know there are many extremely capable residents in the village, so if anyone would like to find out more, please contact:

WHPC Clerk: Anne Oliver 01404 232 100 or 07413 932406

Email: clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

Website: www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

New to West Hill?

With generous support from West Hill Parish Council, St Michael's Church has produced a Welcome Pack for new residents. It contains information about many of the organisations within the village plus the very useful village map – and a free 'church website' pen!

So, if you've moved into the village within the last couple of months and haven't yet received a Welcome Pack, please contact:

Rosemary Hudson

Email: hudsonrosemary@hotmail.com

West Hill Art Group

I hope that you are enjoying the samples of the Art Group work here in The Messenger and on the Messenger website.

One of the main attractions for artists in the South West is the amazingly clear light, which we hope to work on capturing this year. We are so blessed with our variety of landscapes and subject matter. There is no better place to paint.



Cornish coastal scene by Mac Dick



*St Mary's lighthouse, Whitley Bay
by Graham Seymour*

These two seascapes show very different styles and use of colour. The lighthouse has an ethereal feel with use of a limited palette whereas the coastal painting shows a bolder and modern approach.



*Watercolour by Emma
Wilkinson*

The freedom of brushstrokes in this painting of an 'old lady smoking a flower' gives life to the image. Again, a limited number of colours has been used and the white watercolour paper has been left unpainted in places. The viewer fills in 'the gaps' using the lost and found edges technique.

As Spring arrives, we plan to paint some of the new season's flowers. Maybe the next issue of the Messenger and the website will be decorated with daffodils, crocus and snowdrops?

If you feel inspired to get your paints out, give me a call to see if we have any spaces.

Rosemary Seymour Tel: 01404 234122

QUIZ NIGHT

SATURDAY 2nd MARCH at 7pm

at St Michael's Church

£10 per person (includes a 2-course supper)

Tables of 6

Email: HUDSONROSEMARY@HOTMAIL.COM to book



West Hill Women's Group



What a fascinating career Lynda Kettle has had as arts director and set designer on a variety of well-known TV programmes. Her talk in November kept us all enthralled.

The Victoria Hotel served us a very tasty Christmas Luncheon in December. Everyone had a super time, being

well looked after by the hotel staff. Some members went home with a raffle prize which raised £277 towards the Samaritans, our chosen charity for this WHWG year.

On Wednesday, February 14th, we will learn more about the Samaritans from one of their team.

On Thursday, March 14th, local Ottery author, J. E. Hall will be giving us an illustrated talk about his writing and the inspiration behind his novels.

Meetings are held at the RBL in School Lane. Refreshments are served from 10am with the meeting starting at 10:30am. Membership is open to women who live in West Hill although we are nearing our maximum! You are welcome to come along as a guest for up to 2 meetings. If you decide to join us, the current annual fee is £12.

If you'd like to know more about WHWG, please contact **Jill Ingle (Vice-Chairman)** on **01404 814166** or email: jillingle@btinternet.com

St Michael's Mission Partners: The O6

At St Michael's Church, we believe that in addition to our mission to spread the word of God across our local community, we should provide support to other organisations, local, national and international, seeking to do good and improve the quality of life for others. In addition to prayer for, and education about, our Mission Partners, we also support them financially with a share of the income we receive from our members and congregation.

The O6 is one of our Mission Partners:

The O6 is a Youthwork charity based in Ottery St Mary. It currently comprises a group of Trustees, a Youth Pastor, and has the support of several local churches and community organisations.

We aim to support and work with young people in the local community and surrounds. This is done through working with local church and community youth groups; working in the local Secondary and Primary schools; mentoring and coaching; mental health first aid and independent projects.

We actively seek to listen and learn from where young people are at, personally, socially and spiritually. We to seek to encourage, develop and expand their experiences.

God Bless.

Graham Harry (Youth Pastor) Email: graham@o6.org.uk

Opera Nights at the Legion, West Hill



February to May 2024

Opera Nights, on the big screen at the Royal British Legion, are informal and free of charge. The bar will be open at 7.00pm and there is a short introduction to the work at 7.20pm.

The Opera commences at 7.30pm, with an interval, when the bar will again be open. If the operas are given in the original language there are subtitles.

Please note change of days in February and March

Wednesday 28th February : Verdi's "A Masked Ball" A sumptuous Metropolitan Opera of New York production with Luciano Pavarotti, Aprile Millo and Leo Nucci , and conductor James Levine.

Wednesday 20th March: Puccini's "Madame Butterfly" Filmed in Japan with Richard Troxell and Ying Huang, this production brings true realism to this ever popular opera.

Thursday 25th April: Verdi's "The Force of Destiny" Another Met Opera production, starring Leontyne Price, Giuseppe Giacomini, Leo Nucci and Bonaldo Giaiotti and conducted by James Levine

Thursday 30th May: Bizet's "Carmen" The renowned Francesco Rossi production filmed in Ronda and Seville with the young Placido Domingo and the alluring Julia Megenes-Johnson.

Further information from **opconpeterclarke@gmail.com**



The Choral Society had a very successful Christmas Concert, both musically and financially, as we had good attendance. If you were one of those attending then I hope you enjoyed it as much as we did. The carol by William Byrd was a challenge, particularly sung unaccompanied and in 6 parts. The Vivaldi Gloria is a joy to sing. Of course, there

is always a lot of work that needs to be done in presenting a concert, and not just musically. One of the challenges is assembling the staging, which we do on the Friday before the concert. It is a bit of a jigsaw and it is important to get each part in the right place. Then immediately after the concert has finished it has to be taken apart and put away so that the church is ready for the Sunday service. Given that it is all made of wood, it is not light and is quite a workout for our not so young members!

We have already started rehearsing for our Spring concert, which is at **7.30pm on Saturday 23rd March**. As always it will be performed in Ottery St Mary's Parish Church. This time we are performing **Brahms German Requiem** (in English) and **Mozart's Coronation Mass**. Our orchestra will also be performing **Mendelsohn's Hebrides Overture**.

You may recall that I reported last time that we were looking for a rehearsal accompanist. Our search has now been successful, and we have two very skilful musicians who are helping us learn the music: Richard Burdett and Kath Sugden, who between them cover each of the Wednesdays on which we rehearse.

The society's membership remains healthy in numbers and we have several new members this term. We like to think that we are a friendly society, so if you wish to join us to sing, you would be welcome. I guess by the time you read this we will be well into our preparations for the concert, so it may be best to consider starting in the Autumn term. We do not audition, but it is useful if you know something of reading music. All details on our website <https://otterystmarychoral.org/> or enquiries to our email address: osmcs@hotmail.co.uk

David Wade, Chairman

West Hill Greeting Cards

West Hill greetings cards are still available. With a larger format and different pictures to the 2021 cards, they are ideal for birthdays, "thank you" or just to send your greetings and good wishes to friends. The cards are £7 for 10 different pictures with envelopes in a cellophane wrapper. Delivery in the village upon request at no charge.

Order line – 01404 812 370.

Otter Valley Rotary



Otter Valley Rotary members were very busy with Christmas collections by Santa and his elves at Morrisons, West Hill (£122.30 collected) and Tesco, Honiton. A massive 'thank you' to everyone that contributed. All this money goes to deserving local organisations. We also hosted a very successful Carol Singing event at the Royal British Legion, along with Ottery Silver Band. The Hall was full and mince pies, sausage rolls and mulled wine were enjoyed by all. At this event we raised £111.12 and Rotary President, Ken Chun, presented the Band with a cheque for £300 towards their annual costs.

Rotary provided Christmas gifts for Ottery Memory Cafe, and 74 boxes of chocolates for the local volunteer-led Christmas lunch, for those on their own.

Rotary also held a Skittles Evening at the Royal British Legion in January.

Rotary meet every Tuesday evening for a meal and fellowship at The Tumbling Weir Hotel. We will be planning more events starting from April.

For more information on any of our events please contact:

Secretary: David Incoll **Email: d.incoll@live.co.uk**

Simply Worship at St Michael's



Thursday 25th January 7.30 - 8.30pm

Thursday 14th March 7.30 - 8.30pm

Thursday 16th May 7.30 - 8.30pm

Join us for a time of guitar-led contemporary worship. We will be tuned up and ready to teach some of the songs from 7pm, before starting officially at 7.30pm for an hour of worship around a theme and stitched together with scripture and some times of silence.

All welcome.

If you'd like more details, do email **Jane** at janevoll@aol.com

Jesus Died for Them



Judas betrayed Jesus,
Peter denied Jesus,
Thomas doubted Jesus:
Jesus died for them.

Pilate rejected Jesus,
Herod taunted Jesus,
Caiaphas framed Jesus:
Jesus died for them.

The soldiers crucified Jesus,
the disciples deserted Jesus,
the people laughed at Jesus:
Jesus died for them.

Mary wept for Jesus,
the women anointed Jesus,
Joseph buried Jesus:
Jesus rose for them.

We have doubted Jesus,
we have denied Jesus,
we rejected Jesus:
but Jesus died for us.

Dave Hopwood davehopwood.com

Used with permission

Easter Services at St Michael's, West Hill

You are invited to join us over the Easter period at St Michael's Church for the following services:

24th March 10am Palm Sunday

A service of Holy Communion

29th March 2pm Good Friday

Reflection for an hour in church

30th March 7pm

The Easter Vigil is a quiet and thoughtful service, but one full of joy.

The time of vigil is symbolic of the vigil made by Mary Magdalene

31st March 10am Easter Day

A service with Holy Communion and an Easter Egg Hunt

Welcome Café

**West Hill's
Village Cafe**



Friday 23rd February

Friday 22nd March

We will be open until 2pm in
March serving soup lunches

Open from 10.30 in the Church Hall

Take a break!

www.whmessenger.info

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W H Men's Supper Club

We meet, once a month on a Monday
evening for an excellent meal and an
interesting after-dinner speaker.

Monday 12th February
Devon in The Battle of Britain

Monday 11th March
Climate Change & Net Zero Science

New members warmly welcomed

Contact peterkeith29@btinternet.com

www.whmessenger.info

We are happy to take up to 3
text-only small ads per issue.

Please contact Rosemary
Hudson the Advertising Editor
see p3

Hospiscare's
MEN'S WALK
CHARITY WALK | PINT | PASTY | RUGBY

Saturday 9 March 2024
www.hospiscare.co.uk/menswalk

Services at St Michael's



Continuation of Zoom Services

On the first and third Sunday of each month at 10am for the whole Mission Community.

See <https://ottervalechurches.org/ministry/ovmc-services/> and search for **online** to find service details, including the Zoom link.

Services in Church

Feb 4	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Feb 11	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Feb 18	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Feb 23	15.45	Messy Church (Healing/Jairus' Daughter)
Feb 25	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Mar 3	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Mar 10 (Mothering Sunday)	10.00	Morning Worship led by Messy Church
Mar 15	15.45	Messy Church (God's Love/The Lost Sheep)
Mar 17 (Passion Sunday)	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Mar 24 (Palm Sunday)	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Mar 29 (Good Friday)	14:00	Reflection
Mar 30	19:00	Easter Vigil
Mar 31 (Easter Sunday)	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)