

The Messenger



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



**August - September 2025
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?

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PLEASE NOTE The last date for copy for the October/November edition is
Monday 1st September 2025.

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 pretty confident that most of us have things that fall under the heading: 'Things I wish I had known,' or: 'Things I wish I had done sooner.'

For me, one of those things is the way that I have been praying for the last couple of years. Ever since I became a Christian, I have prayed daily. You will be pleased to know that your vicar didn't start praying only two years ago! But what changed was the way I read the Psalms.

You probably know that the Bible includes a book called Psalms. The Psalms are songs, and the book contains 150 of them. Without the music, reading Psalms feels more like having a book of poetry.

The Psalms vary enormously in length, from the tiny Psalm 117, which can be read aloud in about 15 seconds, to the epic Psalm 119, which, if you are brave enough to read aloud in one go, takes about 20 minutes.

They also vary enormously in their themes and moods, covering all human emotion and experience but always with a strong faith in God.

I have always read Psalms as part of my prayers but never in a very systematic way. Then, nearly two years ago, I started following the Book of Common Prayer's pattern of reading all 150 Psalms every month. Although there is beauty in the old-English of the BCP, I have chosen to use the 1984 edition of the New International Version, the one I know best.

It has been an enriching experience. And, although I have never been very successful at memorising Bible verses, I am becoming much more familiar with these wonderful songs/poems/prayers. But please do not hear this as a boastful, "Look at how holy I am!" Instead, I am confessing to being foolish in not doing this years ago.

The last thing I want to do is to load you with something you ought to do. Instead, I want to offer you the Psalms as a gift. Many of us—I am including myself—find it difficult sometimes to know how to pray. If you ever feel like that, I would like, as a fellow-learner, to suggest the book of Psalms as a good place to start. And if you try one and it doesn't fit your mood at the time, try a different one.

Most households have a Bible somewhere, but if you don't, it is easily available online. And if reading is difficult, modern apps will read the Bible to you. And if you are really stuck, get in touch with me, and I am sure that we can sort something out.

Mark

Children's Page



It's the summer holidays and time for having a fun time outside. When you're out with your families and friends, look and listen. What can you see and hear? Look at the flowers and insects and listen for birdsong.

The other day, a family of green woodpeckers was spotted in St Michael's churchyard! 'Mum' and 'Dad' were feeding their baby with insects found in the grass. Can you see two of the woodpeckers in the photo? One is perched on a headstone and the other is standing in the grass. It's very well camouflaged! There were lots of

other birds and butterflies flying around too, enjoying the pollen on the wildflowers. The area has truly become a haven for nature.

Dates for Your Diary

Messy Church is also on holiday in August. We start again in September with a Family Barn Dance, following the success of last year's event. It will be held on **Friday 19th September at RBL from 5.30pm to 7.30pm**. Everyone welcome. Bring your friends!



You can book online using this QR code.



On **Friday 17th October (3.45pm)**, Messy Church returns for its first meeting in the newly-refurbished Narthex. Put the date in your diary.

For more information about Messy Church, please contact **Rosemary**:

hudsonrosemary@hotmail.com

Enjoy the summer holidays!

A Woodpecker Joke:

- Knock Knock
- Atch
- Bless you!
- Who's there?
- Atch who?

Children's Craft Page

Pecking Woodpecker Craft



You will need:

White card
Elastic band
Drinking straw
2 large beads
Felt pens
Sellotape
Gluestick
Scissors

Instructions:

Download or draw an outline template similar to the one on this page

Cut out the shape

Cut the drinking straw to the width of the strip of card joining the two woodpecker shapes

Sellotape the straw to the middle of the strip inside as shown

Cut the elastic band and thread through the straw

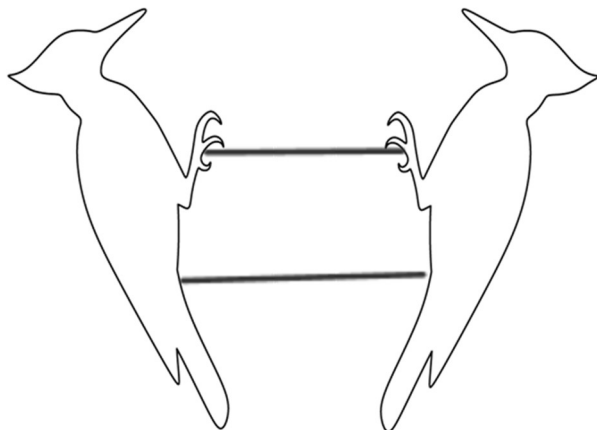
Tie a bead to each end of the elastic band

Fold the shapes together and glue in place

Colour in the woodpecker



Now stretch out the elastic band vertically holding the beads and watch the woodpecker 'peck' its way down!



NACRE Update

It is great news that the first stage of the construction and decoration works planned for the Narthex and the lighting in the Church and Narthex have now been completed and that the Narthex is in use again. As we return the bits and pieces from storage the room feels like 'home' again.

The IT system has been updated. A new TV monitor for visuals, having been kindly donated in place of the old projector and screen, gives a much clearer picture plus it's user friendly. Together with the improved acoustics this makes a great area for singing worship songs - as we found at our July Café Church - picture below.



Thank you again to everyone who has helped with the NACRE project, whether with financial or practical help. We look forward now to the next phase of work to make St Michael's more welcoming to all and more Eco Friendly.

Why not pop in and take a peek!

Pam Johns

Love Ottery (Churches Together in Ottery) present Alpha

Ever wondered why people go to church? Is God relevant to my life? Is there a God anyway?

Alpha is a space to consider these questions. It includes a short video presentation followed by discussion; a chance to share your thoughts and ask questions in an informal and relaxed setting.

Oh, and cake! Alpha always includes refreshments.

Why not try the first session on Monday, September 8th. You can join in online via Zoom or come in person in Ottery.

For more details contact otteryalpha2025@gmail.com

West Hill Women's Group



We had a brilliant meeting in May for our AGM and 10th anniversary celebration. The AGM, where Jane Overthrow stepped down from being Chairman and Pam Bartlett was elected in her place, did not take up too much of the meeting time.

Over half our members came to help us celebrate with a glass of bubbly or non-alcoholic substitute followed by a scrumptious savoury buffet lunch provided by Mary Bolshaw's Hospiscare team. Mary also baked and iced a beautiful anniversary cake, which was cut by the three ladies in the photo, who started the Women's Group in 2015, Dee Newman, Celia Barron and Vivien Shrubsall. Vivien accepted our invitation to 'plant' a flowering tree in the RBL Club garden on Wednesday 15th October at 2.00 pm. We assured her that she wouldn't have to actually



dig the hole! A big thank you to the three people mentioned above and all those members during the past 10 years who have made WHWG such a welcoming and friendly group to be a part of.

Wednesday 6th August Our annual summer coffee morning with (possible) quiz and sales table – we never have enough time to chat so now's our chance! If you are able to bring cakes, biscuits, jams, preserves, plants and/or produce for us to sell, proceeds will go to this year's charity, the RBL Club, which we heard about from Dave Underwood at last month's meeting. Please don't forget to bring cash to buy with too!

Friday 5th September – Jurassic Coast Cruise – 2.00 pm Closing date 22nd August

A trip has been arranged with Stuart Line Cruises from Exmouth, lasting about two hours with a cream tea. This will cost £16 pp – you are welcome to bring friends and partners. There will be no coach as Exmouth is so close. Long term parking is available at the Camperdown car park, close to the marina. Cheques preferred, made out to WHWG.

Thursday 4th September is a talk by Elizabeth Cozens about her work in Nepal trying to keep girls in education and out of teen marriages.

Book Sales Table From September we are trialling a book sales table at our next few meetings to see if there is any interest. Please bring any good condition books which we will sell for £1 each towards our own WHWG funds.

WHWG Walking Group The June walk saw five ladies enjoying a route around Escot Park, on a beautiful sunny morning. We had hoped to visit The Swamp but this area has unfortunately been closed, probably permanently, due to the footpaths no longer being deemed to be safe. However we did stop further on our walk to admire the tribute to Swampy, made out of the tree he occupied when protesting about the new route for the A30 at Fairmile back in 1966. We continued on past the orchard to Black Aller Wood, then stopped to take a photograph at the circular seating area with a view towards the house and reached the café just about noon, when the sun was getting stronger, and enjoyed a welcome coffee.

If you are new to West Hill or would like to give the group another try, come as a guest for just £3 which includes coffee/tea and cake – we'd love to see you.

For further details please contact: **Pam Bartlett** on **07816 919142** or **pamela.bartlett1@btinternet.com**

West Hill Arboretum Group

By the time you read this we shall have had our Bug Safari at the Woodland Trust woodland. Report next time.

Our autumn walk will be held on **October 4th**. A fungi expert will lead this walk starting from the Prickly Pear carpark at 10.30 am. Please put the date in your diary. We hope to have had some rain beforehand to encourage the fungi.

Highlight on Horse Chestnut (Aesculus)

A magnificent tree seen in parks and large spaces, the Horse Chestnut can reach 40m (130ft), so is unsuitable for the average garden. Children love to find this tree in the autumn as its nuts are sought after to play the popular game of 'conkers'. The deciduous tree is native to Albania and northern Greece and in spring its large sticky buds quickly open. The flowers can be 10" tall (26cm) – spikes of white, yellow and pink. In the autumn they turn a rich gold and produce the conkers in their prickly green husks.

The name 'Horse' probably comes from Turkey where the nuts were fed to horses and alleged to cure 'broken wind'. The timber is quite soft and mainly used for crates etc.. The Horse Chestnut tree is prone to several diseases including bleeding canker, leaf miner and leaf blotch. Only the former is likely to kill the tree if severe. High temperatures can scorch the leaves.

Look after our birds; if you can, supply them with water and feed in these dry conditions.

Celina Herbert - Chairman Tel. 07912061530

Eileen Perkins - Secretary and Tree Warden 01404 815905

Guide Me, O Thou Great Redeemer

Some hymns have the power to lift our spirits and stir us to sing with great enthusiasm and energy. One of these is the well-known Welsh hymn 'Guide me, O thou great redeemer'. The Welsh lyrics were written in 1745 by the cleric William Williams (1717 – 1791). The original words, beginning with 'Arglwydd, arwain trwy'r anialwch', thankfully were translated into English in 1771. Williams originally trained as a doctor. After attending an evangelical rally he became a dedicated Christian and in 1740, he was ordained into the Church of Wales then joined the Methodist church in 1744 and dedicated himself to a life of evangelism, lasting 43 years. During this time he wrote over 800 hymns. Peter Williams, who translated the hymn, had a similar career, being ordained into the Church of Wales then leaving to join the Methodist church as an evangelist. The tune associated with this hymn, Cwm Rhondda, was composed by John Hughes in 1904, with the melody fitting the words so well. The hymn is well known and it was sung at Princess Diana's funeral, William and Kate's wedding and frequently at Cardiff Arms Park rugby stadium.

The words of the hymn speak about faith, guidance and perseverance with many phrases derived from Old Testament events. One version of the hymn commences with 'Guide me, O thou great Jehovah' speaking of the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt to the promised land. The alternative is 'Guide me, O thou great redeemer' referring to Jesus as our guide. The second line continues this theme with 'pilgrim through this barren land'. Later in verse one 'bread of heaven ... feed me now and ever more' is based on God's provision of manna in the wilderness as well as Jesus' teaching in John 6:32 'the bread of God is the bread that comes from heaven and gives life to the world'.

Verse 2 continues this theme: 'Open thou the crystal fountain, Whence the healing streams doth flow' refers to God's provision of clean water in the wilderness. Then 'Let the fiery, cloudy pillar' speaks of God's guidance to his people; Exodus 13:21 'By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so they could travel by day and night'. Later in this verse the words 'Be thou my strength and shield' come from Psalm 28:7 'The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in Him, and He helps me'.

Verse 3 commences with 'When I tread the verge of Jordan' clearly referring to the Israelites again as they stood so close to the promised land, with the hymn asking 'Land me safe on Canaan's side' i.e. God's promised land. 'Death of death and hell's destruction' comes from Revelation 20:14 'then death and Hades (hell) were thrown into the lake of fire'.

Next time you sing this hymn you will be able to do so with even greater enthusiasm and energy!

Geoff Green

Hospiscare News

Thank You to Our Amazing Community. We want to extend our deepest thanks to our incredible community for your continued support. Your generosity and kindness help us provide care, comfort, and dignity to those who need it most. Whether you've donated, offered raffle prizes, volunteered at fundraising events, or simply cheered us on, every act of support makes a difference. What we continue to do is only possible because of people like you, and we are truly grateful.

Thank you for standing up and supporting us.

It's a little hello from me, Sharon, your new Area Fundraiser covering the Ottery, West Hill and surrounding areas. My role is to ensure that anyone who wishes to support Hospiscare now or in the future gets the best possible support, but my most important role is to say thank you and I say it a lot!

Do you know.....

If you are a Hospiscare patient, carer or are recently bereaved, we may be able to offer you complementary therapies for free. These can help to:

- Reduce stress and tension
- Promote relaxation
- Lift and energise your mood
- Improve sleep
- Ease pain and other symptoms

The main complementary therapies we offer are massage, reflexology, reiki, and relaxation therapy. In some cases, we use essential oils to fragrance the therapy rooms and create a serene and peaceful environment.

Massage

Massage is a hands-on therapy that can ease aches, pains, and stiffness. It's also very relaxing so can help with emotional tiredness.

Reflexology

A reflexologist uses their fingers to apply gentle pressure to specific points on your hands or feet which correlate to certain body parts and systems. This is particularly beneficial if areas of concern are too tender to touch. Reflexology is a very popular treatment for deep relaxation and can help to boost your mood.

Reiki

Reiki is a hands-off treatment that aims to promote relaxation and a balanced sense of wellbeing by moving energy around the body. It's extremely gentle and therefore a good alternative to massage if you're feeling particularly weak.

Relaxation Therapy

This combination of listening, guided visualisations and attention to

breathing can help you to feel calmer. It's a really useful treatment for those experiencing high levels of stress or anxiety.

Our complementary therapists

We have two professional complementary therapists, who are supported by a team of trained, qualified, and insured volunteers.

Staff and volunteers at Hospiscare would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude and warmest wishes to our wonderful community. Your support, kindness and generosity continue to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we care for.

Thank you for being by our side for the last 43 years caring for those in your community.

Sharon Collins Area Fundraiser 01392 424960 / 07803 428363

West Hill Garden Club

Our plant stall at the fête was a great success. We were delighted to have lots of plants, lots of customers, and to make lots of money to fund future speakers. Thank you to all our customers, several of whom return each year to support us, and thank you to our members for supplying the plants and selling them. We even had one customer who arrived with her wheelbarrow to transport all her plants home!

The current heatwave means regular watering and that includes the planter outside Morrisons – this year is has looked spectacular with red geraniums, white pansies, and blue trailing lobelia. Again thank you to our members who water and dead head on a weekly rota basis so that the plants can be enjoyed by everyone passing by. Thank you also to Morrisons who supply us with the water and to the Parish Council who refund us for the cost of the plants.

Our **August** meeting takes place on **Thursday 14th August at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall**. The topic for the evening is **Foraging for Wild Food** and the Speaker will be **Becca Flintham**. I can think of blackberries at that time of the year but what else will we learn is around us in other seasons of the year, and free for the taking?

In **September** we have our last outing for this year. This will be a **Trip to Plant World at Newton Abbott** on **Thursday 11th September** meeting there **at 2.00 pm**. Names and car sharing will be arranged at the August meeting.

We always welcome visitors and new members – if you have any query please contact our Chairman Sheila Gillam 01404 814074 or our Secretary Pauline Wade 01404 813191 who will be happy to help you.

Monica Highnam

West Hill Village Hall

Registered Charity No. 1160370

West Hill Primary School and Preschool have started their summer break from West Hill Village Hall and many other organisations have slowed down for the summer; nevertheless we will still remain busy, planning for future events, which include the following:

8 th Aug 25	Blood Donation
3 rd Sep 25	CPR/Defib training
26 th Sep 25	MacMillan Coffee Afternoon
15 th Nov 25	PTFA Ball with full marquee
29 th Nov 25	Hospiscare Christmas Fayre

In the last Messenger publication we stated that Sarah Woolfries would be standing down this year as our Finance and Administration Officer. Sarah's replacement is Lynda Creegan who has been working with Sarah over the past three months to ensure a smooth handover.

Sarah stood down on 23rd July so, for Village Hall issues, please no longer contact Sarah. If you wish to make a booking please use **westhillvillagehall@gmail.com**.

Please allow Lynda time to settle into her new position so she can then provide us with the same high level of service we always received from Sarah.

Publicly I wish to thank Sarah for her years of dedicated service and wish her all the very best for the future.

The Village Hall has been upgraded to BT's fibre broadband and business Guest Wi-Fi service. This means our Wi-Fi is now much faster and you can use our Guest Wi-Fi which appears as: 'West Hill Village Hall – Guest' The payphone has been removed from the premises as it no longer works following the upgrade. We have also moved to BT digital voice, which means we have a new phone number for Bookings, Finance and Administration, this is **01404 623091**

On Wednesday 3rd September at 10:30 am in Beech room we have another CPR/Defibrillator training session run by NHS SWAST. This is a really interesting and useful training session and is free of charge to anyone wishing to learn more about these life saving methods. If you wish to attend please contact Lynda on **westhillvillagehall@gmail.com**.

Please visit our website **www.whmessenger.info/west-hill-village-hall** for details of the full range of clubs and activities on offer at the hall, or call Lynda Creegan on 01404 623091 between the hours of 09.00 am and 5.30 pm. You may also contact Lynda by e-mail on:

westhillvillagehall@gmail.com

Colin Veale, Chairman, Village Hall Trustees

West Hill Men's Supper Club

We gather monthly usually on the 2nd Monday for a couple of drinks followed by a two-course meal and a talk by an invited speaker. After the current summer break the next meetings will be on:

8th September

Concorde - an appreciation

13th October

The industrial heritage of Dartmoor

We have an interesting and varied programme throughout the year.

Our venue is the Narthex annex to St Michael's Church in West Hill starting at 6.45 pm. We charge £25 (cash) which includes drinks and a meal.

If you are not on our regular mailing list you are more than welcome to book your place by emailing **Ian Taylor** on **whsupper@btinternet.com**. Alternatively make initial contact through **j.v.rowland@btinternet.com**.

A Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

When we look through the Messenger index, we can see the long list of the contributors. There is always a strong selection of church and faith based articles accompanied by the Village News ranging from the West Hill Garden Club through to what is happening at our local County, District and Parish Councils. The latter is particularly important at this time with the huge pressures on local authorities to encourage new housing developments. We know that many of these developments are not always popular with our local politicians nor with many of our residents. I think it is really important that we give as much support as we can to our local Parish Council as they work to produce a Neighbourhood Plan which will be a critical part of the future planning process for West Hill.

Since I became involved as Editor of the Messenger, I have been privileged to hear from many of our residents and the organisations that function within West Hill. The magazine is a space for young and old alike to share stories of their lives and we always welcome new contributors. The current paper version is now backed up with an online version available on the Messenger website. The stories may be about an organisation that is looking for new members or just to share what they have been doing. We live in a beautiful village with a plethora of organisations and groups offering a wide range of activities and regular events. As I read their articles every couple of months I am reminded just how much is happening in our community. Perhaps you have something new to share with us.

I was doing some research about Parish Magazines and was surprised that the earliest one recorded was produced back in 1859 at another St Michael's Church in Derby with the first editor being the Revd. John Erskine. The

longest continually published Parish Magazine is from Chervil and Sonning in Berkshire which started in 1869 over 150 years ago!

In 2009 it was estimated that the readership of parish magazines was around 1.3 million which is greater than the circulation of many newspapers so it is a clear indication that they fulfil an important role within communities.

So I hope you will agree that the Messenger is serving its various purposes well and that we may continue to look forward to publishing ever more interesting articles about what is going on in our woodland village.

With every good wish **Mac Dick**

Welcome Café

After all the ups and downs we had a very successful Welcome Café in June, in the new updated Narthex and very good it looked. We used the small tables with the bright red gingham tablecloths and each table was adorned with a beautiful flower arrangement. It all looked great. If you haven't been to Welcome Café do give it a try. It's a very friendly atmosphere with lots of laughter.

The next Café dates are **August 29th and September 26th 10.30 am – 12.30 pm**, so put the dates in your diary and we will see you there.

A big thank you to all the volunteers who help run the Café and make the cakes (which are always delicious, and we've decided that they are all calorie free!!) Come and see us. **Christine Smith**

A Message from Mrs. Cheryl Boulton

When I joined West Hill Primary School in September 2016, I discovered that one of my responsibilities would be to contribute articles to *The Messenger*. Writing for a local magazine was not a duty I had previously undertaken during my Headship in Swindon, but over the past nine years, it has become a thoroughly enjoyable and rewarding way to share school news with the wider West Hill community.

I have thoroughly enjoyed my 32-year career in education and my Headship at West Hill and feel immense pride and gratitude. For those of you who may not be aware, the following message was shared with staff and parents in the school newsletter on Friday, 23rd May 2025:

"We are writing to inform you that Mrs Boulton has decided to leave her position of Headteacher at West Hill Primary School on 31st May 2025. Mrs Boulton has shared the following personal message:

After almost nine happy years and after much reflection, I have made the difficult decision to leave my post as Headteacher of West Hill Primary School. Leading the top 6th primary school in Devon has been a deeply rewarding experience and I will be leaving with many proud and treasured

memories. I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the staff for their inspiration and hard work and to the parents who consistently support the school community. Most of all I have been continually inspired by the children whose curiosity, resilience and joy have made every day here so rewarding. It truly has been an immense privilege to watch them grow, learn and flourish over the years. I wish the entire school community every success for the future."

With this in mind, I asked Mac Dick for the opportunity to contribute one final article to express my sincere appreciation to the West Hill community for its support over the past nine years. I would like to extend particular thanks to Mac Dick for his personal and professional support, to members of the Parish Church, to Colin Veale (Chair of the Village Hall Committee), to the West Hill Village Hall Trustees and to Natalie Taylor at West Hill Pre-School.

I am sad that my time at West Hill has ended but wish to thank you all for your kindness, encouragement, and community spirit.

With warmest regards and best wishes for the future, **Cheryl Boulton**

West Hill Primary School PTFA

It's been another busy year for West Hill Primary School PTFA with school discos, cake sales, a ball, and the fantastic West Hill School Fête. We would like to thank the whole village for your amazing support. The village hall committee who has supported us throughout the year and our brilliant Parish Council not only funded the band at the fête but also ran a very successful crazy golf course.

Many thanks to all of you for coming to the fête which raised a fantastic £4,700. In addition to the parents and children who worked hard to make a day a success we, once again, benefitted from the wider village support with the Church and the Gardening Club running stalls amongst others.

Can we also thank anyone who has donated via the clothes bank in the Morrison's car park as this alone generated £372.40 this year.

The money we raise goes directly to supporting the children at West Hill Primary School and this year we have funded a whole new phonics scheme for the Key Stage 1 children (age 4 – 6), new books, forest school and other classroom items, school trips including trips to Paignton Zoo, RAMM, Stover Country Park and Bear Town. We have also funded various sports experiences and interactive workshops like the animation workshop completed by the Year 2 children. We couldn't do any of this without the support we get from the parents, children, and wider village community. Thank you and we look forward to seeing you all at the many events in planning for next year including the fête.

Rachael Jewell Email: ptfawh@west-hill-primary.devon.sch.uk

The Royal British Legion West Hill

Movie Nights

Doors open at 7.00 pm, Film starts at 7.30 pm, Admission free. All welcome!

4 th August	Crazy Stupid Love, 2011
11 th August	Picnic at Hanging Rock, 1975
18 th August	Jurassic Park, 1993
25 th August	Ghostbusters, 1984
1 st September	The Birdcage, 1996
8 th September	What to Expect When You're Expecting, 2012
15 th September	Juror No. 2, 2024
22 nd September	Rebecca, 2020
29 th September	While you were sleeping, 1995

Bingo Nights (Doors open 6.30 pm)

Sundays 3rd, 17th August and 7th & 21st September

Jazz (with City Steam Jazz Band)

Sundays 10th August & 14th September (7.30 to 10.00 pm)

Crafters' Evenings: Tuesdays 5th August & 2nd September (from 7.00 pm)

Dads' Nights

Fridays 8th August &
12th September from 8.00 pm

Mums' Nights

Fridays 29th August &
26th September

Codfather – Fish & Chips

Every Thursday from 5.00 pm – 7.00 pm

Opera Nights

Opera Nights returns on Thursday 25th September

Other Events

Ladies Probos, 9th September from 1.30 pm

West Hill Women's Group, 6th August Coffee Morning &
4th September Talk

Cabaret Band Night, 9th August – from 7.00 pm

Syrian Lunch, 24th August from 12 noon

Councillor's Column



Local Plan

I continue to sit on EDDC's strategic planning committee which is overseeing the delivery of the Local Plan. The responses to the most recent public consultation amounted to more than a million words! Not only were there significant level of public responses to the consultation but also a number of concerns and objections raised by statutory consultees. These responses were discussed at the meeting on Tuesday 8th July. Creating this Local

Plan seems to be a never ending process with the formal examination stage not likely to happen until February 2026 at the earliest.

Whilst there is currently no Local Plan and no 'five year land supply' we may find ourselves the subject of speculative planning applications from developers. I will be doing my very best to oppose any such speculative developments and to uphold the settlement boundaries to prevent sprawling development into the open countryside around West Hill.

Planning applications in West Hill

It is frustrating that at the time of writing we still have not had the appeal decision from the Planning Inspectorate for the application for five houses on Lower Broad Oak Road (ref 23/2610).

Health and Adult Care Services Committee

I was appointed on 22nd May 2025 to be the chair of the Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee at Devon County Council. This is one of the three main scrutiny committees at Devon County Council. Adult Services are one of DCC's key areas of responsibility and for which there is an annual budget in excess of £380 million. The role of the Committee is to act as critical friend to the Senior Leaders within the service area. It is also the only committee that has a statutory responsibility to scrutinise health provision across the county.

Locality Budget

I am pleased that my locality budget of £8000 is now available again this year to support local projects and I can accept applications from a range of organisations including voluntary and community groups and social enterprises. Please do get in touch with me if you would like to make an application.

Paint recycling

I would like to flag a new recycling option for when you next visit the recycling centre. Residents are now able to take usable leftover paint for other people to use through the Community Repaint scheme.

Swift boxes

As yet there are no swifts nesting in the boxes that I have arranged to be installed at EDDC's headquarters at Blackdown House Honiton. I understand that it can take some years for new boxes to be occupied. I am really interested to know if any residents in West Hill have swifts nesting on their properties – please do get in touch with me.

Eastfield road repairs

I am pleased that at long last the road in Eastfield is due to be repaired by way of surfacing dressing this council year, with the exact date to be confirmed.

Cllr Jess Bailey 01404 814056 Email: Jessica.Bailey@devon.gov.uk



Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays



We meet every Friday from 8.45-10.00 am, upstairs in the Village Hall, during term time. **We return after the summer break on Friday 5th September.**

Toddlers, Pre-Schoolers, Mums, Dads, Grandparents and Carers can enjoy a chat and a cup of tea or coffee, whilst the little ones play with the toys. For the children, there is squash or milk and buttered toast with jam/marmalade/Marmite.

The group is growing and we see new faces every week. Do come along - you don't have to have a small person in tow! All welcome!

Please give us a ring if you want to know more: **Pam** (814096) **Rosemary** (234578)

West Hill Primary School

Some readers may be under the misconception that the end of the summer term in a primary school might somehow see things quietly peter out, but nothing could be further from the truth - the reality is that the end of the school year brings a great crescendo of activity from Reception up to Class 6.

For the past few weeks, our September intake into Reception class has been enjoying 'Stay and Play' taster sessions on Wednesday mornings, in preparation for the new school year, while the week of July 7th saw the whole school move up to their new classes for three days, the majority of our Year 6 pupils spending the week at The King's School.

In June, Years 4, 5 and 6 recently enjoyed a day's sea safety input at Exmouth - you may even have spotted them on BBC Spotlight. This is not an event the school has previously taken part in but feedback was very positive.

The Summer Show, 'Oliver with a Twist', was a huge success (I won't reveal the 'twist', but I can honestly say that I didn't see it coming!). The children all sang, danced and acted superbly. The children and teachers worked very hard to rehearse so that by the time families came to watch on Wednesday 2nd and Friday 4th July, it ran very smoothly.

We have introduced a new phonics programme in school: 'Little Wandle Letters and Sounds'. This scheme will be taught from September and teachers and teaching assistants are receiving weekly training in this new scheme. We are also in the process of moving the library from the corridors and into what was the school's computer suite. Now the children use Google Chromebooks for their computing provision, the school no longer needs a room dedicated to computers.

It was wonderful to see so many local stakeholders attend our PTFA fête on Saturday 28th June - thank you to everyone who helped run a stall, or who came to spend money. It was a very enjoyable day and over £4500 was raised, which will go straight to enriching and enhancing the pupils' school experience.

The term is due to end on Wednesday 23rd July with a picnic lunch on the school field. This annual event is a lovely way to sign off from what has been an incredibly busy but ultimately very rewarding school year.

I wish you and your families a wonderful summer.

Mr R Pantling - Acting Headteacher, West Hill Primary School

Ottery St. Mary Floral Art Club

A bit like the schools, the Club takes a break in August which gives members the opportunity to relax, spend time in their own gardens or alternatively get out and about to make the most of this beautiful part of the world that we call home.

Our Club nights re-start on Tuesday 16th September when we will be joined by Exeter based florist Sarah Pepper. Working from her studio near Broadclyst, Sarah not only designs inspirational bridal flowers but also teaches classes in floral design for individuals as well as household names such as the National Trust and the Royal Horticultural Society. It's a return visit to the Club for Sarah and we look forward to enjoying another evening with her and being inspired by her demonstration!

It has been lovely to see visitors coming along to our Club nights this year and a number have now joined us as members. We are a relaxed and friendly group with very different levels of experience with flowers so if you would like to come along and see for yourself what we're all about, why not join us for Sarah's demonstration?

For Club members reading this, the competition title for September is "Bold and Beautiful" - please take part if you can.

We hope all readers enjoy the summer and look forward to seeing our members and visitors at Sarah's demonstration at **West Hill Village Hall, Beech Park, West Hill, EX11 1UQ – 7.30 pm on Tuesday 16th September.**

Any enquiries: Karen Taverner, Club Secretary – 01404 811807

Quietly

I missed you quietly today. So quietly that no one noticed.

I missed you as I climbed out of bed and as I brushed my teeth;

when I waited at the lights on the drive into work and as I heard the rain outside my window.

I missed you as I ordered lunch and as I kicked off my shoes when I got home; as I switched off the lights and climbed into bed for the night.

I missed you without tears or noise or fanfare. But oh how I felt it.

I felt it in the morning, at lunchtime, in the evening and at night. I felt it as I woke, as I waited, as I worked. I felt it at home, on the road, in the light, in the dark, in the rain.

I felt it in every one of those moments, each one sitting heavier and heavier as the weight of me missing you kept growing and growing.

Yes, I missed you so quietly today.

But I felt it so loudly.

Becky Hemsley, used with permission; submitted by **Ann Pangbourne**

Jesus said

"I am with you, always"

He is there beside you in each of those moments

Lutra Vallis Ladies' Probus

We are excitedly looking forward to our 30th Anniversary Celebration on the 9th of September. Thirty years of friendship, learning and fun since our club's inception. Not many groups can say that they have such a history!

Our theme is "Summertime" and we are serving "Pimm's Cup Cocktails" and Afternoon Tea. A special Anniversary Cake and Tea is being provided by Mary's Hospiscare Team. The cost for the tea--£10, proceeds to Hospiscare. Our Speaker is Stuart Raine, his topic is "Development of the Devon Seaside". We will decorate and theme the room, and have some fun surprises for members, who have been asked to dress to fit the occasion. A free tea will be awarded to the most aptly themed member!

So far this year we have had some superb speakers -

In May, Paul Rendell gave a talk on Lundy island. It was very well illustrated, covering the history of the island and its habitat.

In June, a talk on Cyber Crime was given by Mick Harrison from Devon & Cornwall Police. An extremely helpful talk on how to protect ourselves from becoming a victim. Even the most savvy of us learnt something!

Our Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of the month, at 2.00 pm in the Royal British Legion in West Hill. If you would like an informal chat to find out more about joining our welcoming and friendly club, please contact:

Either the Chairman **Trisha Fryer** on 01404 813408

Email **trisha.fryer@hotmail.co.uk**

Or the Membership Secretary **Moni George** on 07368546944 or **monicageorge895@aol.com**

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 'village website' pen!

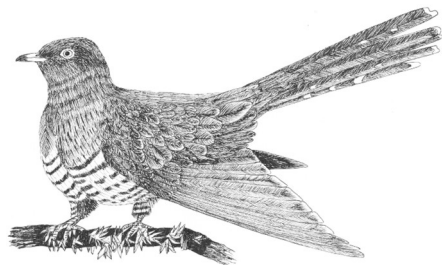
So, if you've moved into the village within the last couple of months and haven't yet received a Welcome Pack, please contact Rosemary.

Note for Welcome Pack contributors - have there been any changes to the details for your organisation/group? If so, please send an updated note to **hudsonrosemary@hotmail.com**

Rosemary Hudson

Birds (of West Hill)

If you had to choose one species of bird to illustrate the marvels of avian natural history, the Cuckoo would come near the top of the list. Sadly you won't see a Cuckoo in West Hill; the nearest place to see them is on Dartmoor. As summer migrants they arrive in April and the males fly back in late June followed later by the females and later still by the young. Only the male sings the iconic song, the female makes a strange babbling call. The Cuckoo is a specialist feeder, preferring noxious, spiny caterpillars, which other birds won't eat. The spines of the caterpillar cut the Cuckoo's stomach lining so badly the lining is replaced regularly.



The Cuckoo lays its eggs in the nests of other birds but any one female only ever lays in one host species, as will her female offspring. The eggs she lays are the same size and colour as the host. The female must lay her egg at just the right time; too early and the hatchling will emerge too late;

too late and the host's eggs will have hatched. The female can lay 12 eggs

in separate nests, a process requiring acute powers of observation. She times her egg laying to the afternoon when the hosts are out feeding (other birds lay their eggs in the morning). As she approaches the host's nest she emits a sound which mimics a bird of prey, to divert the host's attention. The egg she lays has a thicker shell to ensure it does not break when dropped in the nest. The female will eject one of the host's eggs to prevent the hosts being alerted to the presence of an extra egg.

When the blind hatchling emerges from the egg it immediately sets about ejecting all the other eggs from the nest. The hatchling has a hollow on its back which just fits an egg. The chick's begging call imitates the host species' chick's call to induce the host adults to feed the bird. Astonishingly, the host parents carry on feeding the hungry chick which quadruples its weight in 4 days! Once fledged the Cuckoo successfully harangues its small foster parents to feed it even when it is many times their size.

In 2011 the British Trust for Ornithology fitted tracking devices to several Cuckoos to plot their migratory routes. This experiment continues and you can see live data on the BTO web site. It's worth a look!

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.

Ottery St Mary Heritage Society and Museum

Registered charity CIO no. 1179598

Our Museum is open for the Summer Season on Thursday, Friday and Saturday each week until end of September. Please check our website **www.otterheritage.org.uk** for exact opening times as we regularly keep this up to date. We have an excellent new display this year commemorating the 80th anniversary of the end of WW2, so please do come and have a look. Entrance is free.

Our monthly members' talks take place at **The Institute, Yonder St., Ottery St Mary EX11 1HD** on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Guests are welcome at £3 payable at the door. Please check our website for any changes, but the schedule is currently as follows:

August – no meeting

Tuesday 16th September 7.30pm AGM followed at 8.00 pm by:

West Country Mining – The Reality Behind the Myth or “Poldark With His Shirt On” by Ken McKechnie (rescheduled from March)

Ken's illustrated talk centres on the lives of West Country miners illuminated by his own experiences after 35 years exploring some of the remotest regions of the world, mining metals, gold and diamonds.

All enquiries, including annual membership (£20 single, £27.50 joint), to **Lynda Murlewski**, Hon. Secretary: **otterheritage@gmail.com**

West Hill Parish Council

Although we are into the holiday season life in the Parish Council has been busy but rewarding as we are making some real progress with some of our projects.

After many frustrations, trials and tribulations we at last have start dates for the work on the Village Hall Footpath. This project was conceived some years ago and may even predate the Parish Council as it was apparently initially discussed by the Residents Association that was the forerunner of the Parish Council.

The dates we have been given mean that, subject to weather, the work will take place over a few days during the last two weeks in August. This will allow us to have the footpath open for use at the start of the school term in September. We do hope that people will find the footpath useful and that it will encourage more walking or cycling to school and reduce the number of cars making the twice-daily school run. Another benefit of completing the project is that it will enable the Parish Council to spend time on other work to benefit the village.

A very important project for us is the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for West Hill. A village-wide survey took place in June and July and we received a number of responses. It was good to see that some young people submitted their views showing an interest in the future of the village. Developing the plan is a lengthy process so it will be well into next year before we have a draft plan to submit to the Planning Inspector. The team working on the plan are putting a lot of effort into it and I thank them again for their time.

On a lighter note at the annual PTFA Summer Fayre at the end of June the Parish Council ran a Crazy Golf game to raise money for the association. We councillors actually had a lot of fun making the obstacles for the game and testing them out. It appeared to be quite popular as it was busy for most of the afternoon and one or two visitors came back for several more goes. It was entertaining watching some enthusiastic dads giving lessons to their children, showing them the correct way to hold the club and how to address the ball and then being soundly beaten by the young golfers who clearly had a natural talent! I think we may have some budding star golfers in West Hill.

It is hard to believe that in September it will be two years since my wife and I moved to West Hill. They say that time flies when you are enjoying yourself so we are clearly enjoying living in West Hill – but then who wouldn't?

Francis Pullman, Chairman, West Hill Parish Council

Contact: Clerk: Anne Oliver 01404 232 100 or 07450 388198

Email: clerk@westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk Website:

www.westhillparishcouncil.gov.uk

West Hill Art Group

Over the Garden Gate



Graham Seymour



Andrea Griffiths



Terry Butler

There are so many beautiful gardens around West Hill which gave us the inspiration for this recent subject. Painting scenes that have personal connections or are close to your heart adds another dimension to the picture. We are very lucky here to be surrounded by beautiful scenery and nature's bounty which watercolour paints capture so well.

We do have a vacant space at the moment for a new member either complete beginner or an existing artist.

Rosemary Seymour 01404 234122



Graham Evans



Liz Shorrock



Hazel Wheeler

Ottery St Mary Bowling Club

After a long dreary winter, the Bowling Club's new President, Sharon Kenny, opened the season delivering the first bowl for The Opening Drive on Sunday 13th April. Once the round robin series of games had finished, the players were treated to a sumptuous afternoon tea.

Thereafter, the fixtures started to be played with friendly matches against other local teams, many of which have formed part of ours and their fixtures for many years. Touring teams also love coming to Devon, and Ottery St Mary is a "must visit venue" for many such clubs. External competitions were also being played as well as the early rounds of internal matches.

In accordance with many sporting clubs and other organisations, the club celebrated VE Day in a suitable manner. Red, white and blue was the dress code for the day, and many members found old 1940's clothing fit for the occasion. There was a general sense at the end of the day that whilst we had enjoyed the fun, we were all so grateful, that our generation had not been called upon to partake in a world war.



The final social event of the early season was President's Day, when the theme was a celebration of the club colours which are blue and yellow. The Chairman, Carl Gilleard, summed up the day by saying that the game of bowls was the real winner

Amongst all the celebrations, bowls was being played, and the ladies team are having an exceptionally good season, winning through to the County Final of the Top Club competition. If they win that match then they will progress to the next round where they will play against another county champion. We wish them every success. All four men's over 60's teams are well placed in their leagues with their wins and losses almost running equal. In addition two of our members have recently been recognised as full County Players. Congratulations to Tony Luff and Sue Cole.



Clive Russell, Press Officer

Ottery St. Mary Choral Society - Why Do We Sing?



The Ottery St. Mary Choral Society can trace its formation back to 1883. It gave its very first concert in April 1884, singing “Mozart’s Twelfth Mass” – a piece now acknowledged not to be by Mozart at all, and which has fallen from the height of popularity it enjoyed in the Victorian era. It performed the very first concert in the newly-opened Institute Hall in Ottery, in 1897.

The choir, under the baton of Ottery parish church organist Thomas J. Carnell, put on acclaimed performances every year until Carnell’s sudden death in 1896 while he was watching the Somerset vs. Australia cricket match at Taunton. The society struggled on for a further two years under a new leader, eventually winding up on New Year’s Eve 1898. It was revived in 1904, performing “St. Cecelia’s Day” in May 1905, and since then, even through two world wars, has delivered an unbroken 120-year programme of concerts.

In 1999, a century after the first Ottery Choral Society wound up, the present Society faced a crisis. It was down to 28 members, of which only 3 were male voices, and was close to disbanding. A concerted rescue effort was mounted by our musical director Malcolm Matthews and the choir committee, led by Kyle Hayes, and the choir was brought back from the brink. We’re still going strong today. But why did they put so much effort into this? Why was this so important? Why do we sing?

We sing to share our feelings, to show solidarity, to soothe, or just entertain. Songs – whether choral pieces or top 40 hit songs – express our feelings. What it’s like to be in love. Our greatest hopes and deepest fears. Singing



Choir rehearsal, April 2025 (Photo: Mark Gilronan)

the same thing with a group of people at the same time is a basic human instinct. We do it at stadium concerts, school halls, churches and football grounds. We sing together to celebrate, to grieve, to inspire, to tell stories, and to make ourselves happy. Choral music in particular grants us permission, singers and audience alike, to express and share those emotions.

What makes our members return every season to rehearse our programme? A short survey of our choir members showed it is as much to do with the sense of shared achievement and lasting friendship as it is to

sing the music. We prize the satisfaction of performing challenging pieces, in a friendly and supportive learning environment. Many of our members are not confident music readers, so it is the challenge of overcoming that steep learning curve they find most satisfying. But far and away the Number One reason we return every year, some for many decades, is the friendly and positive atmosphere of our choir.

We are a non-auditioning community choir with a shared love of choral music. We exist for the enjoyment that singing together brings us, as well of course to entertain our audiences. Our members come from Ottery and the surrounding towns and villages. For 120 years we have given a good go at singing some of the most beautiful choral music in the world.

What does the future hold? We will keep singing this glorious music for as long as there's an audience who wants to hear it and members to sing it. Our next season's programme will be announced shortly; if you would like to be a part of it, you would be made very welcome. Email osmcs@hotmail.co.uk for more information.

West Hill Craft Group & RD&E Blanket Friends



You can't fail to have noticed the wonderful postbox 'toppers' outside Morrisons this year! I was interested to find out who made them – and to say thank you for the joy they bring. The answer is West Hill Craft Group. The group was established about 18 months ago and meets on the first Tuesday of the month from 7.30 pm at RBL. They also get together on the second Monday afternoon of the month at each other's houses.

Last Christmas, they decided to make a Nativity-themed postbox topper. This was followed by Valentine's Day, Spring, V.E Day and, currently, Summer. The group

members say that the toppers are time-consuming to make but good fun. They have several crafters who all bring different ideas and skills.

West Hill Craft Group would love to get together with other community groups to make toppers and are planning to make one in conjunction with West Hill Primary School later this year.

Another community project that the group supports is the provision of colourful blankets for RD&E patients who are receiving palliative and/or end of life care. The scheme was set up by a retired nurse with the palliative care nurses at the RD&E.

West Hill Craft Group responded to a call for help from her to continue the scheme. They have called the project 'RD&E Blanket Friends'. Hundreds of knitted and crocheted 8" blanket squares have been delivered to them from all over the country. Group members also make squares and join them together to create beautiful, colourful blankets. Since April, RD&E Blanket Friends have delivered 36 blankets to the palliative care team.



If you are interested in joining West Hill Craft Group or helping with RD&E Blanket Friends, please contact: **Jane Ollier** Tel: 07814 207592

Otter Valley Rotary



The recent annual Wiscombe Hill Climb also saw some Rotary members assist with car parking and entry fees on the gate. We caught up with a number of former Otter Valley Rotary members, which was fun, and we all enjoyed our duties in bright sunshine with stunning views over the valley.



In May we attended Devon County Show where we issued wristbands to children (in case they got lost) at the Devon County Show. We were very lucky with the weather this year which was hot and sunny and attracted large crowds.



We sponsored, and judged, the annual Primary School Youth Speaks competitions where the standard of debating was extremely impressive for such young speakers. The winners of the final competition were Honiton Primary School B Team. Well done to all who took part.

Otter Valley Rotary Members recently enjoyed our annual Pétanque match against Exmouth Rotary, which took place at Ottery Pétanque Club. There was some excellent play, and some not so excellent play, but the main

thing was everyone enjoyed themselves on a lovely sunny evening. Otter Valley Rotary did emerge as the victors, and will soon travel to Exmouth for an evening of Lawn Bowls. After the Pétanque we all enjoyed a meal, and plenty of chat, at the Tumbling Weir Hotel.

Each year the Presidential handover takes place on 1st July and outgoing President, Richard Thomas, reported on a successful year. It was observed by the Assistant District Governor that



in spite of being a small group we 'punch above our weight' in the money we raise for the community. Incoming President, Emma Bradshaw-Smith, outlined her plans for the forthcoming year which included finding a new venue after many happy years at the Tumbling Weir Hotel, which has sadly closed.

If you are interested in joining us please contact our Secretary,

David Incoll at: d.incoll@live.co.uk

Otter Vale Men's Probus Club

We are a friendly club whose aim is to promote fellowship among professional and business men aged 60 and over. We meet for talks and lunch at Jack in the Green

Our next talks are:

27 th August 2025	Suffragette movement in the South West.
10 th September 2025	Can you hear me Mother? The dawn of the mobile phone.
24 th September 2025	Anecdotes from the A30 (and A35)
22 nd October 2025	Churchill's Secret Army
12 th November 2025	Was Christmas Day in the Workhouse
26 th November 2025	Murky Waters
14 th January 2026	The West Hill Story
28 th January 2026	Teaching computers to read
11 th February 2026	Bungle in the Jungle
25 th February 2026	Morgan Sports Cars

All talks are at the Jack in the Green

If you are interested in attending an event as a guest, please contact

John Pulsford, Chairman, Otter Vale Probus Club 01404 815994.

Welcome Café

West Hill's village café



Last Friday of
every month

See you there from 10.30 am onwards

Friday 29th August
and
Friday 26th September
in St Michael's Church Hall

All welcome!

Contact us via the form at:
www.whmessenger.info/contact

Otter Vale Friends of Hospiscare presents

SUMMER FETE

@
Cadhay
EX11 1QT

Saturday 23 August
12 - 4pm

Beautiful gardens & house tour available
Entertainment, BBQ, refreshments in the tea room, bouncy castle, side stalls, crafts, raffle and so much more!

Entry - donation to Hospiscare
Well behaved dogs on short leads welcome

GREAT FAMILY DAY OUT!

With thanks to Mr R Thistlethwaite of Cadhay

Because every day matters
www.hospiscare.co.uk
Hospiscare is a charity

Proceeds to West Hill Hospiscare
Your local hospice

Keyboard Club

on
Wednesdays
2 - 4pm
£5 per session
(all proceeds to SW Children's Hospice & St Michael's Church Hall)

We play a variety of music
Treble Clef literacy essential

Interested?
Contact Andrew Pitts
01404 814760

£25 per table - non refundable

Calling all crafters, makers and bakers

Sell your wares at West Hill Grand Christmas Craft Fair

Saturday 29 November
West Hill Village Hall, EX11 1UQ

To book your table call Kim Holmes 07795 482065 or email thirzas8@hotmail.com

Because every day matters
www.hospiscare.co.uk
Hospiscare is a charity

Proceeds to West Hill Hospiscare
Your local hospice

We are happy to take up to 3 text-only small ads per issue.
Please contact Rosemary Hudson the Advertising Manager see p3.

Services at St Michael's



Services in Church

Aug 3	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Aug 10	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Aug 17	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Aug 24	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Aug 31	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Sep 7	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
Sep 14	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Sep 21	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Sep 28	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)

Zoom Services

On the first and third Sunday of each month at 9.30am for the whole Mission Community.

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