

The Messenger



**The bi-monthly magazine from
St Michael's, West Hill providing news and
information on church and village activities**



**October - November 2026
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?

<i>Other West Hill Clergy</i>	Revd. Mac Dick macdick1@aol.com Revd. Ann Turner jandaturner@btinternet.com	371064 813476
<i>Pastoral Care Coordinator</i>	<i>vacant - contact Team Vicar or Churchwardens</i>	
<i>Church Warden</i>	Pam Johns (<i>also Sacristan</i>) pam-johns1@hotmail.co.uk	814096
<i>Assistant Wardens</i>	Ann Pangbourne – see below Sue Lock	812947
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<i>Safeguarding Officer</i>	Sue Ritchie westhillchurchsafeguarding@gmail.com	814811
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<i>Church Hall Bookings</i>	Sue Lock	812947
	or	07984 881398

To contact Ann Pangbourne (PCC Secretary and Assistant Warden) please see <https://whmessenger.info/contact/>

Website

www.whmessenger.info

Church address

Bendarroch Road, West Hill, EX11 1UW

Index

Why is God so important to us?	p 18 - 19
INFORMATION ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES	
A Letter from our Team Vicar	p4
Charities St Michael's Supports	p 17
Children's Pages / Messy Church	p 5 – 6
Monday Bible Study: Preparing for Christmas	p 22
Services in church and on Zoom	p 18, 25, Back cover
Simply Worship	p 25
St Michael's Churchyard	p 7 - 8
Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays	p 30
VILLAGE NEWS and ACTIVITIES	
EDDC / DCC Councillor's Column	p 26 – 27
Hospiscare News	p 19 - 20
Letter from the Editor	p 6 – 7
Lutra Vallis Ladies' Probus	p 15
New to West Hill?	p 23
Opera Nights	p 12
Operation Christmas Child	p 24
Otter Vale Probus Club	p 21
Ottery Help Scheme Memory Café	p 23 – 24
Ottery St Mary Bowling Club	p 27 - 28
Ottery St Mary Choral Society	p 28 - 29
Ottery St Mary Floral Art Club	p 13 - 14
Ottery St Mary Heritage Society	p 10 - 11
Royal British Legion Events	p 16
Seasonal Reflection	p 11 – 12
The West Hill Story	p 13
Welcome Café	p 31
West Hill Arboretum Group	p 9 - 10
West Hill Art Group	p 25
West Hill Garden Club	p 20 - 21
West Hill Men's Supper Club	p 21
West Hill Neighbourhood Plan	p 29 - 30
West Hill Parish Council	p 22 - 23
West Hill Village Hall	p 8 - 9
West Hill Women's Group	p 14 - 15

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PLEASE NOTE The last date for copy for the December/January edition is
Monday 9th November 2026.

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



During my sabbatical in the summer, I had the opportunity to visit Holy Island (Lindisfarne) off the coast of Northumberland. The island is joined to the mainland by a tidal causeway. When the tide is out, you can drive or walk across; when the tide comes in, the causeway is impassable. Most people most of the time play it safe. There are clear timetables. But human nature being what it is, each year a few

people get caught out cutting it too fine. And because of that danger, a refuge hut has been built on the side of the road nearest the deepest part. As I hope you can see from this photograph, the refuge is a simple hut but on stilts holding it above the highest tides. A walker or driver in danger of being overwhelmed by the incoming tide can find refuge until the danger has passed. (The fate of the driver's car would not be so good and would make for a challenging insurance claim!)



Holy Island is a beautiful place to visit just for the landscape, but for me the visit was something of a spiritual pilgrimage. As the 'Holy' name implies, the island has a long Christian heritage, and one name associated with it is St. Cuthbert. Learning more about Cuthbert and his way of praying the Psalms has inspired and encouraged me in my praying of the Psalms, and this was an important theme of my sabbatical.

Across the 150 Psalms found in the biblical book of Psalms, God is described as a refuge 44 times! Some of those even say that the Lord God is a refuge "in times of trouble." As I prayed these Psalms this refuge hut was a lovely picture of what it means to find refuge.

God is far more glorious than a wooden hut, and He is not to be kept in reserve only for times when we are desperate, but we all experience times in our lives when we feel overwhelmed. We can feel overwhelmed by work, family, financial worries, addictions, ours or a loved-one's health, grief or any number of life's pressures. When it feels as though the tide is rising, we can find refuge in the God who is higher than all our troubles.

Mark

Children's Page



Autumn & Hibernation

In the church calendar, we celebrate Harvest. In autumn, animals also gather food to prepare for winter. Squirrels collect nuts, acorns and seeds, which they bury underground ready to be eaten when food is scarce. Hedgehogs hibernate, which means they spend the winter sleeping to help preserve their energy. A pile of leaves, spaces under sheds or a purpose-built hedgehog home are all spaces where hedgehogs might hibernate. Have you got an area like that in your garden?

The shorter days and lack of light are signs for the deciduous trees to prepare for winter. The leaves change from green to beautiful shades of red, yellow and orange before eventually falling to the ground and the trees have their winter sleep.

Remember to think of the birds and animals during this time and perhaps make a home for them or put out some bird food. So, put on your jumpers and get outside to play in those crispy leaves and enjoy our gardens and countryside!

Dates for Your Diary

Friday 16th October – Messy Church

3.45 - 5.15pm

Saturday 31st October – Lite Nite & BBQ

5.00 – 6.30pm

Friday 20th November – Messy Church

3.45 - 5.15pm



At Messy Church, the children have a light tea followed by stories, music and lots of crafts. It's ideally for age 3 years and over but all are welcome. We now have a separate group called Messy Momentum for the 'older' young people (around 9+ years)!

For more information, please contact Rosemary
HUDSONROSEMARY@HOTMAIL.COM

Children's Crafts

Above we have been thinking about autumn and all the animals that are preparing for winter. On the next page are some ideas for autumn crafts featuring creatures that prepare for winter in different ways.

Hedgehog Leaf Craft

- Collect some colourful leaves from the garden and dry them between 2 pieces of kitchen roll. Put a book on top to keep them flat.
- Cut out a hedgehog shape from card.
- Stick the dried leaves onto the back of the hedgehog to look like prickles.
- Draw a happy (or sleepy?) face onto your animal!
- Attach a piece of ribbon or string to hang up your artwork.



..... or a Squirrel?

- Cut out a squirrel shape from card.
- Stick the dried leaves onto the squirrel's tail. Oak leaves are ideal because they look more 'fluffy'.
- Attach a piece of ribbon or string.

..... or a Bat?

- Use a cardboard tube (about 10cm long).
- Cover the tube with black paper or black paint.
- Cut wings, ears and legs out of black paper and stick onto the tube.
- Stick a face onto your bat using white paper/googly eyes.
- Hang your bat – upside down of course!

Can you think of any other autumn animal crafts?



Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers, I missed you last issue but am back with some thoughts about what is taking place in West Hill.

The most serious issue concerns the Village Hall. Please read the article from Colin Veale, Chair of the Village Hall trustees. It is very clear that the future of one of our best village resources is at risk. We need folk to really step up at this 11th hour. The consequences could be catastrophic!

Hopefully our burnt lawns and open spaces will soon be turning green again as the rain returns. If it is too much rain we can be glad we live on a Hill!

And it has been good to see that many of the worst pot holes are at last being addressed.

*Look to the potholes as you ride
Repair money often denied.
For holes in the street
When it's under your feet.
A wall's just a road on its side.*

You will see on the front cover that the text reinforces 'The Messenger' being the place to go to, to find out what is happening in our village. I wish you happy reading.

Mac Dick

St Michael's Churchyard

Over the past couple of years, a lot of work has been going on in St Michael's churchyard and we thought you'd like an update.



After many years in place, the bug hotel is well-established but may be in line for a bit of refurbishment next year. The addition of bird, bat and butterfly boxes together with a small wildlife pond, water butt and compost bins (using recycled wooden pallets) has helped towards St Michael's achieving the Silver Eco Church Award.



In November 2024, with approval from the Diocese, four native trees were planted alongside the path. These were kindly sponsored by families either in memory of loved ones or to celebrate their family. The trees were chosen to attract pollinators.

Each spring, we take part in No-Mow May. This year proved to be a challenge as many will have noticed! The weather worked in favour of excessive grass and wildflowers. The bonus was a host of insects, especially many varieties of butterflies. Sadly, the Blue Atlas Cedar tree has been felled. A tree surgeon confirmed that it had died and was a potential health and safety risk.



Thanks to a grant from the Devon Historic Churches Trust, we have been able to transform the front churchyard. Once the grass has established, we hope to put a bench around our beautiful Magnolia tree. All will be welcome to come in to sit and reflect.

As an Eco Church, we aim to maintain a churchyard that is nature-friendly. With this in mind, we wish to remind

people of the regulations for the Churchyard and Garden of Remembrance.

- Only fresh flowers in suitable vases, not glass, are permitted.
- Living plants (no miniature conifers) are permitted but the pot should be removed when the plant dies.
- Bulbs/wildflowers are permitted on graves but avoid encroaching on neighbouring grave spaces.
- Poppy wreaths may remain for a month after Remembrance Day.
- Maintenance of gravestones and grave spaces are the responsibility of the families of their loved ones.

Thank you for caring for your loved one's grave space and helping us to keep the Churchyard safe and Eco friendly. There's more to do but we're getting there!

West Hill Village Hall

Registered Charity No. 1160370

WEST HILL VILLAGE HALL TO CLOSE

This is the message we will have to post if we are unable to find a way of managing the Village Hall after the end of 2026.

At our AGM on 15th July Mike Harris, our longest serving trustee, took the decision not to stand for re-election. Mike joined the Village Hall committee in 1991 and subsequently became a trustee. Our grateful thanks go to him for his 35 years of service and for all he has done for the village hall and the community.

The Chairman, Vice Chairman and Minutes Secretary were each re-elected as trustees. They are all in their late 70s and have each served as trustees for around 12 years. At the meeting they said they feel the time has come for new, younger trustees to join the committee so they will stand down at the end of 2026.

The Village Hall was built in 1986 by donations from West Hill residents and from grant money. West Hill residents had pride in their endeavours and were always keen to support the activities of the Village Hall. Subsequently the hall was registered as a CIO [Charitable Incorporated Organisation with registration number 1160370]. Even then we were always able to attract residents to support the hall by becoming trustees of the charity. Sadly, in recent years, it has become impossible to find volunteers and so we now find ourselves in a very difficult position.

In 2027 we will be left with just 4 trustees; whilst this is sufficient to govern the hall, we need to have someone to assume the responsibilities of the current Chairman and Vice Chairman who each devote many hours per week to maintain the hall in a safe and useable state.

Technically if we drop below 3 trustees we are in the position of having to wind up the Charity which would involve the closure and sale of the hall. Charity law dictates that any charity with similar objectives should be the beneficiary of any remaining assets, in practice any monies are designated for use for community benefit.

In addition to taking over the Chairman and Vice Chairman's responsibilities, we require someone to handle all the safety checks that take place each month as well as taking responsibility to appoint and manage contractors who carry out most of the maintenance issues at the hall. Some minor maintenance work also needs to be carried out by the person in this position.

The village hall is at the heart of our community and we really cannot afford to see it closed. It hosts many local organisations including the Pre-School and Primary School. There are hundreds of children who, in term time, use the hall every day so continuity of the village hall facility is, or should be, of significant vested interest to all parents.

We have decided to try to appoint a professional General Manager, on a part time basis of around 14 hours per week, who would assume a non-voting role on the committee and he/she would undertake the work of the current Chairman and Vice Chairman and take on the responsibility of managing the hall, including our statutory responsibilities.

The cost of employing this Manager would have a serious impact on our budget; we estimate we will need to increase the cost of hiring the hall for all users by up to 20% from January 2027.

The only way to avoid this is if we are able to find volunteers to act as trustees.

Lynda Creegan will continue in her role as our Finance and Administration Officer.

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 9.00 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 Arboretum Group

Wild Flower Walk - On Saturday 25th July, 14 of us, ranging from 6 – 90 years of age, met at the Blackberry Honey Farm for a guided walk around the wildflower meadow. After a coffee, David Hogan, a soil scientist, showed us the structure and type of soil in the field. He also told us about the history of the area. There were signs that the small creatures living in the meadow were under stress from the drought. All who attended thoroughly enjoyed the informative talk and walk; and some of us stayed on for a tasty lunch.

Drought Conditions

You may have noticed you are having to start leaf blowing a little earlier this year! This is the trees' response to the drought conditions our gardens have been suffering. When a heatwave hits and rain stops falling, trees obviously can't just walk to the shade or grab a glass of water. Instead, they use a built-in survival kit to save every drop of moisture.

Shutting their "pores": Leaves are covered in microscopic openings called stomata, which act like tiny windows. During a drought, the tree slams these windows shut so water can't evaporate into the air.

Dumping their leaves: If a dry spell drags on, trees sacrifice their leaves by dropping them early. Fewer leaves mean less surface area for water to leak out, keeping the main trunk alive.

Building up sugars: Dry soil holds onto moisture very tightly. To pull that water out, trees fill their root cells with extra natural sugars and salts. This turns the roots into a "supersponge" that sucks water straight out of the soil.

Plant Sunscreen: Without water, a tree can't make food from sunlight, but too much light can actually burn the tree's internal structure, so it produces protective antioxidant chemicals—acting like internal sunscreen—to keep its cells safe until rain returns.

Change of date for our Autumn Fungi Walk. This will now be held on the 17th October. Meet at 10.30 am in the Prickly Pear car park. This walk will be led by Ed Dolphin, a tree and fungi expert.

The Arboretum Group welcomes any new faces to join the walk.

Celina Herbert - Chairman – 07912 061530

Eileen Perkins - Secretary and Tree Warden - 01404 815905

Ottery St Mary Heritage Society

Looking back to August for a moment, Ottery St Mary Heritage Society had a presence this year at the popular August Bank Holiday Saturday event in support of Hospiscare, held at Cadhay House.

In September, the usual talk from an outside speaker was replaced with a more interactive presentation following the essential brief AGM formalities. Several members shared their special interests and set out ways that others could share them, from interpreting ancient maps to researching the history of older buildings that survived the Great Fire of 1866. Chairman Peter Shrubsall set out a vision for the society, from making the museum a more social and friendly place to visit, to practical ways of getting involved with heritage.

Now in October we're back to the usual pattern of an invited outside speaker. This month we welcome ferry enthusiast Brian Margetson, who has compiled a collection of images and stories about Britain's short crossings

— very short in the case of rowing across the Manchester Ship Canal right up to the more extended passage across the Solent to the Isle of Wight. Apparently there are 124 such ferries around the country. We will learn some strange stories, curious crafts, and poignant personalities revealed in Brian's account which is on Tuesday, October 20th.

Looking ahead to November 20th, we anticipate hearing about a maverick character known by author Ian Fleming and who could have jumped out of the pages of his writings. Fleming called him 'The Amazing Mr Cotton' — the title of Brian Fearnley's talk — and it's the story of an enterprising Australian who joined the Royal Naval Air Service in 1915 and turned out to be an excellent aviator, but for whom naval disciplines were too restrictive. So he returned to Australia, only to rediscover flying, this time in Newfoundland, locating seal packs for hunters. Between the wars, he made regular trips to Germany, attracting MI6's attention as a businessman with legitimate reasons to gather intelligence on the Nazis.

Come to The Institute, Yonder Street, Ottery at 7.00 pm for refreshments before the talk at 7.30 pm. Non-members are always welcome – we ask for a modest contribution, refundable if you decide to join this friendly society and support its museum and heritage activities.

Ian Greig Trustee 07976 365798

Seasonal Reflection

“Then nightly sings the staring owl, Tu-whit; Tu-who, a merry note”

Early August heralded the end of the last wave of heat that had blanketed southern England since May. What followed was an abrupt change to a more familiar Atlantic weather pattern and the appearance of the first signs of the forthcoming fall season.

Alongside the more obvious tactile cues of autumn, such as changes in temperature, humidity and rainfall are a host of more subtle visual and auditory cues in the natural world. High-flying swallows and house martins, their scimitar-shape wings, silhouetted briefly against a cool, blue autumn sky, are a poignant reminder of a turning season. Their purposeful, directed flight signals their intention to depart for southern shores for six months or more. West Hill's many beech trees are well advanced in crisping from lime-green to aged-bronze as their chlorophyll and important nutrients are reabsorbed in preparation for a period of dormancy.

Auditory cues are also important. A powerful voice from the canopy of the woodland village makes itself known at this time of year. Sit outside just before sunset, and I'm reasonably confident that this will apply in most parts of West Hill, and you may hear two sounds. A long, wavering "hoo-hoo-oooo", and if you are lucky, this will be answered by a sharp, piercing "ke-wick" call. These are of course the respective territorial calls of the male and

female tawny owl (*Strix aluco*).

Some people describe the tawny's call as mournful or even spooky. Indeed, English folklore has sometimes portrayed the bird's call as a harbinger of bad things to come. I rather favour Shakespeare's take on this - 'a merry note' (from "Winter" in Love's Labour's Lost Act V, Scene II). However, I'm informed that the Shakespeare line refers to the mocking, repetitive cry of the owl which ironically calls a freezing night 'a merry note'.

To me the call of the tawny is an inspiring and a hopeful sound. While the seasons of natural abundance are behind us, the tawny owl is not wasting energy serenading thin air for no reason. The calls of male and female owls help divide woodland resources between different bird pairs. This serves at least two key purposes: to ensure each bird pair has sufficient feeding and nesting resources to survive the winter; and to establish a breeding territory in which to raise young owlets. In late-winter tawny courtship peaks with more loud hooting and calling and in early spring (as early as February) birds will typically lay eggs. The calling tawny is a rebuke to whatever winter may bring and a down payment on the spring and summer yet to come.

The presence of tawny owls also indicates a healthy woodland ecosystem with good populations of small mammals and other prey species. To the tawny owl West Hill's big gardens and tree-lined lanes are prime habitat.

Where can you find a tawny owl? Stick your head out of a window in West Hill on most dry, still nights this autumn or winter. For a more intrepid experience, take an early evening stroll through one of the accessible woodlands in the village, such as Broad Oak Plantation or the footpath connecting Lower Broad Oak Road and Elsdon Lane. Don't forget to submit your records of calling birds to Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (<https://www.dbrc.org.uk/>).

Richard Gowing

Opera Nights - Founder: Peter Clarke

Opera Nights, at the Royal British Legion, are informal and free of charge. The bar will be open at 7.00 pm and there is a short introduction to the work at 7.20 pm. The Opera commences at 7.30 pm with an interval, when the bar will again be open. If the Operas are given in the original language, there are subtitles in English.

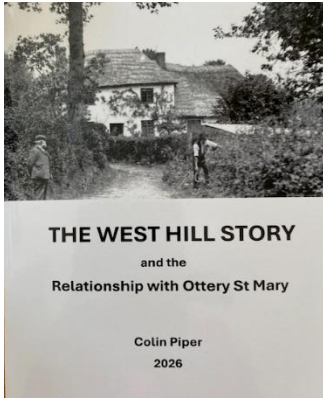
Thursday 24th September: Donizetti's "Lucia Di Lammermoor" - Graham Vick production from the Teatro Carlo Felice, Genoa, 2003

Thursday 29th October: Donizetti's "Don Pasquale" - Andrea de Rosa production from the Ravenna Festival, 2006

Thursday 26th November: Puccini's "La Boheme" - Franco Zeffirelli production from the Teatro alla Scala, 2003

Further information from Joyce Clarke: joyceclarkepiano3@gmail.com

The West Hill Story and the relationship with Ottery St Mary



This booklet is about the history of West Hill. It was inspired by reading Michael Potter's book "**West Hill: Memories of a Woodland Village**" and John Stone's book "**Parochial Memories**".

I wondered if there was an even wider story to tell by questioning why West Hill exists with its acidic soil and big round pebbles; why there are so many trees and whether there is any very early history. Also, how the Kennaways of Escot supercharged the growth of a straggling hamlet and how the Coleridge Family were so generous.

The research has taken me 5 years and I hope that you like what I have found from various historical archives but, above all, from the memories and photographs of local people. The old name for West Hill was Ottery West Hill so there is a great deal about the relationship with Ottery St Mary and its early history.

I don't think that this is better than previous publications; it just fills in some of the gaps in coverage. It is priced at £5.99 and, if I sell enough booklets, I will break even!

The booklet can be bought from the Curious Otter bookshop in Ottery or directly from Colin Piper Email: ColinJJPiper@gmail.com **Colin Piper**

Ottery St. Mary Floral Art Club

It seems hard to believe that the long hot summer is now but a distant memory and shorter days, darker mornings and evenings will soon be here. After enjoying the floral talents of Caitlin Anning-Pile at our September Club night, we now turn our thoughts towards our October and November programme.

As always, it is our AGM in October and this year it takes place on Tuesday 20th October. As has now become an annual tradition, we'll enjoy a very sociable Bring and Share supper after the formalities of the AGM are over, maybe accompanied by a glass of bubbly! For any members reading this, there will still be a competition at the AGM and the title is "Happy Halloween"!

We have a quieter lead up to Christmas than in previous years but are looking forward to our Christmas demonstration which will be held on Tuesday 17th November. We will be welcoming back Julia Harrison from Exmouth, whose demonstration is called "Backwards & Forwards to Christmas". Julia has demonstrated many times for the Club and also been

the tutor for a number of Club workshops over the years, so it will be good to have her back with us, and I have no doubt she will send us all away full of ideas for our own Christmas flowers.

As was the case last year, our Christmas demonstration will take place in the smaller upstairs Beech Room at West Hill Village Hall with a limited number of tickets available only through Club members to ensure that we do not exceed the maximum capacity of the room. This means that we will unfortunately not be able to admit anyone who arrives on the night without a ticket. If you would like to come along then please purchase your ticket from one of the members if you know them or alternatively, please call Sue Marvin on (07906 029076). The demonstration starts at 7.30 pm (doors open at 6.45 pm) and tickets are £12 each to include tea/coffee and a mince pie. There will also be a raffle of all Julia's arrangements at the end of the demonstration.

In summary, here's what's happening at the Club in October and November:

Tuesday 20th October – AGM with bring & share supper (members only)

Tuesday 17th November – Xmas Demonstration “Backwards & Forwards to Christmas” - Julia Harrison

West Hill Village Hall, Beech Park, West Hill, EX11 1UQ.

Doors open 6.45 pm for a 7.30 pm start – Ticket only, please see ticket details above.

Any enquiries: **Karen Taverner**, Club Secretary – 07791 013383



West Hill Women's Group

Cllr. Francis Pullman is the Parish Council lead on the West Hill Emergency Plan and has brought great expertise to this project, as part of his working life

included producing this type of plan. He came to our August meeting to explain the West Hill Plan, give us an update on progress so far and to ask for our help in locating the more vulnerable members/neighbours in our own area of West Hill as these are the people that the Plan is being set up to help most in the event of an emergency. The wild fires that we have been witnessing, not only locally but all over the UK and beyond, in the recent drought, has brought the need for a professional plan into sharp focus. If you weren't at our meeting do go to the Parish Council Website and look under the **Information** heading to learn more about the West Hill Emergency Plan.

Tuesday 6th October

Rob Springthorpe from South Devon Blood Bikes will be coming to tell us about the free, volunteer run, out-of-hours courier service they provide taking all kinds of samples, including blood and donor breast milk, as well as patient notes, from one hospital/hospice to another.

Wednesday 4th November

Beryl Cooke, the Plymouth artist is well-known for her larger than life figures and colourful paintings. Marilyn Bishop will be celebrating the centenary of Beryl's birth and telling us about her life and work.

Guests are most welcome at our meetings for a cost of 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 email **pamela.bartlett1@btinternet.com**

Church is

Where your PARENTS bring you to be christened

Where your FRIENDS bring you to be married

Where your RELATIONS bring you to be buried

Why not try coming on your own sometime?

Lutra Vallis Ladies' Probus

Our first meeting since July, (when we had a delightful lunch at the Harbour Hotel) was on 8th September. Our Speaker was Mike Crewe, his subject was "Jack the Ripper," "The story told as never before." A well-researched Whodunnit! Did we really find the perpetrator???

On October 13th our talk is titled "Spitfire Girl." The speaker is Candy Atkins. Her Mother flew Spitfires, as a courier, during WWII. Which goes to show, there is nothing us women cannot do! If you find these and similar subjects interesting, why not join us and enjoy gaining new knowledge? Also, you would have the chance to make new friends and contribute to that wonderful charity Hospiscare, who provide us with an optional Afternoon Tea.

Future events include a Skittles Match and Pub Lunch with Men's Probus in October. And a first this year, we are inviting them and their partners to our Christmas Coffee & Mince Pies Morning, more later!

On a very sad note, we have sent condolences to Ann Widdecombe's PA Harriet and family, on her tragic and untimely death. Requiescat in pace Ann. She was a good friend to us and will be much missed for her lively wit and interesting talks.

If you would like to know about our friendly fun group, and have diverse new topics to inform and digest, try us!

To find out more, and possibly come to a taster meeting, where you would made most welcome, please phone; Chairman **Trisha Fryer** on 01404 813408; email **trisha.fryer@hotmail.co.uk**. Or Membership Secretary **Moni George** on 07368546944; email **monicageorge895@aol.com**

The Royal British Legion West Hill

Movie Nights

Doors open at 19.00, Film starts at 19.30, Admission free. All welcome!

5 th Oct	The Ballad of Wallis Island, 2025
12 th Oct	The Guernsey Literary and Potato Peel Pie Society, 2018
19 th Oct	Remarkably Bright Creatures, 2026
26 th Oct	Marty Supreme, 2025
2 nd Nov	Priscilla, 2023
9 th Nov	The Outfit, 2022
16 th Nov	Devil Wears Prada 2, 2026
23 rd Nov	The Choral, 2025
30 th Nov	The Odyssey, 2026

Bingo Nights (Doors open 18.30)

Sundays 4th & 18th October and 1st & 15th November

Opera Nights (Curtain Up 19.30)

29th October, Don Pasquale (Donizetti)

26th November, La Boheme (Puccini)

Jazz (with City Steam Jazz Band)

Sundays 11th Oct (19.30) & 8th Nov (15.00)

Crafters' Evenings

Tuesdays 6th October & 3rd November (from 19.00)

Dads' Nights

Fridays 9th October &
13th November (from 20.00)

Ladies' Nights

Fridays 2nd October &
6th November

Codfather – Fish & Chips

Every Thursday from 17.00 – 19.00

Other Events

Ladies Probus, 13th October & 10th November **from 14.00**

West Hill Women's Group, 6th October & 4th November **10.00 - 12.00**

Rotary Quiz Night, 8th October 19.30

West Hill Women's Group, Beetle Drive 20th October 14.00

West Hill RBL Branch AGM 21st October 19.30

Steve Waters Band Night 24th October 19.00

West Hill RBL Club AGM 17th November 20.00

Charities St Michael's Supports

Following the article in the last Messenger, Children's Hospice South West (CHSW) is the fourth of the charities that St Michael's currently supports. It provides hospice care for babies, children and young people with life-limiting conditions, and their whole family. The care offered is wide ranging including hospice stays, emergency care, palliative care and end of life care.

CHSW operates 3 hospices; Little Bridge House in North Devon, Charlton Farm in North Somerset and Little Harbour in mid Cornwall.

The idea behind the hospices has always been to provide a home from home for everyone who stays, and that includes parents, and brothers and sisters too. So the child-friendly bedrooms have minimal medical equipment, and are decorated with favourite books, toys and DVDs for each child who stays. There is lovely accommodation for the rest of the family too.

In the main CHSW provides the chance for families to get away from it all in a safe and fun environment with expert medical, emergency and palliative care.

We offer a range of complementary activities from music therapy, and messy play, to use of the hydrotherapy pool and sensory gardens to enhance well-being and improve quality of life.

We offer care, support and practical help while working in partnership with families, following as closely as possible the care babies, children and young people receive at home so each family feels they are in control. We aim to be flexible in the support we offer, allowing each family to choose how we can help and whether we become fully or partially involved with their child's care.

Care is provided from the point of diagnosis to those who have a life-limiting or life-threatening condition and are not expected to survive into adulthood, as well as providing support to their families. Services provided include:

- Highly specialised clinical care
- Short breaks
- Emergency care
- End of life care
- Sibling support
- Counselling
- Complementary therapies
- Pre and post bereavement support for all family members
- Telephone support

All the services provided are completely free to families who are referred to us.

For further information see: <https://www.chsw.org.uk/>

Remembering and Celebrating the Lives of Loved Ones

Sunday 1st November at 3 pm

Many people, whose relatives' funerals have either taken place at St Michael's or have been conducted at the Crematorium by one of our clergy team, will have received invitations to this service, but anyone who wishes to come along to remember a loved one who has died, however long ago, will be very welcome.

The service will last for about forty-five minutes. In it there will be readings, prayers, and a time for quiet reflection. The names of those we remember will be read out, and candles will be lit as a mark of our gratitude for their special place in our lives. After the service, light refreshments will be served.

The Remembrance Book for writing the names of those you wish to be remembered will be in church from Sunday October 11th. **Ann Turner**

Drought and Rain

In the recent season of drought, I started to muse on the times of drought and the times of rain that we hear of in the Bible.

In Deuteronomy 28 God tells Israel that if they do not follow his commandments, (given as the Maker's instructions for the best way of living), things will go wrong. One of these things is that *"the sky will turn to bronze and the ground will be as hard as iron, and the rain will be just dust."*

In the book of Kings we hear how Elijah, the prophet, gave word from the Lord that there would be no rain for 3¹/₂ years, because the nation had turned away from God. Instead, they were worshipping Baal, the god of weather and rain. At the end of the period Elijah challenged the prophets of Baal to a contest, to find out who is the true God. Guess who won!

In the book of Jeremiah, God speaks through the prophet regarding a series of droughts, saying that they are a direct result of His people turning from God's ways.

Conversely, rain is seen as a sign of God's blessing, both in the Bible and reflected in many hymns that we sing, particularly at harvest time.

In Hosea dryness and rain are spoken of in terms of relationship with God - *"Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. You have plowed wickedness; You have reaped iniquity. You have eaten the fruit of lies, Because you trusted in your own way, In the multitude of your mighty men."*

And what of Jesus? Did he say anything on this topic? John's gospel recounts two occasions:

On a long journey from Judea to Galilee, Jesus walked through Samaria.

Tired from the journey he sat by a well, where he asked a Samaritan woman for a drink. This was a huge surprise to her, because Jews did not associate with Samaritans, let alone a Jewish man with a Samaritan woman. Jesus says two things:

“If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, ‘Give Me a drink’ you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water” and “Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.”

Secondly, on the greatest day of the Harvest Festival of Sukkot: *“Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”*

Finally, in Revelation, the last book of the Bible, the writer has a vision in which he is shown *“a pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God ... and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, each tree yielding its fruit every month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”*

What should we make of all this? Perhaps just the words of Jesus: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

submitted by Ann Pangbourne

Hospiscare News

Soup & Pudding

Save the date: Saturday 24th October 2026 at The Institute, Ottery St Mary from 12 noon till 2.00 pm. No need to book. Just come along and join us.

West Hill Grand Christmas Fair 2026

Saturday 28th November at West Hill Village Hall 10.00 am to 2.00 pm.

Lots of exciting Christmas Goodies, from unique artisan Christmas gifts to bespoke presents, Christmas cakes, jewellery, toys and so much more. Refreshments are available, too.

Hospiscare Open Gardens 2026 – Thank You!

Our 2026 Open Gardens season finishes this month, and what a fantastic season it has been! We are so grateful to everyone who opened their gates, visited, volunteered, and supported Hospiscare through this much-loved event.

West Hill - Ottery St Mary – Do You Love to Grow?

Could Your Garden Be Part of Hospiscare Open Gardens 2027?

Do you have a beautiful cottage or town garden? Are you part of a community garden or allotment? Do you manage hotel grounds, a residential home garden, or a shared green space within an apartment or housing development?

Every pound raised helps us continue providing specialist care and support to local people living with terminal illnesses and their families when they need us most.

Never opened your garden before? No problem! We'll support you every step of the way with promotional materials, inclusion in our printed Open Gardens Guide, and advice to help make your event a success.

Big or small, formal or informal, every garden has something special to share.

If you think your garden – or one you're involved with – could be part of our 2027 programme, we'd love to hear from you.

Our registration window is now open until mid-January 2027. This allows us to make sure every garden is included within our Open Garden Booklet.

Contact fundraising@hospiscare.co.uk or 01392 688020

Hospiscare Monthly Bingos

Every 2nd Sunday of the month at Ottery St Mary Football Club. Thank you to all who continue to attend our bingos. Ottervale Friends are incredibly grateful for your continued support. Doors open 6.30 pm; Eyes down 7.45 pm.

Recycle your unwanted gifts

With lots of events coming up over the coming months, do you have any new or unwanted gifts Hospiscare could recycle and use at these upcoming fundraising events? Please contact Sharon on the number below.

If you are interested in the work of Hospiscare, or can help with any of the above requests please contact your Area Fundraiser **Sharon Collins** Tel: 01392 424960 Mob: 07803 428363 Email: s.collins@hospiscare.co.uk

West Hill Garden Club

As we leave behind the excessive heat of the summer and with an ongoing hosepipe ban in place, gardeners are watching closely to see which of their trees, shrubs and plants have survived the exceptional conditions. Our long awaited speaker from the Met. Office had to cancel his visit to us in September for family reasons and will be rebooked. So if you were planning to attend that evening just follow the Messenger to see when he will be speaking.

Our October meeting is also our **AGM**. This will be held in the Village Hall (upstairs) on **Thursday 8th October at 7.30 pm**. Officers will report on the year's activities and we shall be able to hear plans for the year ahead. This will be followed by a **Bring & Share Finger Food Supper** with drinks supplied by the Club.

On **Thursday 12th November** we are holding another **Open Evening** when we hope to be joined by lots of visitors, including members of other garden

clubs, students studying Horticulture at Bicton College and all those who enjoy a special speaker. We have booked **Christine Skelsmersdale**, a **National Speaker and Author** whose subject is **Winter into Spring**. The meeting will be held in the Main Hall at the Village Hall to start at 7.30 pm. Tickets are on sale now at £8.00 each to include a free raffle ticket available on the door. West Hill Garden Club members are FOC. Tickets can be booked from Pauline Wade (01404 813191). Following questions, the raffle will conclude the evening.

If you have a Garden Club enquiry please contact our Chairman - **Sheila Gillam** (01404 814074) or Secretary **Pauline Wade** (01404 813191). Either will be pleased to help you. **Monica Highnam**

Otter Vale Probus Club

Following the summer break meetings recommenced on August 26th at the Jack in the Green with a talk titled Modern Day India. This was followed in September by subjects on Ottery Church and Apollo 13.

Before the break club members enjoyed an eye-opening talk on Industrial Relations at Ford in the 1970's, an insight on life in Nepal focusing on charitable work in the Education of Women and a very informative talk on the development and work of the Devon Freewheelers. On July 7th a group spent an educational morning visiting a dairy and poultry farm where cows are milked with 'robot' milkers and where all the electricity is generated from methane produced by a digester using animal and plant material; nothing goes to waste. The future programme has talks on Ascension and St Helena, Jane Austen and Captain Cook as well as skittles and visit events.

If you would like to learn more about Probus you will be most welcome as a guest at a meeting at the Jack in the Green to sample membership. Get in touch with anybody you know to be a member or the secretary at **gordonoxenham@gmail.com**. Membership is open for retired or semi-retired business and professional men. We look forward to hearing from you.

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 summer break our talks resume when the topics will be:

Monday 12th October:

Fast Food - slow death

Monday 9th November:

It's a Hornet thing

Our venue is the Narthex annex to St Michael's Church in West Hill starting at 18.45. We charge £25 (cash) which includes drinks and the meal. Visitors or prospective members are welcome. If you are interested in coming for a taster evening or finding out more about us, please contact **John Rowland** at **j.v.rowland@btinternet.com** or 01404 813027.

Preparing for Christmas

The dates of this Monday morning Advent Bible Study Course, which was outlined in the August Messenger are:

**November 16th; 23rd; 30th and
December 7th; 14th and 21st.**

We begin in the Narthex at 9.30 am. It would be helpful if you could indicate that you plan to come by adding your name to the list on the MABS notice board, also in the Narthex, or by contacting me on 813476. The course is free, and everyone is welcome.

Ann Turner

West Hill Parish Council

It may be a little early to be thinking about Christmas but I want you to put a date in your diaries – Saturday 5th December. This is the date for a new village event -Illuminations and Celebrations - when we will light up the village Christmas tree and have a seasonal celebration. This event has been organised by a village group with the intention to make it an opportunity for all the village to get together. We have too few such events so let us all make this the start of a great annual celebration.

There are two important consultations taking place over the coming weeks. The first is intended to gather information for the Neighbourhood Plan which is being prepared by a working group of our Parish Council. I appreciate that a lot of people will glaze over or try to stifle a yawn when they read about “Council” and “Neighbourhood Plan” as it all sounds rather boring but with the changes that are taking place with the planning process and the creation of Unitary Authorities it really is important to make sure that we can put in place as many safeguards as we can to control the development in our village. We want to be able to demonstrate that the Neighbourhood Plan really reflects the wishes and aspirations of the village so please do take part and tell us what you think. If we miss this opportunity to make clear what is important to us in our beautiful village then we cannot complain if we lose more of it to developers.

The second important consultation is about the playpark. We are planning a significant investment in replacing old equipment and introducing some new playthings for age groups who are not well served by the current equipment. The best people to determine what we want in the playpark are the main users i.e. the children and their parents and carers. A group of Parish Councillors – most of whom are pensioners – may not be the best judges of what our youngest residents really want! Please look out for this consultation and again please take part and help us to do a good job for our young people. There is an old saying that it takes a whole village to raise a child so please let us all accept the joint responsibility of the village to give our children the very best playpark that we can.

I have written quite a lot here about consultation and it is so very important that the Parish Council is fully aware of what is important to the residents. We have introduced a regular monthly drop-in “surgery” so anyone who wants to have a private and informal discussion with the Parish Council can do so. This may help people who want to discuss a certain matter but who do not want to speak publicly at a Parish Council meeting. It may also help the Parish Council to discover what is really important to the residents so it is potentially a positive two way information flow. For a six-month trial period, two councillors will be available between 10.00 am and 12.00 on the third Tuesday of every month in the RBL Clubhouse so please do make the most of it.

As we move into the Autumn I will now dust off my gardening boots and take instruction from my head gardener to sweep up the autumn leaves that are one of the many features of our woodland village.

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



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!

If you've moved into the village within the last couple of months and haven't yet received a Welcome Pack, please email Rosemary at the address below.

As a new resident, Dave (Chair) & Andy (Treasurer) of the RBL Club (aka the “Legion”) would like to welcome you to West Hill with a free drink for each member of the household. Please contact them via email at rblclubwesthill@icloud.com to take advantage of this offer. One or both of them will take the opportunity to meet you and show you the facilities at the club.

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

Ottery Help Scheme Memory Café

At Ottery Help Scheme, we are committed to supporting people affected by memory loss and dementia, as well as the family members and carers who support them every day. One of the ways we do this is through our monthly Memory Café, held on the fourth Thursday of each month at Ottery St Mary

Cricket Club.

The Memory Café provides a safe, welcoming and friendly space where people experiencing memory difficulties can meet others, enjoy social interaction and take part in a range of activities. We also recognise the vital role that carers play, and the café offers them an opportunity to meet others in similar situations, share experiences and access support.

You do not need to have a formal diagnosis to attend. We warmly welcome anyone with memory concerns, together with their family members, friends or carers.

Our sessions are run by a team of dedicated volunteers who help create a relaxed and supportive atmosphere. Visitors can enjoy a cup of tea, a piece of homemade cake and, most importantly, good company.

While each session follows a familiar format, we aim to offer something a little different every month. Activities are often designed to stimulate memory, encourage conversation and provide gentle mental exercise.

We are always delighted to welcome new faces and would encourage anyone who may benefit from attending to come along and see what we offer.

The Memory Café meets on the fourth Thursday of every month at Ottery St Mary Cricket Club between 2.00 – 4.00 pm. For more information call the office on 01404 813041.

Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child, run by Samaritan's Purse, is a hands-on way to bless children in need around the world. By filling a shoebox with toys, personal care items, school supplies, and small gifts, you can help share joy with a child who may otherwise go without.

This year, St Michael's will be an official collection point. Filled shoeboxes can be dropped directly at St Michael's Church any time before **Sunday 8th November 2026**.

Please use a wrapped shoebox with a lid. Lids may be attached, but must be able to be opened easily by the Samaritan's Purse team. Ideas for what to include—and important guidance on items that *cannot* be packed—can be found on the **Operation Christmas Child website** (<https://www.samaritans-purse.org.uk/what-we-do/operation-christmas-child/how-to-pack-a-shoebox>).

Further details will be shared soon on *What's On in West Hill* on Facebook for easy access to links and reminders. If you have any questions, please contact **Joanna** on **07879 220011** or **Nicola** on **07850 100904**

West Hill Art Group

The last two months have been challenging for painting as the water paints have dried so quickly, but the group members are always ready to accept and rose to the challenge. This month we feature Terry Butler and Graham Evans who are both founder members of over 12 years. Terry paints in a very precise style and produces beautiful accurate fine paintings, usually of buildings or street scenes. Graham is always happy to tackle any subject and produce lovely work and pushes himself to paint any new subject especially animals.



Wisteria covered building by Terry Butler



View across Tower Bridge by Terry Butler



Relaxing Lion by Graham Evans



Marie Celeste by Graham Evans

Rosemary Seymour 07972 047035

Simply Worship

Simply Worship is an hour of guitar-led, contemporary worship, based around bible passages; often psalms. There are times of silence as well as songs and scripture. You are welcome to either join in or just sit and enjoy God's presence in St. Michael's church.

18.00 – 19.00 Sunday December 6th

Speak to Cag or Jane for further information or email janefoll@aol.com or call Jane 07970431820

Councillor's Column



Local Government Reorganisation

There has been a significant development on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), with the Government announcing that the process in Devon is being paused.

This follows many months of work by councils across Devon preparing for wholesale reorganisation. It seems extraordinary that the government announced its decision in July 2026, only then in September 2026

to pause the decision on the basis it is now taking legal advice on the decision it had previously taken.

Devon County Council has incurred considerable costs as a result and is calling on the Government to reimburse the Council for money spent on a process which the Government itself initiated and has now paused.

I think it is absolutely right that we seek to recover these costs. At a time when council finances are under enormous pressure, Devon taxpayers should not be left to pick up the bill for work undertaken in response to a Government-directed process which has subsequently been put on hold.

For West Hill, I have also been particularly concerned about proposals which could separate the village from Ottery St Mary. Our communities are closely connected: West Hill residents use Ottery's GP services and other facilities, children move through established school networks, and health and social care services do not stop at arbitrary new council boundaries. If LGR is restarted, I will continue to argue strongly that these longstanding links must be properly recognised.

North Devon maternity services

As Chair of Devon County Council's Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, I have been heavily involved in scrutinising the suspension of births at North Devon District Hospital.

I called a special meeting in August, at which the Committee heard evidence about longstanding workforce fragility and the circumstances which led to the suspension. We called for a clear, time-bound plan for the safe restoration of services.

We will continue scrutinising this closely. Although North Devon may seem some distance from West Hill, ensuring safe and sustainable NHS services across Devon is an important part of the Committee's work. It is also clear to me that suspension of services in one area then also increases the pressure on services and staff elsewhere in Devon.

Supporting Devon's unpaid carers

Carers are another major focus for Health and Adult Care Scrutiny.

Thousands of people across Devon provide unpaid care for relatives and friends, often quietly and with enormous dedication.

The Council needs to ensure carers are identified early, can access assessments and practical support and, crucially, are able to take breaks from caring. Scrutiny has an important role in testing whether the Council's plans are actually translating into better outcomes for carers and carers' voices remain at the heart of decision making. That is why at the September Scrutiny Committee meeting we are examining the Council's new approach to supporting carers, including bringing some services in house and establishing a new grant-based model with the voluntary sector.

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

Ottery St Mary Bowling Club

As I write this the evenings are beginning to draw in, the weather is changing and the season at The Bowling Club is nearly finished. It has been a season full of laughter and banter, good natured competition, and companionship, as well as physical exercise. Many matches have been won and some have been lost, but the most impressive victory of the season was winning the East Of Exe Triples league on the last night of the competition.

One other match that is now greatly looked forward to is 'The Redferns Trophy', sponsored and supported by the local estate agents, and to which seven local teams are invited to compete in a round robin tournament. It is a great pleasure that the handsome trophy will retain its place in the trophy cabinet. The club would like to thank Redferns for their continued and valued support of this competition and for their sponsorship throughout the year.

The club now has a reputation of being a very welcoming club with a superb green and a delightful well-appointed clubhouse, so much so that it has become a venue for inter County matches, as well as a venue for the finals of area and county competitions.

One of the most pleasing pieces of news this year has been the promotion of Gail Hawke to be Bowls Devon Ladies President in 2027. Gail joined Ottery over 15 years ago, and has probably done every job within the club, including the arduous jobs of club captain and secretary. I don't think she has been seen cutting the grass, but that may come! She is a level 2 coach

and has the amazing gift of being able to encourage both old and new bowlers. She started the Saturday morning coaching sessions for young people aged between 10 and 15, and this has been a great success. When her duties permit, she can often be seen either in the club kitchen preparing a meal, or in the clubhouse organising a social event. Gail is greatly liked and highly respected within the club and also within the wider area of Bowls Devon. When



playing bowls she is extremely competitive, as well as being difficult to beat. The club is delighted that she has been recognised in this role, it brings great honour to her for her dedication and great esteem to the club.

It has been most pleasing to see that many of the players who came down to Strawberry Lane in April have now integrated into the club, and are now proudly wearing the blue and gold of Ottery and enjoying participating in friendly matches.

The season will finish in mid-September and the green will be given over to the greenkeeper to start his winter work in readiness for next year's series of matches. Next season will start in April 27, and further details will be displayed on the club website.

Looking back and in the words of Club President, Sharon Kenny:- "It has been a wonderful and successful season, and hopefully the next will be even better than this one, to the extent that we may have to install a new trophy cabinet".

Clive Russell Press Officer

Ottery St Mary Choral Society

Classics Galore!

Every two years since 2007 (with a brief hiccup during COVID lockdown) the Ottery Choral Society has been involved in a series of spectacular fund-raising concerts. The aim is to raise as much money as we possibly can for our local cancer charity, FORCE, who are based at the Royal Devon and Exeter hospital and at our own Ottery St. Mary Hospital cancer hub. Our last concert in 2024 raised £20,000.

The next concert in this series will be on Saturday November 14th, 2026. We will be taking over the fabulous space of the Exeter Great Hall for our biennial Classics Galore! concert. It will be a great spectacle, with over 200 musicians on the stage – the Lympstone Town Band, the Classics Galore orchestra, and a choir of nearly 100 voices. The programme will be a combination of foot-stomping favourites, some best-loved movie soundtracks, and uplifting choral music. The combined choir of Ottery St. Mary Choral Society and the St. David's Players will be singing some favourites from Handel and Faure, some opera excerpts, the stirring Finlandia, and a wonderful medley from The Sound of Music.

We are lucky to have the renowned and regular Classics Galore! soloist Cheryl Enever singing with us again this year, bringing her glorious operatic voice, and no doubt a spectacular spangly Union Flag gown, to our very own Last Night of the Proms experience. If tickets for the Albert Hall eluded you this year, here is your chance to sing along heartily to that famous finale.

The evening will be hosted by Victoria Graham of BBC Spotlight.

Tickets are on sale now, and are going quickly. We really need you, our local audience. The whole point of the evening, and the reason so many of us will be performing our socks off for you, is to raise as much money as we can for FORCE. It is an unfortunate fact that nearly half of



us might receive a cancer diagnosis at some point in our lives. At times like these, patients and their families need all the support they can get. FORCE provide free counselling, group sessions, complementary therapies, benefits advice, and specialist physiotherapy and exercise guidance, to cancer patients and their families. They are not part of the NHS and receive no regular government or NHS funding, but are funded entirely by donations and fund-raising.

Let's make this the most successful night so far and fill this huge space with sound and music and song. Tickets available from www.ticketsource.com/classics-galore-exeter

West Hill Neighbourhood Plan

Update on Neighbourhood Plan progress

Over recent months, the Parish Council's working group has been focusing on the things residents consistently tell us matter: protecting the green spaces and landscapes that give our woodland parish its unique character. Green spaces aren't just "nice to have" — they shape the look and feel of our settlements. They soften development, support wildlife, provide breathing space, and help maintain the rural character that residents value. Alongside local green spaces, we are also assessing valued views — the important sightlines, vistas and landscape settings that help define the character of our parish.



View from Higher Broad Oak Road

We need your help

We are asking West Hill residents to complete a survey — this will be on the EDDC Commonplace public consultation platform — links will be available in the parish council newsletter, and on posters around the village. We will also have hard copies for those unable to access the internet.

The evidence we gather will inform our new Neighbourhood Plan, helping to shape future planning decisions in West Hill and maintaining the look and

feel of our parish for generations to come.

The Morrisons site

In last year's community survey, residents told us they would support some redevelopment or additional facilities at the Morrisons site. Keeping a viable shop and the post office is essential. The most popular suggestion was a café or coffee shop that could provide a friendly place for people to meet.

There was also clear agreement that keeping enough parking spaces is essential. Many people felt that a small amount of housing, such as apartments, could help make any improvements to the site financially viable.

As part of the formal consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan, we will be required to notify and consult landowners who have an interest in our village. We have already made contact with an agent acting for the owners of the Morrisons site and hope to continue a helpful dialogue. We are committed to keeping the process as open and transparent as possible, and the agendas and minutes of any meetings will be published on the parish website.



Tea & Toast & Toys on Fridays



At our final session in July, Revd Mac Dick presented each of our 'off to big school leavers' with a Children's Bible. They immediately opened them up and started reading the stories! We're looking forward to meeting newcomers to Tea & Toast this year.

We meet every Friday from 8.45 – 10.00 am, upstairs in the Village Hall during term time.

Babies, Toddlers, Pre-Schoolers, Parents, 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 toast with jam/marmalade.

All welcome!

If you want to know more, please ring:
Pam (814096) or **Rosemary** (234578).

Welcome Café

Everyone is welcome to come to the Welcome Café held monthly in the Narthex room at the Church on the last Friday of each month. If you come you will enjoy a cup of fresh coffee and a piece of homemade cake, all for the sum of £3.50; what a bargain! We are open from 10.30 until about 12 noon, or when everyone has departed. Come and meet new friends.

The next Cafés will be on: **October 30th** and
November 27th

At the November Café we will be holding our regular Christmas / Craft fair where there will be several stalls. The Church will be running a cake stall and a 'New to you' stall, where we will be selling any unwanted presents that have been donated. If anyone would like to take a stall at the Craft Fair at the November Café please get in touch with Ann Robertson using the form at <https://whmessenger.info/contact/>

Looking forward to seeing you there.

Christine Smith



!!Lite Nite!!



Saturday 31st October
5pm

St Michael's Church
Short celebration & BBQ
followed by fireworks
in the Vicarage garden
For catering purposes,
please email
whlitenite@hotmail.com
All welcome!!

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



Remembrance Services 2026

On Remembrance Sunday, 8th November, assemble at the War Memorial at **10.15 am.** for a short Act of Remembrance. The Remembrance Sunday service follows, in St Michael's, at **10.50 am.**

On Armistice Day, Wednesday 11th November, assemble at the War Memorial at **10.45 am**, when a short service will be conducted, followed by the National Silence at **11.00 am.** All will be welcome. Maroons will be fired at **11.00 am** and **11.02 am.**

Services in Church

Oct 4	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Harvest Café Church
Oct 11	10.00	Harvest Holy Communion and Bring & Share Brunch
Oct 16	15.45	Messy Church
Oct 18	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Oct 25	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Oct 31	17.00	Lite Nite & BBQ
Nov 1	8.00	Holy Communion (said)
	9.30	Café Church
	15.00	Remembering and Celebrating the lives of loved ones
Nov 8	9.30	Holy Communion (said)
	10.50	Service of Remembrance
Nov 15	10.00	Morning Worship (All ages welcome)
Nov 20	15.45	Messy Church
Nov 22	10.00	Holy Communion (sung)
Nov 29	10.00	Advent Sunday. Morning Worship (All ages welcome)

Zoom Services

On the first and third Sunday of each month at 9.30am for the whole Mission Community. The Zoom link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89943585754?pwd=NnhEcW9HZjhwWHN4ZmlBdHplOStoQT09>

If you don't have Zoom, you can join via telephone on 0203 481 5240.