

**Showing
Public Rights of Way
and County Roads**

LOCATION PLAN
(Adjoining Parishes)



Date	Details
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Legend

Public Rights of Way

- Footpath
- Bridleway
- Restricted Byway
- Byway

Cycleways

- Off Road
- On Road

Roads

- Motorway
- A Road
- B Road
- Other Road

Telephone: 0845 155 1004
Website:
www.devon.gov.uk/prow

Devon
County Council

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Morchard Bishop is a pleasant, rambling village with a population of just over a thousand. The parish is large with a few hamlets and many farms, mainly dairy. Its history can be traced back to Celtic times when there was a settlement in or near the 'Great Wood', the meaning of 'Morchet' [or 'Mawr Coed' in Welsh]. Archaeological excavations have revealed an Iron Age settlement in the south west of the parish while the name Harestret [War Path] in the east testifies to its Saxon past. At the Conquest Morchard became crown property, but in 1166 it was purchased by the Bishop of Exeter, and from then became known as Bishop's Morchard [or Morchard Episcopi].

From whichever direction one enters the village the church tower is a prominent landmark. The church was built in the middle of the 15th century when the Bishop was offering indulgences to all who helped with the work. Indulgences were a form of church fund-raising in money and kind in exchange for redemption of sins and a reduced time in Purgatory. A few years earlier the Bishop had been writing stern letters threatening excommunication for those poaching deer and other game from his park!

There are several medieval farmhouses in the parish and many pretty thatched cottages in the village. To most visitors, however, one of the greatest attractions is the continuous row of thirteen cob and thatched cottages in Fore Street. These were mainly built in the late 18th century when cob and thatch were a poor man's building materials and are reputedly the longest row of thatched cottages in the county. Until 1830 Fore Street was part of the main coaching road from Barnstaple to Exeter and ultimately to London, hence the name of the 'London Inn' in the middle of the village. With the opening of the new road and railway in the valley, and the decline of the woollen industry, the village suffered a severe drop in both industries and population. The latter halved in the last 50 years of the 19th century.

Today many of the inhabitants have to travel outside the parish for their employment. Nonetheless the village is self-sufficient in both services and entertainment. The playing fields are large and contain a bowling club, tennis courts and children's play area as well as a football pitch. There are many clubs and organisations in the village which cater for all ages and interests.

Morcharad Bishop is situated in the centre of Devon at the mid-point of the Two Moors Way which makes it an ideal base for exploring the whole of this beautiful county.