



THE MORCHARD MESSENGER

THE INDEPENDENT VILLAGE NEWSLETTER

www.morchardbishop-pc.gov.uk/news/latest-morchard-messenger

No.367 JANUARY 2026

SPONSORED THIS MONTH BY MORCHARD BISHOP PARISH COUNCIL

A Message from Morchard Bishop Parish Council

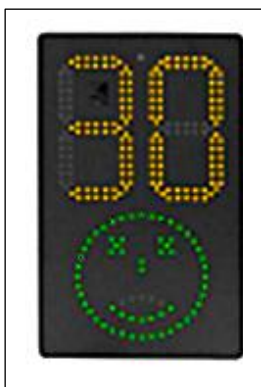
Dear Parishioners,

We trust you had a relaxing and peaceful Christmas, and that 2026 has started well for you.

2025 was another busy year for your Parish Council. We meet at the new time of 7pm on the first Monday of each month upstairs in the Memorial Hall. All are warmly welcome, for as little or as much of the 90-minute meeting as you like, as we consider issues affecting our village and its people. Please do continue to support the work we do on behalf of our Parish. A new Councillor was appointed halfway through the year after many strong applications and a rigorous interview process. We review planning applications, praise and complaints, issues around roads, footpaths and infrastructure. The Pothole team and supporters try to improve the worst potholes, and the snow warden team and volunteers clear paths and grit the roads that are not gritted by DCC. The Christmas lights, Remembrance Sunday wreath, Apple Day pressing and other events are all overseen or supported by the Parish Council. Welcome Packs for new residents are delivered and may be found on the website. We consider ideas for improvement, resident concerns, communication from outside bodies, legislative changes, updates from our County and District Councillors and much more.

One big event for 2026 that promises to be as spectacular as the 2024 Laser Extravaganza and Bonfire night, is **MorFest** on Saturday 23rd May during the second Bank Holiday weekend. The day will have a wide range of local music artists and bands performing, food stalls and lots of entertainment for all ages. Do please support this event, we are delighted to receive offers of contribution, sponsorship or help. Lots more volunteers are needed so please do speak with Sarah Gillbard if you can help. We aim to sell 1000 tickets and profits will be split between village organisations that contribute. The Parish Council were very proud to contribute to and attend the recent opening of the school track, along with Pam Tilney the generous benefactor and FOMBS' good work.

The new website <https://morchardbishop-pc.gov.uk/> went live in the autumn with our refreshed logo, and feedback has been very positive, thank you. This is for the community benefit, so if there are suggestions for improvements or additions, please do let us have them. The Calendar shows the many events that go on in our wonderful community. Do make sure that you add your organisation's events – for publicity and to avoid clashes. Similarly, do send in your photographs for the scrolling home page, life in Morchard Bishop.



You asked, we listened! After various houses suffered flooding, we called a meeting with Highways who have been and checked all drains, and where possible cleared some. Some residents have raised concern about speeding through the village, the Parish Council have investigated and supported the new VASS or Vehicle Activated Speed Sign, with the speed flashing green for within the limit, or a red for speeding offenders. This has been proven nationally to help increase awareness of speed limits, and we will download the results and share them on the website and at Parish Council meetings. Statistics will be shared with the Police and Devon Highways where necessary. Please do keep suggestions as to how we can improve village life coming forward.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Councillors, whose commitment is entirely voluntary. Many have been in post for numerous years, and we are all grateful to them for their dedication and commitment.

Wishing you a healthy, fulfilling and rewarding 2026,

Simon Baker - Chairman
Morchard Bishop Parish Council

The Christmas Bazaar and Craft Fair

What an amazing afternoon, all of the village together to celebrate Christmas. We were Wowed by the children's voices and the dancers from the Doves School of Dancing, clearly there have been many hours of practice and effort, thank you to all.

The variety of activities and crafts on offer entertained the whole village from the tiniest tot to the residents of Ridge House. The refreshments and cakes were in plenty supply with the Mulled Wine being a particular favourite.

As well as bringing the village together the aim was to raise money for the two churches and the Memorial Hall; due to the generosity of the village we were able to make a significant donation to each of the churches.

Aren't we lucky to live in such a wonderful community.
See you next year!

Katie Moore



JANUARY 2026 DIARY

If you would like details of your event or meeting to appear in the February 2026 diary, please let Sue Eaglen know by January 12, 2026 at sue_eaglen@fastmail.co.uk or text Sue on 07854 745791. You may also like to use the section below to publicise a future event.

St. Mary's All welcome at our services.

Sunday Jan 4, 10.30 Morning Worship

Sunday Jan 11, 10.30 Holy Communion and Baptism

Sunday 18, 10.30 Family Service

18.00 Joint Bible Study at Emmanuel

Sunday 25, 10.30 Morning Worship

Emmanuel All welcome at our services. Morning services start at 11.00, coffee from 10.30. Visit www.emmanuel-morchard-bishop.org for detailed information about services, Sunday School for primary age children, youth clubs and other events. Third Sunday of the month: Joint Bible Study Group with St. Mary's.

Prime & Edge youth clubs will have a joint meal in January, from February Prime will be on the 2nd Friday at 19.00, Edge on the 3rd Friday at 19.30.

BOOK SWAP: Wednesday, Jan 7, 15.00 – 16.30 in the Memorial Hall

PARISH WALK: Usually final Saturday of the month, 11.00 start at the Memorial Hall.

To be announced: Brownie meetings dates.

Future Events 2026

Possible Ladies Darts Wednesdays in Feb, dates not yet confirmed.

Togs & Toys, Emmanuel, Feb 7

Quiz at Sports Club, Feb 27.

Memorial Hall Quiz March 6.

SEED SHARE, Sustainable Morchard, March 7

Sat	3	Saturday times	Sports Club reopens	MBSSC
Mon	5 & 12, 19, 26	9.00 – 10.00	Pilates mixed ability	Memorial Hall
	5	19.00	Parish Council Meeting	Memorial Hall
Tues	6 & 13, 20, 27	17.15 -18.00	Dance, Intermed. Modern	Memorial Hall
		19.30	Bridge	MBSSC
Wed	7 & 14, 21, 28	10.30 – 11.15	Chair Pilates	Memorial Hall
	7	14.00 – 15.00	Intro Pickleball. Free tea & cake after at the Book Swap	Memorial Hall
	7	19.30 – 21.00	Pickleball	Memorial Hall

Sponsored This Month by Morchard Bishop Parish Council

Thurs	8	10 – 16.00	Can't sew won't sew – shared lunch	Emmanuel
	8 & 15, 22, 29	16.00 – 16.30 18.35 – 19.30	Junior ballet Pilates mixed ability	Memorial Hall Memorial Hall
		19.30	Men's Darts	MBSSC
Fri	9	10.00 – 11.00	Pickleball	Memorial Hall
Sat	10	9.30 – 11.30	Coffee Morning Table Top	Memorial Hall
		18.30 – 19.30	Pilgrims' Meeting	MBSSC
	10 & 17, 24, 31	From 19.00	MBSSC Open Open afternoons when football is at home.	MBSSC
Wed	14	19.30 – 21.00	Pickleball	Memorial Hall
Thurs	15	19.30	Ladies' Darts	MBSSC
Fri	16	10.00 – 11.00	Pickleball	Memorial Hall
Sat	17	9.30 – 11.30	Coffee Morning Emmanuel	Memorial Hall
Fri	19	20.00	Skittles	MBSSC
Wed	21	19.30	Ladies' Darts	MBSSC
Thurs	22	20.00 – 21.30	Pickleball	Memorial Hall
Fri	23	10.00 – 11.00	Pickleball	Memorial Hall
Sat	24	9.30 – 11.30	Coffee Morning Bowling Club	Memorial Hall
Sat	31	9.30 – 11.30	Coffee Morning Hall Committee	Memorial Hall

NOTICEBOARD

Copy for Publication in

THE MORCHARD MESSENGER

The deadline for articles, adverts and notices for the next issue is:

15th January 2026

The Editors retain the right to reject, edit, alter or correct articles which are sent in for publication.

The opinions expressed in articles and letters are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Editors. We do not publish anonymous letters.

Copy should be sent **by email** to morchardmessenger@gmail.com

Hard copy may also be delivered to Colin Crewdson at the address below.

Postal Service.

This newsletter can be posted to you monthly at a cost of £12 per annum.

Please contact :

Colin Crewdson
Wayside Cottage
Frost

Morchard Bishop EX17 6SF
Phone: 07926 625120

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Adverts up to 1/8 page are £5 a month

Adverts up to 1/4 page are £7 a month

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(Larger sizes negotiable)

Please email your copy or draft to the editor (address above)

Morchard Bishop Sports & Social Club

Bar open to all members
Annual membership £2 per adult, due
1st August 26

JANUARY 2026 OPENING TIMES

Mondays – 19th skittles 8pm onwards.

Tuesdays – all dates Bridge.
7.30pm

Wednesdays – Possible Ladies darts practice all dates not confirmed. Match on 21st from 7.30pm

Thursdays – All dates men's Darts 7.30pm. Ladies skittles 15th.

Fridays – Closed.

Saturdays – All dates open from 7.30pm Open in afternoons when football is home, 10th Pilgrims
Monthly meeting 6.30 to 7.30pm.

We reopen after the Xmas shutdown from January 3rd.

We would like to wish The members, Sports teams & all who use the club. A HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM US ALL at the MB Sports & Social Club.

A Big Thank You from the MBSSC

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL AGAIN
IN 2026

This is a rough guide which may be subject to change please contact morchardsportsandsocialclub@gmail.com for more information if needed.

Church Street Stores

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Sunday & Monday: 8.30am-12noon

Tuesday- Friday: 8.30am-5pm

Saturday: 8.30a- 2pm

01363 877826

www.facebook.com/churchstreetstores

Matthew & Clare

Bus Service 369 (Dartline again from 4.1.26)

Outward

Morchard Bishop (Greenaway):
07.12, 09.40, 11.50, 13.55, 16.07
Saturday variation 07.25

Crediton High St: 07.46, (0754), 10.14,
12.21, 14.24, 16.39

Crediton Train station /Redlands:
07.51, (0800), 10.19, 12.26, 14.28,
16.43

Exeter City Centre (Sidwell St):
08.17, (08.23), 10.39, 12.45, 14.48,
17.05

RD&E Hospital 08.26, (08.28), 17.14
Saturdays 0828 1714

Return

Exeter RD&E: 17.15/ 17.15

City Centre (Sidwell St Stop 40):
08.40, 10.50, 12.55, 15.00, 17.30

Crediton Train station/Redlands:
09.02, 11.11, 13.17, 15.23, 17.57,
(17.55)

Morchard Bishop (Greenaway):
09.38, 11.48, 13.53, 16.05, 18.34
Saturdays 1828

Witheridge: 18.59 (not Saturdays)

Morchard Bishop Memorial Hall

Available for birthday and celebration parties, family meetings/get togethers/wakes/wedding receptions.

Bookings - Contact Debbie Ticehurst
dticehurst@icloud.com
07875359563

General - Contact Anton Heal
antonheal@yahoo.co.uk
07970 227753

Produce / Table Top booking –
contact **Robert Moore**
07455 896589
robert@lydcottnursery.co.uk

LETTERS – MESSAGES – ANNOUNCEMENTS

A Big Thank You!

Ukraine and Moldova

We really appreciate your ongoing kindness in supporting this fantastic charity cr2ee (Christian response to Eastern Europe). Already this year, 8 big articulated lorries have travelled to Moldova / Ukraine packed to the roof with much needed equipment and clothes. These items are distributed to contacts previously sourced by Hugh Scudder (the founder of the charity). Hugh frequently visits these areas and also offers financial help to the disabled, elderly and others when there is no other means of support.

On a personal note, a big thank you to everyone who supported the coffee morning and the collection of clothes, toiletries etc. for Ukraine and Moldova. Again the response was absolutely amazing. Thank you also to Matt and Clare who supported the collection with a box outside the shop.

We raised the grand sum of £700 at the coffee morning. There are so many people to thank especially: helpers on the day; those who donated and made items for the stalls, those who gave monetary donations and all who came along and spent their money! It really was a brilliant village effort. Thank you all once again, and can we reassure you that the money will go directly to help the people of Ukraine and Moldova, and not a penny goes to administration.

Don't forget to look out for our next fundraising effort!

Carol Hutchings & Colin & Helena Sykes

The Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal 2025

Thank you for supporting the Poppy Appeal, Morchard Bishop raised £226.74. The District raised a total of £1978.57.

Kind Regards

Katie Pope

QUIZ NIGHT!

Quiz to be held at the Sports Club on Friday 27th
February.

Put the date in your Diary!

Details in Feb Messenger.

Morchard's Weather

Normally, I report about the previous month's weather. That would be December last year. And all I can say is - it was very wet. Dartmoor received 267mm (10 and a half inches!) rain by the 9th December! Storm Bram came through and although it created little damage, it brought a deluge of rain with it.

And what about Christmas? Was it a white or a wet one? A Christmas is defined as 'white' when just one, single snowflake falls during the 25th December. (I do not know what they call it if a snowflake falls but no-one is there to see it...).

I seem to remember in my childhood that we had more white Christmases than we have now. But is that true? Certainly, since 1960, there have only been 4 years with widespread snow at Christmas - 1981, 1995, 2009 and 2010. MetMatters has some amazing facts about snow at Christmas. Firstly, snowflakes are colourless, not white. The UK gets 33 days of snow on average each year. White Christmases were more frequent in the 18th and 19th centuries. Teignmouth experienced 16C (61F) on Christmas day in 2015. So maybe we did have more snowy times at Christmas "when I were a lad" than we do now. And this year? Personally I doubt it will be a white one. But if we do/did have one, I'll of course report about it.

Wishing you all a Happy New Year!

Stephen Leese

Pickleball at the Memorial Hall



Introductory and general play sessions

These will be held on the following dates/times in **January**

Weds 7th Intro session-2pm to 3pm. Free tea and cake after at the Book Swap!

Wed 7th, 14th, 7.30-9pm

Thurs 22nd 8-9.30pm if Tractor Club is on the 21st

Fri 9th, 16th, 23rd 10-11am

Places are restricted to just 6 people per session. Places need to be pre-booked by email to dicehurst@icloud.com or WhatsApp 07875359563. £2 a session.

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January Programme

All events start at 7.30pm and full details can be found on our website

www.creditonartscentre.org

8 January Music & Food:
Jazz on the Green

9 January Film:
German Expressionist doublebill

16 January Theatre:
Fagin's Last Hour

23-24 January Theatre:
So Many Words

29 January Film:
Last Thursday Picture Show

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: home – 01363 877803.

: email – jomcdphysio@gmail.com

: web site - jomcdougallphysio.com

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Poem of the Month

Forebears

*My father was Julius Caesar, she said with a shrug,
and though officially I'm a model Venus now
I used to be a seaside girl. He knew me
by many different names then, not all good.*

Glancing at the thick forest wall,
at the crows flicking their gothic tails in the branches
*Do I need to know more? I didn't know
the man well, though my mother did.*

Heroic lies told with angry pride and scarred skin,
scrap metal, all that – *world domination*
that's his game. Escape through divination, down the
path,
into the fields, meeting the creatures of dreams.

And then as we drove along in our old car
smelling of leather and fumes, we stopped at the cottage
with roses round the door. Who lived there then?
It's all speculation. Ask Cicero.

Colin Crewdson

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News from your Parish Council

Having failed to wish you all a Happy Christmas in the December issue (I wasn't in Christmas mindset when I wrote the article in mid-November) **may I wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year – may it be a good one for us all.**

The Parish Council met in the Memorial Hall on Monday 1st December 2025.

We had four parents of children from the Primary school visit the Council to voice their concerns about the school's proposal to reduce the level of wrap-around care in the new year and also the poor communication between school and parents/carers. The Parish Council listened and explained that it would like to hear from both sides and that it would write to the Head Teacher of the school asking for her response.

Another member of the public came to discuss the forthcoming setting up of the Nativity Scene in the Bus Shelter in time for Christmas.

The Parish Council spent £453.79 from the main account, £4,138.58 from its Reserve account and £924 from the Footpaths account. The items of expenditure over £100 were £375.00 for the painting of the posts around the War Memorial, £185.18 for bitumen for pot-hole repairs, £3,953.40* for the purchase of a Vehicle Activated Speed Sign and £924 for the repair of a footpath.

*The Parish Council will be able to reclaim VAT of £658.90 on this purchase and have been given a grant of £500 towards the sign – so the total cost to the Parish Council is £2,794.50, this has been taken from the Solar Farm grants received by the Council each year.

There were two planning applications for the Parish Council to consider – both of which the Parish Council supported.

25/01522/FULL	Erection of a general purpose agricultural building	Land at NGR 275608 104882 Willowbrooke Farm, MB
25/01598/MFULL	Variation of condition 1 of planning permission 15/01612/FULL (Variation of Condition (1) of planning permission 12/01303/MFUL the solar pv facility shall cease to generate electricity on or before 28 th March 2043) to allow for an extension to the cessation in the production of renewal for an indefinite period	Ellicombe Ltd Solar Farm at NGR 274160 105292 Morchard Road, Devon.

Reports from our County and District Councillors included: **(i) Local Government Reorganisation proposals** - Our County and District Councils had each put forward differing recommendations to Central Government. **(ii) Reshaping the future of adult social care.** **(iii) Reduction in street lighting trial to cut energy use, emissions and costs.** **(iv) Community Support programmes.** **(v) The Warm Homes Grant.** **(vi) Free parking on Saturdays at MDDC car parks in the run up to Christmas.**

Correspondence received from Mid Devon District Council included an Infrastructure funding statement which prioritised proposed projects, Section 106 (public open spaces) funding availability and the changes to Postal Votes rules and reapplying.

The preparations for our Music Festival **MorFest** are going apace with all the bands booked. The Festival will take place on Saturday 23rd May 2026 so make sure you reserve the day in your diary. Earlybird tickets offering savings on the price of a ticket go on sale on 3rd January 2026.

Concerns were raised about pot holes in Wood Lane and about the flood at Jane Ways Grave which Sarah Gillbard had already cleared twice. Concerns were also raised about vehicles parking on the grass opposite Polson Hill Garage. The new Vehicle Activated Speed sign would move around the roads in the village every three weeks or so and locations around the village had been identified. We hope this action will encourage everyone driving in the village to be more careful.

The Budget for 2026/27 was considered and approved and a precept set. With future costs to the Council rising an increase in the precept was inevitable but it should work out at 5 pence per week for a band D property.

If you want to read the full minutes of Parish Council meetings, they are available on the Parish Council noticeboard on the London Inn Skittle Alley. They can also be read on the Parish Council Website: <https://www.morchardbishop-pc.gov.uk/>. We hope that the new website is a useful tool for everyone in the village, please do let us have your comments and contributions. If you have any views or issues regarding life in Morchard Bishop, please do let me know.

Happy New Year.

David Parker
Parish Clerk

Contact Details for the Parish Council:

David Parker: 01363 877008 / 07794 362591 email: clerk@morchardbishop-pc.gov.uk



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"The inauspiciousness of the owl is nothing but the inauspiciousness of the man who thinks that owl is inauspicious!"

Mehmet Murat ildan (contemporary Turkish playwright)

In our perception of the avian world no group is credited with wisdom in quite the same way as the owls. Sure, we know Corvidae are smart, so very smart they can mimic and understand our language, and use tools of their own accord, and even teach each other this use, but owls we credit with deep and abiding wisdom and knowledge of world and in fiction they crop up doling out sage advice or passing on important messages, they are associated with gods and the afterlife. Who are they really though? Can we at least be familiar with a little of each of the owls we might see out in the countryside or even in our gardens.

***Tyto alba*:** The most recognisable owl is the barn owl, also known as the night owl, the ghost owl, the screech owl or the church owl. Their pale heart shaped face disk catches sound and helps us know who we're watching. They often roost in barns or other buildings and hunt at night but also at dusk or occasionally daytime. Their call is a screech and thanks to human intervention and support their numbers are starting to recover locally.

***Strix aluco*:** The most recognisable call belongs to the tawny or brown owl. The distinctive *twit-twoo* is a call and return between a male and female courting, ready to start nesting together in local trees in their territory from February onwards. Due to their reliance on large old trees and our destruction of many older woodlands they are now amber listed. Fortunately they will take to using suitable nest boxes, so hopefully we can help the mottle brown owls along with the pretty white-faced ones.



***Asio flammeus*:** The short-eared owl are present in the UK as resident and as migrants. This amber endangered owl is one you might be more likely to see and identify – whilst they aren't that common, they are daytime hunters swooping over fields to catch voles, not unlike the barn owl but the two feathered tufts on the top of their head which give them their name are quite distinctive, as are the dark circles around its bright yellow eyes. Its plumage is a yellow brown above and paler beneath.

***Asio otus*:** The similar long-eared owl is darker with orange-red eyes and long ear tufts and is usually found near woodland. It winters around the coast. The striking "ear" tufts are referenced in its other common names - the lesser horned owl or the cat owl. Whilst it's less common near here if you do see one you may see many as their winter roosts can number 20 or more birds!

***Athene noctua*:** The last owl you might see is the little owl. It's a naturalising 19th century introduction. It's a really rather small owl which breeds from March onwards and is often seen perched on a fence post blending in with its flat-topped head and plump diminutive body. This owl in particular is, more than any other, associated with wisdom and its other names of Athenas Owl or Owl of Minerva carries some of this connotation. Its Latin name actually translates as that, Athene (of Athena) and noctua (meaning owl, similar to nocturnas which becomes nocturnal, meaning belonging to the night). Whilst they will hunt at night and are often killed by cars whilst doing so, they also hunt in the day, by perching on posts waiting to drop on insects and invertebrates or small mammals like voles. At night their *kiew kiew* call is heard as breeding season approaches in late spring.

Jo Coffey



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Dog Owners & Walkers – Livestock Worrying Laws Have Changed

Recent updates to the Dogs (Protection of Livestock) legislation mean stronger powers and clearer responsibilities for anyone walking dogs in the countryside — including on public footpaths.

Key changes:

- Unlimited fines for livestock worrying
- More animals protected, including alpacas and llamas
- Law now applies in fields, enclosures, roads and public rights of way
- Police can seize dogs, enter premises with a warrant and collect forensic evidence

What counts as livestock worrying?

It's not just attacking or biting. Worrying includes:

- Chasing, running at, harassing or scaring livestock
- A dog being loose among animals and not fully under control
- No physical contact needed – stress alone can cause miscarriages, injuries or panic

Proper control – what it really means:

A dog is only under proper control if the handler can prevent it from approaching or chasing livestock at all times.

- Leads must be short and secure
- Flexi leads + long lines often don't meet the standard
- Off-lead control must be instant and reliable – hesitation or running towards livestock means it's not under proper control

Dog seizures:

Dogs are not automatically destroyed. Seizure is usually for evidence or to prevent repeat incidents. Destruction orders are rare.

Remember:

Livestock don't need to be bitten for an offence

"Friendly" or "never done it before" is not a defence

Walkers are responsible for preventing risk, not reacting after it happens

These laws protect farmers and animals — please share to help prevent future incidents.

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Lasting Power of Attorney



Making a lasting power of attorney (LPA) is not just for older people! Anyone can appoint an LPA; it means nominating a trusted friend or relative to act on your behalf and manage your finances, care or medical treatment if you should ever lose mental capacity either because of illness or due to an accident.

The kinds of illness that may prevent you from making decisions for yourself include dementia, mental health problems, a brain injury, alcohol or drug misuse or the side effects of medical treatment.

Setting up an LPA doesn't mean that you are expecting anything to happen but it's something you may want to do in case something happens in the future.

There are two types of LPA; property and financial affairs whereby you give authority to someone to manage and make decisions about things like buying and selling property, bank, building society and other financial accounts, welfare benefits and debt.

The health and welfare LPA gives someone the authority to deal with and make decisions about things like where you live, your day-to-day care and your healthcare treatment. With both types of LPA you can choose to give authority to handle all or just specified areas of authority.

You can make an LPA either online at Welcome to GOV.UK or by downloading the forms. There is a different form for each type of LPA and if you want to appoint someone to cover both you will need both forms. You then register them with the Office of the Public Guardian and you will need to send a registration fee with the forms. The Public Guardian then registers the LPA which can take up to 20 weeks. They then notify you and your attorneys at which point the LPA can be used.

You don't have to be a legal expert to be a volunteer adviser at CA TNMWD as full training and ongoing guidance is given. It is very interesting and varied work and demand for our services is increasing. If you can give one day a week to help us support people in our local communities who need our help and advice, please do get in touch. Email recruitment@citizensadvicetnmwd.org.uk we'd love to hear from you!

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When The Gods Are Impotent



Alongside all the new born suns celebrating their births at this time of year, a whole constellation of sun goddesses and sun gods are celebrating their release from captivity in the underworld. I think I've mentioned before that the solar deity story is "Sun goes away: Sun comes back again", and while some shut themselves in a cave or go for a long walk, quite a few find themselves trapped, and sometimes dead, in the underworld of their mythology.

However it is that their incarceration comes about, and however powerful the sun may be when in the sky, they suddenly find themselves without strength, wit or agency and can do nothing to save themselves. Surprisingly it is rarely the great sky gods or their enforcers, the gods of storm, that effect a rescue either. For some deep and mystical reason it is generally left to more humble characters to bring back summer.

Along the south east coast of the Baltic, when Saule, their sun goddess, is locked in a tower by a wicked king, she is broken out by the horses that normally pull her chariot. In ancient Sumeria, when Innana is killed and hung on a hook in the land of the dead, it is two beings made from the dirt under Enlil's fingernails who are sent to raise her up again. Just recently a new humble hero, doing what the gods can't do, has come to light.

It is shocking how many of the ancient clay tablets found have never been translated. One that is pretty much the poster tablet for all of its kind, since it was used as the cover of a famous book on the subject, remained un-interpreted for about a hundred and fifty years until 2025. A strip along the top and about the bottom third of the tablet are missing. Because the convention with cuneiform was to write in columns, that means you don't just lose the beginning and the end but get bursts of the fragmentary narrative at regular intervals. From what remains it appears to be a myth concerning the later Mesopotamian sun god Ishkur, who you will be surprised to hear has, by the middle of column four, somehow got himself detained in the underworld.

Ishkur's Father and one of the three top gods, Enlil, has clearly called a meeting of potential rescuers, outlined the problem and asked for a single volunteer. Now, the various archaeology news outlets and blogs that have reported on the new translation have all been fairly excited by the few remaining lines of column five which state:

"Fox shall go to the netherworld!"

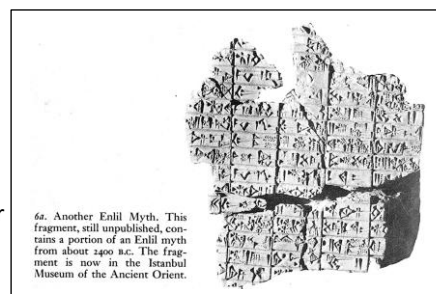
He did not refuse the bread

but put it in a bag instead.

He did not refuse the water

but poured it in a waterskin instead.

Suggestions are made that we are seeing the earliest example of the fox as trickster trope, with Fox surreptitiously avoiding eating the food of the Underworld as that would compel him to stay. Clever Fox!



Personally, I do not think that is what is happening here. In no Sumerian tale that I have read does a character move from the point of selection for a task to the moment of action in less than a couple of columns. First they have to be given their instructions by whichever god is co-ordinating the mission, which tends to be extraordinarily detailed, specific, patronising, and following a ritual formula of repetition by threes or sevens:

"Listen carefully, I am going to give you instructions.

Follow carefully the instructions your god has given you.

Do not forget the instructions you have been given"

And such like, and so on, etcetera.

Then they have to make any preparations that were outlined in the instructions, which is all reported using the same pattern.

Next they take the journey, which is itself at least the work of a full column; finally they arrive, which carries all the necessary storytelling activity of any scene change.

Not eating the food of the Underworld may be part of how the story goes when Fox eventually gets there, but I don't think that is what is happening in column five. I believe that if we ever find a version of the tablet that is more complete, and probably the other tablets on which the story continues, we will find that the bread and water were part of a feast, or payment that was offered earlier in the story, and Fox, packing it to go, is him even more cleverly setting up his tricks for later on.

I do hope someone finds the rest of this story, I'd love to know how Fox, quite literally, saves the day!

...here's to living happily ever after, until the next adventure.

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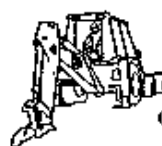
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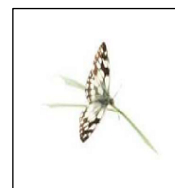
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Hazards of life in the Philippines

The Philippines is a country in the western Pacific Ocean comprising 7,641 islands. Governing such a geographically disparate country, including co-ordinating disaster relief is logistically demanding. With a population of 112 m spread unevenly across 300,000 square kilometres it is the 14th most populous country in the world. Its most unwelcome claim, however, is that it is the world's most hazardous place to live. It is described as a natural hazard hotspot.

A natural hazard hotspot is a place that is subject to two or more natural hazards, coupled with high vulnerability resulting from such factors as high population density, significant economic assets and vulnerable infrastructure. The Philippines experiences tectonic hazards caused by crustal plate movements (earthquakes, volcanoes and tsunamis); running water (floods, mudflows); weather phenomena (typhoons, droughts and wildfires); and mass movements such as landslides.

The Philippines lay on the notorious Pacific Ring of Fire, specifically on the boundary of the Philippine and Eurasian plates. These two plates are moving together with the heavier oceanic plate of the Philippines sinking (subduction) below the lighter continental Eurasian plate. This movement and subduction causes earthquakes and volcanoes.

Each year the Philippines can expect to experience 7000-7500 earthquakes a year, of which 100-150 are considered to be significant events. The 1976 Moro Gulf earthquake, magnitude 8.0, killed 8,000 people and injured 10,000 others, as well as spawning a tsunami. The northern and eastern coasts of the Philippines face the Pacific, the world's most tsunami-prone ocean.

Of its 22 active volcanoes, perhaps its best-known is Mt Pinatubo. In June 1991, Mt Pinatubo erupted emitting 5 cubic kilometres of ash, dust and rock, some reaching a height of 25km. This was the world's largest eruption for 50 years. Thanks to forward planning, exclusion zones were set up prior to the eruption and 200,000 people were evacuated. Nevertheless, 657 were killed, including those engulfed by lahars (mudflows formed by ash mixing with rivers or rain). Economic losses amounted to US\$710 m, much of these costs affecting 500,000 farmers who, in total, had 80,000 ha. of farmland buried in deep ash. The ash circulated the globe, lowering world temperatures temporarily as the ash blocked out the sunlight.

Last month's article was about the Philippines most recent typhoon - Fung-Wong. This event brought strong winds and heavy rainfall, killing 33 people, with 52 injured and a further 1.4 million being displaced. Typhoons can bring secondary effects such as landslides, floods and outbreaks of disease such as cholera.

Much of the Philippines is mountainous with steep slopes; many of the lower-lying areas comprise steeply-sloped hills. In times of heavy rainfall, these slopes lose their shear strength and they fail, resulting in landslides. The Guinsaugon landslide in February 2006 completely engulfed the village, covering three square kilometres of land and killing 1,150.

The hazards caused by weather events are likely to increase in frequency and magnitude with climate change. The impact of all hazards is amplified by human behaviour, such as building densely populated shanty houses on steep slopes, or removing tree cover for agriculture. As our knowledge of such things increases we can, where there's the will, modify our behaviour.

Paul Ticehurst



Devon & Cornwall Police

Police target drivers passing horses dangerously

Police forces in the South West teamed up to make roads safer for horses and riders as part of a recent operation in Devon. Our Rural Affairs officers and Roads Casualty Reduction team joined forces with the British Horse Society and the Mounted Section at Avon & Somerset Police to educate motorists about the importance of passing horses safely. In 2024, the British Horse Society recorded 3,118 road incidents involving horses, resulting in 97 horses becoming injured and 58 horses sadly losing their lives. The British Horse Society says 81% of these incidents occurred as a result of a driver passing too closely or too quickly. Our 'close pass' operation took place in and around Bampton in Devon, and saw Mounted Officers from Avon & Somerset ride on horseback in plain clothes. This allowed them to identify any drivers passing horses too closely or too quickly. Information was then fed back to Devon & Cornwall policing teams who intercepted vehicles and issued words of advice to drivers. Officers said many drivers seemed unaware of the correct way to pass horse riders on the road, with many drivers incorrectly believing they had done so safely. Rural Affairs officer PC Lucy Wyatt leads on equine crime in Devon and Cornwall and was responsible for organising the operation. She said "I grew up riding horses and have experienced, first-hand, how dangerous it can be when motorists pass too fast or too close. "We have to remember that horses are animals with their own brains, and they can become spooked if a vehicle passes at an inappropriate speed or distance, and this can have devastating consequences for everyone involved." "When approaching horses and riders on the road, drivers should slow down to no more than ten miles per hour, avoid revving their engine or honking their horn and then pass slowly when safe to do so, allowing at least two meters of space between the horse and vehicle." PC Wyatt recommends that horse riders wear hi-visibility and reflective clothing and stay alert to their surroundings. Lucy also recommends that riders use clear hand signals to indicate their intentions and be courteous and polite to all other roads users. Lucy added, "This is the first of many collaborative operations we'll be carrying out. I hope that our actions have helped to educate drivers about the importance of passing horses safely and provided reassurance to horse riders that we are committed to reducing the number of people – and animals – killed or seriously injured on our roads. "Everyone has a right to use the road. Let's look out for one another and make sure everyone gets home safely." Footage of unsafe driving, including dangerous overtaking of horses, can be submitted to Devon & Cornwall via Operation Snap: [Operation Snap - Devon and Cornwall Road Safety Team \(Devon & Cornwall Police\)](#)

Postal Votes: New Rules and Reapplying

If you applied for a postal vote before 31 October 2023 you will have recently received a letter or email from us about some changes.

Due to new rules introduced by the Elections Act 2022, you'll need to reapply if you wish to continue to receive a postal vote.

Reapplying is quick and easy, please just visit www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote

To reapply you'll need the following information:

- Your date of birth
- Your National Insurance number
- A photo or scanned copy of your handwritten signature (black ink on plain white paper)

The Council will have sent reminders out in November. To save postage costs, please apply online if you are able to. If you don't reapply, **your current postal vote will expire on 31 January 2026.**

If you need help please contact us:

Email - elections@middevon.gov.uk or
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'Emmanuel Togs and Toys' collect good quality and giftable second hand children's clothing and toys donations. We then pass them on free of charge to any members of the community that can give them a good home.

Drop in sessions now available

Call in and see us at one of our monthly drop in sessions, in the Lower Room at Emmanuel Chapel, on the first Saturday of the month.

We currently have clothes and footwear for both girls and boys from birth to teen available, as well as a selection of toys.

Drop in sessions are as follows:

Saturday 7th February : 9.30 - 11am

Saturday 7th March: 9.30 - 11am

If you cannot make any of the above please email and we can arrange a convenient date and time with you.

For more information or to donate any items, please email:

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Don't forget to follow us on Facebook :
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MORCHARD BISHOP FOOTBALL CLUB

Devon & Exeter Football League
Division 2



January Fixtures

Saturday 3rd **Morchard Bishop v Witheridge (H)**
2.15pm k.o

No results this month as no matches played due to weather

Light refreshments on sale during the match

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Real Christmas tree collections

This year all residents can have their real Christmas trees collected by our garden waste service (until 31 January 2026). Residents can place their real tree out on a scheduled garden waste collection day (this is the opposite week to a recycling collection).

To ensure a tree is collected:

- Trunk must be no larger than 4 inches (100mm) in diameter
- Tree must be under 6ft tall – preferably cut in half to help crews load it safely
- Place the tree next to the blue food caddy, or if subscribed to our garden waste service, it can be placed inside or next to the brown wheeled bin.

If a tree is too large or unsuitable for collection, it can be taken to the nearest recycling centre.

Note: All refuse and recycling should be placed at its normal collection point by 6.00am on the revised collection days as per your calendar. Alternatively, use our online collection day look-up facility.

Applications for warm home grants now open

Mid Devon Council, in partnership with Devon County Council and other local authorities in Devon, is proud to deliver the Warm Homes Local Grant, a government-backed scheme designed to make homes across Devon warmer, greener, and more affordable to heat.

The scheme offers fully funded energy efficiency upgrades for eligible households, including measures such as cavity wall and loft insulation, double glazing, air source heat pumps, solar panels and insulated doors. These improvements not only reduce energy bills but also cut carbon emissions, supporting Devon's commitment to a sustainable future.

To qualify, homes must have an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating of D or below, and must either receive certain benefits or meet the specified low income criteria. Landlords can also apply, with one property fully funded and contributions required for additional homes. Cllr Jane Lock, Cabinet Member for Housing, Assets and Property Services said: "For many people in our district winter brings added financial pressures, with worries about rising heating bills. But we do not want anyone in our community to be suffering from fuel poverty or inadequately heated or insulated homes, when they don't need to be. Please reach out to us and we can point you in the right direction for help. This grant is one way some members of our community may benefit from that little bit of extra help."

Applications are opening in phases across Devon districts, and funding is limited, so early registration is encouraged. This initiative prioritises households most at risk of fuel poverty, ensuring that those who need help the most receive it.

For more details and to apply, visit [Warm Homes: Local Grant DCC - Energy Saving Devon](http://www.warmhomes.gov.uk)

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Garden Tips for January



- Recycle your Christmas tree by shredding it for mulch
- Clean pots and greenhouses ready for spring
- Disperse worm casts in lawns
- Inspect stored tubers of Dahlia, Begonia and Canna for rot or drying out
- Prune apple and pear trees
- Start forcing rhubarb
- Plan your vegetable crop rotations for the coming season
- Keep putting out food and water for hungry birds
- Make a polythene shelter for outdoor peaches and nectarines, to protect against peach leaf curl
- Dig over any vacant plots that have not been dug already - unless you are following No-Dig practices to preserve the soil environment, in which case enjoy the rest.

Jo Coffey

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~ Debbie's Diner ~

Take one ingredient-a loaf of bread

Bread in its simplest form is a baked product made of just 4 ingredients: flour, yeast, a pinch of salt and a pinch of sugar. The flour needs to have a high gluten content because this protein creates a stretchy dough which can rise in the heat of the oven. The yeast is the raising agent which creates the lift. It can be activated by the sugary water which feeds the organism to create CO₂.

Most commercial breads wrapped in plastic contain many more than just these 4 ingredients. These will include preservatives for a longer shelf life, flavour enhancers and even vitamins and minerals to increase its healthy properties.

To make a quick & simple loaf: place 500g strong bread flour in a large bowl with a glug of olive oil. Pour 300ml of warm water into a jug and tip in a large pinch of sugar and a 7g sachet of yeast. Stir it all together and leave it to start fermenting. It will be ready to use when the water has bubbles on the surface. The yeast is farting CO₂ which we can use to raise the dough up in the proving and baking phases.

Add most of the water to the flour/oil in the bowl. Use one hand to mix it all together to form a straggly, sticky mix. Add more water if it has dry patches. Tip the dough out onto a floured surface and knead it for ten mins [or use the dough hook on your food mixer]. The end product should be smooth and stretchy and not tear when you pull it. If it does, keep kneading! If you need the bread to be ready quickly then you can shape it now and then leave it to prove until doubled in size before cooking it at 200c/gas 7 for 30 mins. If time is no object, you can prove the dough until doubled in size then shape it then prove it again before baking it. Pre-heat oven to 200c/gas 7. Shaping it can be into rolls, a plaited loaf, a loaf in a loaf tin. You decide! The bread is baked when it is a golden-brown colour all over and it sounds hollow when you tap it. Don't be tempted to open the door during the cooking phase as it may collapse.

Cake mix and bread dough - cook in this order - mixture rises then sets then browns.



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Over 60's Luncheon & Get Together

The next Over 60's Luncheon at the London Inn will be on Wednesday 21st January at 12.30pm.

The menu for this lunch will be Roast Pork with a selection of Vegetables & Roast Potatoes, followed by Apple Crumble and Custard followed by tea/ coffee.

The cost is £12.00 inclusive.

Regular and new members will be warmly welcomed in the London Inn.

If you would like to join in please fill in the slip below and return it to me by Tuesday 20th January or email me at mandytapp@talk21.com or phone me on 01363 877459 or just pop in to me at Harries.

Regular members please let me know if you are unable to attend, thank you.

Name- _____

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Next Meeting: **21 January 2026** 10:00 – 12:00

[The Weirdest Buildings in the West Country](#)

A talk by Robert Hesketh

The West Country has more than its fair share of weird buildings. This talk explores an eclectic selection.

Venue: [Boniface Centre](#)

Cost: £2.00

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School News

Christmas at the School

It is always such an extra delight and pleasure to work in a school at this time of year. There is so much excitement in school. We have beautiful trees courtesy of St Mary's Christmas Tree Festival that the children decorated; it was lovely to be part of a community event and show off our creative skills. We also have elves hiding, Carols playing and so much beautiful singing.

Our nativity was a super event last week; it's a chance for our youngest children to shine and also look super cute! They did a wonderful job, and I saw so many smiling faces in the audience, as well as our children singing with gusto.

This afternoon we are off to Ridge House to sing for the residents there. We will be supporting the Morchard Bishop light switch on this weekend and then hosting our carol concert on Tuesday night. We're very much looking forward to these festive events.



It has been a busy term, packed full of learning and extra-curricular opportunities. We have attended PE events, had a zoo visit here in school and our London residential trip plans are in full swing. We look forward to many more experiences next term.

Wishing you all a very Merry Christmas.

Hannah Bancroft
Head Teacher



Organised by the Parish Council supported by village organisations

MORFEST

MORCHARD BISHOP FESTIVAL

Saturday 23rd May 2026

London Inn Fields

Midday until Late

Music and Food to suit everyone's taste!

Two Stages – seven local bands plus comedy, a choir and a Mummers Play and many other musical acts.

Save money:

100 early bird adult tickets costing just **£20** will be available from The London Inn and Church Street Stores from **3rd January 2026**.
(Maximum 2 tickets per person).

Further details in Future editions of the Morchard Messenger!

Reserve the date – get involved and look forward to another exciting Morchard Bishop event.

