

NEWTON WONDER

THE MAGAZINE & WEBSITE FOR THE COMMUNITY OF NEWTON ST CYRES

December 2025/January 2026

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Cover

Our cover picture this month is taken from December 2010. Maybe this is what we will see at the end of December this year.

. Government in Newton St Cyres

The Parish Council has gone through a turbulent time and is looking to co-opt more councillors. This is a difficult time for all local government and it will be important to retain the grassroots level of community involvement that parish councils provide. Next year we will see the new structure of local government as Whitehall decides on whether to adopt one or other of the plans being put forward by the present county, district and unitary councils. There is the possibility that none of the currently suggested schemes will be accepted. We have to wait and see.

At the start of the year an enthusiastic group from the village, sponsored by the parish council, were seeking to establish a neighbourhood plan for the parish. Given the uncertainty regarding the future structure of local government and because the plan would only effectively have lasted until 2027, this was abandoned. In this issue Ann Quon Cordingley interviews our county councillor, Steve Keable who discusses some of these issues.

The Station Garden

In February it was reported that the friends of the Station Garden had received a gold award from a range of railway groups. However, as time goes on, things change and Chris Southcott has decided he has been in charge of the garden long enough. He is interviewed by Ann Quon Cordingley in this edition of the Newton Wonder. The remaining volunteers need further support, so if you feel you would like to contribute do come along.

Fundraising at the Beer Engine

Following Vicki's treatment for breast cancer, the pub ran a fundraising event on Friday 24th October. The "Wear Pink" event featured two musical acts, local band Burnt Daylight and also local, Roger Styles. Almost £4000 was raised for Breast Cancer Research.

The quiz held on 12th November raised funds for prostate cancer research, supporting the "Movember" initiative.

An active year

Village activities have been blooming. We have reports from and about all the groups: the history group, the garden club, N.E.W, the friends of the arboretum, friends of the station garden. The rec has provided the sports

facilities the village needs as well as supporting the refurbishment of the children's playground and offering opportunities for darts, skittles. and archery. The tennis club has had a very successful year. There are lots of other exciting activities going on in the village. The Adonai kitchen offers an important social resource as well affordable food. The activities of the church support those in need and those who are not in many different ways. During 2025 the church has opened its kitchen, new disabled lavatory and exhibition and performance area. Newton is undoubtedly a great place to live.

Next Year

At a Britain in Bloom meeting last month, those who attended discussed whether or not to enter in 2026, noting that we would have to go up a level and that could be challenging. Some wanted a two year pause to give time to improve all aspects of our entry; others felt we could ride the momentum created this year. It's a group decision and will be made on 25 February at the next meeting. The closing date for entries is Mid-march.A

A Personal Note

The last thing I expected was that I would be putting this, the last edition for 2025, together in the R.D and E. I am confident that after surgery I will be back on form. Most important, however, is to let you know how much your good wishes have been and are appreciated.

Peter Hawksley

Parish Council ReportNovember 2025

Once again, we were a small but select group of councillors. However, we were lucky to have County Councillor Steve Keable present for the first half hour, so we concentrated on discussing his report on road issues. Steve has been working with Councillor John Dean and Nick Gillon (who heads up our Road Wardens) to get our concerns heard at county level.

As a result, we have seen some issues addressed. The road outside Winscott Barton Farm has now been repaired and Kingfisher Close has been officially adopted by Devon County Council (DCC) Highways. The drains on Marsh Lane are now recorded on DCC's system so they should be maintained properly. Some trees were reported to be trapped against the bridge over the Creedy on Station Road. These had gone by the time the team turned up to remove them, but metal sheeting has been inserted against the bridge supports under the water to protect them from future damage.

Still on the list of problems are the vehicles passing/parking by the school on Station Road. The school has submitted an excellent School Travel Plan, which is now with Steve. We are pressing for better signage, a 20-mph speed zone and parking restrictions around the school entrance. Some of this is beyond the jurisdiction of the Parish Council, but we are looking at least to install some signage.

Another major problem is the ability of people to cross the A377 at Tytheing Close. We have been pressing for some time for a traffic island there so that people don't have to cross all the road at one go. There are issues about where to site the island and about the cost. A parishioner agreed to collate a petition from residents on Tytheing Close about the problem, which Steve will find very useful in his further work for us.

Smallbrook has had some issues that have been successfully tackled. The broken culvert has been repaired by the local landowner and the leakage of raw sewage into the Smallbrook has been addressed. However, the path accessing the bus stop is very overgrown and this will be taken up with DCC Highways. We are also pressing for an advisory 40-mph sign to be added to the signs telling you to slow down.

Another area for discussion at the meeting was Resilience and Emergency Responses. The Council approved our Snow Plan and this has now been accepted by DCC. Our team of snow wardens is ready to respond should it snow this winter. The resilience sheds have been checked and everything is ready to deal with a variety of emergencies from flooding to snow.

Proposals for next year's budget were also discussed, but more of that in the next newsletter.

As this is the last meeting that will be reported before Christmas, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Parish Councillors and all those who volunteer in the local community for their hard work this year. You are what makes Newton St Cyres such as pleasant place to live.

The next meeting of the Parish Council will be held in the Parish Hall on **Thursday 4th December 2025** at 7pm. Members of the public are welcome. Do come along and see what a friendly bunch we are, and maybe even consider joining us. Alternatively, if you would like issues to be raised in council meetings, contact councillors in the usual way. Remember we have a form that can be filled in online. Copies of the form are also available at Coffee Mornings and the Adonai kitchen. There is also a Parish Surgery at the coffee mornings held on the **second Saturday of the month** in the Parish Hall.

Liz Ouldrige

A Letter from our Treasurer

Dear Reader,

I trust you enjoy reading the Newton Wonder as much as I do. I think it's one of the positive aspects of living here in Newton.

My wife, Sue, and I were recruited some four years ago by Daphne Clague, who was the treasurer at the time, when she decided to step down. We enjoy playing our part, in both delivering the magazine and counting the beans to ensure there's enough money to oil the printing press and keep it all ticking along as it should.

Income is key and we endeavour to strike the balance with your annual subscription and the advertising income. It seems to work out – just about.

We will be keeping the subscription fee at £10 for hard copies of the magazine and £5 for the online version.

My primary reason for writing this article is to try and make my life a little easier. There appears to be a growing number of subs paid by banks transfers (BACS), often leaving me to scratch my head, trying to work out which distributor the payment relates to.

So I would ask those who pay by bank transfer that you provide your address in the reference, abbreviated if necessary. But, equally importantly, please let your distributor know what you're doing, or indeed more to the point, that you have paid by BACS, so that they don't have to chase you for the cash. If you do decide to pay by BACS, can you also please email me at marknsue.phillips@btinternet.com as soon as you have paid, with your name, address and distributor's name. It will help me enormously to identify you on the bank statement and tie the payment with the appropriate distributor.

If you decide to receive the magazine "online", then just pay £5 and again send me an email to the above address. I will let Martin Taylor know and he can send you a link to access the site each month.

I apologise for this lengthy request, but it will help me no end and save me many hours of pulling out my hair, trying to work out who's delivering your magazine – or if you even exist!

Finally, if you could pay your annual subscription by no later than the end of January when you receive your first magazine of the year, it would be much appreciated and assist with our cash flow.

Thanks for reading my desperate plea.

Mark Phillips
Treasurer

Newton St Cyres Tennis Club

The clocks have changed and it is getting darker and wetter. But there are still many days of lovely sunshine to enjoy. Winter is such a good time to play tennis, to get some fresh air and run around, instead of staying inside. The weather always looks more cheerful when you are outside.

The courts have been repainted and look amazing. That may inspire you to come and play tennis.



There are regular sessions for rusty rackets on Saturdays. The person to contact is Sue Bloomfield at sueblmfld03@gmail.com and she can let you know what time the sessions are.

Come and join the other club sessions: they are generally well attended and apart from exercise provide lots of fun and banter. Do come to the Sunday afternoon session, where we have space for you. The sessions cover a wide range of abilities and ages so there is something for everybody. Try the club for a couple of sessions and then you can decide. Just contact our membership secretary, Laura Leigh, on 01647 24259.

The winter league has started. There is one mixed team, one ladies' and one men's team, so something to suit everybody. We have two teams in the middle of the league, and one team at the lower end.

Junior coaching, run by our club coach James Temple, takes place on Wednesdays after school during term time. If your child wishes to join, please email juniors@newtonstcyrestennisclub.co.uk for further information.

Jon Wills offers adult coaching both individually and for small groups, so if you feel you need to brush up your skills, just get in touch via our website. www.newtonstcyrestennisclub.co.uk.

The Tennis Club now has a super-duper ball machine, which means you can brush up your skills all by yourself. If you want to try it out, please contact me at frederiekmaddock@gmail.com

Wishing you all a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Frederiek Maddock

NEWTON RAMBLERS December and January

The walk for December will take place on Boxing Day

Boxing Day Walk - 26th December

For those of you looking for a short walk to shake off any excesses of the previous day please join us for a Boxing Day perambulation. The walk will be from the top of Pennsylvania, along the top of Stoke Woods, past the Iron Age fort, then down through the woods. We will cross the A396, then the river and the railway to the Exe Valley Way. We will finish at Pynes House for some suitable refreshment – so, flat or downhill all the way.

We will meet at the Newton St Cyres parish hall car park at 9.30 am to share cars, or you can meet us at 10 am parking at this end of Stoke Valley Road. We will arrange a lift for the drivers from Pynes House back to where we have left the cars.

Sunday 18th January

For our January walk we have planned a one way walk from Cadbury Castle down to Thorverton. (We can leave cars at each end)

We will start the walk at Cadbury Cross on the A3072, parking by the houses there. We shall go down past Cadbury church then up to view the iron age hill fort. We will then follow the lane past Fursdon House down into Thorverton.

Lunch has been booked at the Thorverton Arms at 12.30 for 10 people. If you would like to join us please let Rosemary know by 11th January.

We will meet at Newton St Cyres parish hall car park at 9.30 a.m. to share cars but you could also meet us for 10 a.m. at Cadbury Cross.

All are welcome on either of these walks. I please ring Rosemary or Nigel Chambers or

Please note that anyone joining these walks



ST CYRES COFFEE MORNING



Come and join us on
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10.30-12
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In aid of Church

Newton St Cyres 200 Club

The winners for November 2025:

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No. 102	P Hoey	£10.00
No. 225	Q Palmer	£10.00
No. 245	L Keeley	£10.00

The club is registered through Mid Devon District Council Licensing Department
as a Small Society Lottery under the Gambling Act 2005

Jane Hole
01392 851148

THE JOY OF WINTER COPPICING

We've all heard about the research projects that tell us how important it is to get out into the fresh air and nature, especially during the shorter days of winter. Well, at the Newton Environmental Wellbeing group (N.E.W.), we have the perfect means of combining this advice with a purposeful and productive activity. Now in its third year, a small team of people meet once or twice a month from October to March on a Sunday morning to carry out the coppicing of some hazel woodland, by kind permission of Quickes Estate.

We are calling out to any of you who would like to help expand our team. You don't need any experience, as we will give you training and all the tools you need. We work in teams of between three and seven people, so that we can work safely and effectively. Thanks to a successful funding application, N.E.W. now has five new sets of tools that anyone can use after instruction.



Dave Harris building a wood pile



Gill Melling and protected stump

Not only would you be getting some physical exercise and a bit of social mingling, there is also the promise of next winter's fuel to look forward to.

Coppicing is a traditional woodland management system dating back centuries as a means of producing firewood, fencing, bean poles and thatching spars amongst other things. Nowadays it is considered a valuable and sustainable way of improving woodland biodiversity and is carried out during the dormant months.

All kinds of native trees can be coppiced, but hazel is one of the most plentiful and easiest to coppice using hand tools. The group follows traditional methods of

cutting the stems down close to the ground to make a small stump, and then protecting them from deer. Hazel is a multi-stemmed tree, meaning a variety of sizes can be cut, either with loppers or a bow saw.

Obviously, the weather is a key factor in working safely, but there are often plenty of bright, wintery mornings when working quickly results in warming up and removing extra layers of woolly jumpers!

All you need to take part is some sturdy boots and to be willing to get stuck in! If you'd like to get involved, please contact Emma Parkin on 07817 000015 or email: newnewgroup@protonmail.com

Emma Parkin

A Beautiful day for a Macmillan Coffee Morning



Anna Mace-Leska has just learned from the Macmillan charity that she and Sue Browne raised £150 for their funds. Anna hosted a coffee morning on September 25th at her home, Compass House. with a huge amount of help from Sue whose baking was eagerly devoured.

Anna said, "Thank you so much to all who came and contributed. We ate a lot of cake to raise the money. We hope to do this again next year and will advertise earlier next time. Many thanks for your generosity,

Peter Hawksley

How much would you like to know about the past in Newton St Cyres?

Newton St Cyres History Group has a growing library of publications.

- **Newton St Cyres – A Village Story (£5)**

Compiled by residents of this village in 1999 (the green 'millennium book') containing a wealth of reproduced photographs.

- **Newton St Cyres Historical Village Walks (£1)**

Four brief walks around the Village, the Western Bluff, West Town and Station Road with maps and an explanation of the road cuttings, levelling and straightening.

- **Newton St Cyres Mining and Miners (£1)**

Our mining heritage, both manganese, claimed to be "*the first commercially successful manganese mines in the world!*", and lead & silver up on Tin Pit Hill that may go back to Roman times.

- **Newton St Cyres Church – Statement of Significance (£2)**

Describes the history and most important features of the church, dedicated to St Cyr and St Julitta.

- **Memories of Boyhood in a Devon Village (£3)**

Written by Alfred Abraham, born in Newton St Cyres in 1893. He shares his memories growing up in the village at the beginning of the 20th century.

- **Newton St Cyres in the 1940s & 1950s (£5)**

Written by Stella Cork, born in Newton St Cyres in 1934 and the daughter of the village postmaster. She gives a remarkable description of families in the village and an insight into village life.

- **Newton St Cyres and The Civil War 1642-46 (£5)**

Written by Jean Wilkins. The story of grief, hardship and a little excitement for those living in the village almost 400 years ago during the English Civil War supported by coloured photos and maps. Would you have been a Roundhead or a Cavalier?

- **Newton St Cyres in the WW2 Years (£5)**

Written by Roger Wilkins, The contributions of the village to the war effort are described, as are impacts on village activities and businesses.

- **Newton St Cyres & the A377 (£5)**

Written by Jean Wilkins, A window into the history of transport into and through the village and the development of the A 377.

Also visit **newtonwonder.net** where you will find data and analyses on:

Births, Deaths and Marriages in Newton St Cyres (16th–18th century)

UK Censuses on Newton St Cyres (1841-1911)

Newton St Cyres Tithe Map of 1843

Copies can be purchased by contacting

Jean Wilkins 01392 851337 jeanwilkins1@btinternet.com



Table Tennis

Newton St Cyres Parish Hall
every Friday from 7 to 9 pm.

As well as seeing present members of our Group, we are keen to welcome new players – with or without experience adults and children from the age of 12.

There are four tables, so we can fit in people from beginners and rusty former players to League players. Equipment is available.

You pay for the evenings you come - £3 for adults; £2 for schoolchildren.

Just come on the evening, but for any further information contact Roger Wilkins – rogerwilkins1@btinternet.com



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Bert Jewell writes Rhymes and Ways about Gardens and Gardening

December & January

It seems the world is full of doom and gloom, so I thought, why not take a light-hearted approach to Christmas this year. It goes like this -

Its December shouts a Gonk to his neighbours on the shelf,
Does that mean we'll be moving, asks a nervous little Elf,
Only if someone buys you says Teddy with a grin,
If you're still here after Christmas you'll end up in the bin.

Now let's keep it friendly, says Santa with a smile,
His glasses perched upon his nose, that's always been his style,
As he eyes up all the Reindeer on shelves around the store,
How many does he think he'll need, will it be two or four.

Just then the shelves fall silent, the doors are opened wide,
The management and staff, into the store they stride,
Followed by the customers, the farmers and the like,
They've no idea of all the fun on those shelves overnight.

Now it's been weeks in the making for all those shelves to fill,
I jokingly ask the manager, "What if Santa is ill,"
"Will Christmas be cancelled", will all this go to waste,
The truffles and the shortbread, will they lose their lovely taste.

You cannot cancel Christmas said the manager out loud,
The reasons are obvious, he gestured to the crowd,
The truffles and the shortbread will last until next year,
Dates are on the boxes that will make all that quite clear.

So when you're next out shopping where there's lots of
Christmas things,
Passing by a shelf or two could make Santa start to sing,
To wish you all the very best, to fill you full of cheer,
To have a happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year.

Things to do in the garden

On a recent visit to a large garden centre, with a coffee and a stroll through all the displays of things we can buy for Christmas, we found shelves upon shelves of Santas playing the saxophone, some strange-looking creatures that have a long moving neck whilst singing, another creature that jerks its bottom up and down (really!), plus all the Gonks the Teddies the Elves and what I call

the normal stuff. The sad thing for me is that hardly any of this is made in this country, but we let's not go there.

We'll concentrate instead on jobs we can do around the garden, if the weather is favourable and the soil workable, you can turn vacant ground in the veg patch, leaving it rough for the frost, rain and wind to break down over winter, removing perennial weeds as you go. One weed that we have in our gardens is groundsel, it is a hardy annual, growing and flowering from seed all year round. It is a relative of ragwort and a food source for caterpillars of the Cinnabar moth. Both the moth and its caterpillars are poisonous, so they feed openly, knowing that birds will not eat them.

If it's raining, take yourself off to the shed for an hour or two, sort out the pots, trays and cells, wash any that need cleaning and stack them ready for spring sowing and potting up.

Clean off tools, like spades and forks, sharpen shears and secateurs and clean and service the lawnmower. I tend to sharpen the mower blades myself, but if you haven't got the right tools, then it's worth finding an outlet that will sharpen them for you.

You can also clean the greenhouse, removing any dead leaves from overwintering plants, checking for any fungal disease as you go.

If you want large exhibition onions from seed, sow them on or near the shortest day, and if you have plants in the greenhouse that will need watering, keep a can full inside so that it warms up. It's best to water from the base at this time of year.

If you buy a real Christmas tree, one that has been cut off and sold without roots, cut off about 1" when you get it home, before putting it in a stand that will hold water. This will help reduce needle drop.

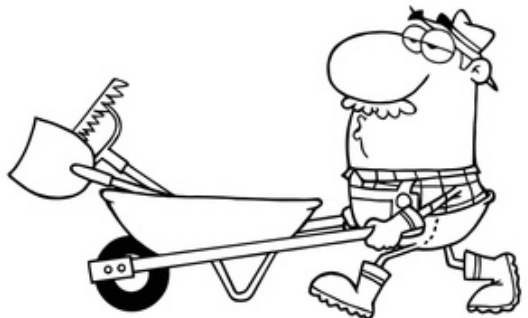
Plant of the month

"Sarcococca Confusa" or Christmas E

Growing it in a container in a shady s
and reward you with a wonderful sce

Have a great Christmas and a happy

Enjoy your gardening



Chris Southcott hangs up his trowel

After almost three decades, Chris Southcott, a founding member of the Friends of the Newton St Cyres Station and its award-winning garden, is hanging up his trowel. "I've done it for too long," says 78-year-old Chris. "It's time to find someone else to keep it going."

For the past 28 years, Chris has been responsible for overseeing the volunteer group whose labours have won several awards in the Tarka Line Station Garden Competition, an annual event for all stations on the line.

"I used to love coming down and planting up the veggies on spring bank holidays in May," he says. That was when he and his band of volunteers would descend for the annual "Big Plant-Up", where not only veggies, but seedlings would be planted for the coming summer.



Chris Southcott is stepping down



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“The railway used to pay for plants for us, and we would send in the receipts to be reimbursed and enter the Tarka Line competition,” he recalled. However, railway cutbacks in recent years have meant the volunteer group relies on donations of seeds and plants, along with their own muscle power, to keep the garden going.

“There were seven of us – one person for every day of the week – who would come down to water the garden and all the troughs on the station platform,” he said.

Among the Friends group was Liz Ouldrige, whom Chris recruited nine years ago. Interesting historical fact: Chris was also responsible for recruiting Liz to the Parish Council, where she is now the Chair.

She praised Chris's dedication and commitment. “He always put a great deal of work into the station garden,” she says. “It was his idea to grow vegetables there to be shared by all. His commitment kept the garden going through the Covid times.

Chris is a part of the Newton DNA. Born and raised in the village, he attended the local school and spent most of his working life with Mid Devon District Council (and its predecessors), working on the roads.

On his retirement, he was recruited to join the Parish Council by then Chair Dave Baker, who, unsurprisingly, was its highways and railways liaison officer. On issues ranging from fixing potholes to hedge clearing to road safety, Chris was the “go to” man. With his extensive knowledge of roads and byways, as well as local history, villagers still seek him out for his local knowledge. He was also the council's Rec ground representative, and while he may no longer be a councillor, he continues to play an important role in ensuring the defibrillator at the Rec is in working order.

Chris is passionate about football and can often be seen at the Rec watching the local team play. He also looks after the book exchange telephone box by the Beer Engine.

Chris says he is hoping the station-garden volunteer group will continue its work and urges those who love gardening to volunteer their time to the project, even if it's just watering the troughs once a week. “If they can't find enough people to do it, the railway will take the troughs away,” he said. “Fingers crossed it will keep going, but things don't last for ever.”

And what will he do in his spare time? “I will keep doing what I have always done, which is to go down and sit either in the shelter or on the bench and watch things go by,” he said. So you know where to find him if you have a question about local affairs.

Report and photo by Ann Quon Cordingley

Do You Remember....December and January?

December 1975

The Church reported that 20 kneelers had been made already and the decorations were going well.

The Parish Council were asking Devon County Council to do something about the potholes etc. in Three Horseshoes even though this was in the East Devon District Council area.

Some of the footpaths in the area had been found to be in excellent condition but others needed work on them.

The AGM of the W.I. was well attended and the cup was won by Mrs Curtis with and the cup was won by Mrs Curtis with the Goblet for the Flower of the Month going to Mrs Halse.

The Hall were discussing bookings for discotheques but will not refuse the bookings and just keep a careful eye on them.

At the YFC AGM the following were elected: President – Mr W G Lee, Leaders – David Searle and Peter Coleman, Chairman – Jill May, Vice Chairman – Robert Ayre, Nick Lee, Social Secretary –Jon Crooke, Membership Secretary – Jeremy Brooke, Nick Lee, Social Secretary –Jon Crooke, Membership Secretary – Jeremy Brooke, Press Officer – Philip Harris.

The NSC Players production, 'See How They Run' was excellent and played to full houses.

December 1985

The Parish Council had its request for the speed limit to be extended to Home

Farm rejected. Damage had been done to the bus shelter at Tytheing Close and the Police were on the case.

House to house collection for the British Legion raised £259.10 for the Poppy Appeal.

The Cubs and Scouts are collecting newspapers to raise money for funds. Cubs and Scouts were also delivering Christmas Cards.

The Twinning group were sending a signed Christmas Card to Rots. The card was of the Village painted by Keith Hazell.

December 1995

'The Parish Council had discussed the County's proposals for the next 15 years. In NSC it was hoped for further protection of our environmental area and more public transport, including more stopping trains at the Station.

The Young Farmers had raised £480 for Honeylands in Exeter. This was achieved by apple picking and dung sales.

A Nevada Western Dance was held in the Hall following the success of the Western Dance classes.

The Rec. held a Senior Citizens Party on a Sunday afternoon and transport was provided.

A successful Christmas Bazaar was held at the School by the School Association.

December 2005

The organising committee had been formed for the Revels with support from the Art Group, Cancer Research, the Church, FANS, the Football Club, Newton Nippers, the Parish Council, the Hall, the Recreation Ground, Table Tennis, Tennis, Twinning and Young Farmers.

The Twinning group had elected new officers with Chairman being Eric Fee and secretary being Nathalie Edward-Coulier

Crediton Motor Club held its annual Skittles and Social evening at the Rec.

An interesting article on Bell ringing had been written by Andrew Digby and included a request for more Bell Ringers.

The annual Newton Ramblers Boxing Day walk took place finishing up at the Beer Engine.

The Art Group held an exhibition and sale at the Village Hall.

The School performed an Old Style Music Hall in the Hall.

The annual Mini Market Christmas Fayre was well supported.

January 1976

The Lady Chapel had almost been completely re-decorated and the floor and floor and woodwork had been cleaned and polished.

This month was the Centenary of the Mothers' Union and the meeting heard Mrs Willis talk about 'A Century of Weddings'

The Coffee Club held an 'Italian Evening' where the Clubroom of the Hall was transformed.

The future of the Flower Show and Fete was discussed and it was felt it would be a pity if it did not continue. A new committee was formed.

A School Dance for parents and staff was held.

Henry Gliddon had resigned as secretary of the Gardener's Association and a replacement was sought.

The Parish Council had been informed that Council rent and rates will be payable by Bank Giro.

Michael Westaway was back home after his spell in hospital.

January 1986

The Cancer Research Campaign Coffee Morning had raised £115.35p

The Church Working Party were thanked for the money they had raised at the Christmas Fayre.

The School presented the play 'Oliver'

The Parish Council set a levy rate of 1p to cover expenses.

December 2025/January 2026

An advert appeared for organically grow, chemical free fruit and vegetables for sale from the Kitchen Garden at Home Farm

The Women's' Institute visited Thorvorton to join in with the St Cyres Group at their Carol Service.

A suggestion was put forward to publish a recipe book and kitchen hints. One contribution per household was requested.

The Children's Puzzle was all about names of Garden Flowers and the first prize was 50p.

There was a report of a farewell party held at the School for Terry Mortimore, Deputy Head who was leaving to go to Deptford in London as Head.

January 1996

The School reported on their twinning with a school in Rots through the Twinning Circle.

Young Farmers' reported on a membership drive event and were planning competitions, visits and speakers and were rehearsing for a Pantomime.

Neighbourhood Watch were making sure that information was posted on notice boards in the village.

The Parish Council had news of proposed traffic calming and hoped for a 40mph limit through the village from Half Moon to Home Farm.

Some allotments were still available

to rent.

January in the Garden detailed what to put out on the bird tables for the birds

during the cold weather.

The Church Christmas Fayre report mentioned that £900 had been raised this year.

The 200 Club winners were Mrs Hiscocks, Mr Tootall, Mrs Sedgwick and Mr Ware

January 2006

It was reported that preparations were in hand for the Village Revels on the 24th June.

A report appeared of the A G M for the Twinning Circle with Eric Fee elected as Chairman, Martin Ouldrige as Treasurer and Nathalie Edwards-Coulier as Secretary. Events had been planned including Wine Tasting, the Annual Dinner and Skittles evening.

The Ramblers Group walk was from the Beer Engine to Shute Cross, Efford House Shobrooke Mill, Wyke Cross and back to the Beer Engine - a total of 5 miles.

December 2015/January 2016

Mid Devon District Council had asked the Parish Council to decide about the future of grass cutting in the parish. The options were of either letting MDDC cut the relevant verges and being charged for the service or or taking on responsibility for the cutting ourselves.

The Friends of Newton St Cyres Station thanked The Young Farmers

for their generous donation of 20 bags of farmyard manure that had been delivered to the Station garden. Work was in hand, weather permitting, to clear the weeds and dig the muck in.

It was reported that the Raddon Hills group of Parish Councils were considering the possibility of employing a Lengthsman to undertake maintenance work in all the 11 parishes and are asking Councils to put forward suggestions of the type of work and frequency required.

At the Fireworks, John Horsman organised and prepared the sale of Burgers, Cheeseburgers and Hot Dogs from the tent in the field. £250 for

the cancer charity "Force" was raised. Everyone who bought a burger or hot dog etc. contributed to this important local charity. The organisers thanked all those who helped, on the night and by the loan of equipment; barbecues etc.

Jean Wilkins continued her accounts of WW1 heroes from the War Memorial with a tribute to Noel Henry Boles (1893 -1916), the son of the vicar who was killed at Imbros, having joined the Royal Flying Corps.

The entertainment at the New Year Ceilidh was provided by the Barnstormers.

Peter Hawksley



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Thoughts for November from Peter Cordingley

I prepared a couple of ideas for my final scribblings of 2025. Maybe a cheery Christmas greeting, or perhaps a selection of my most ludicrous New Year resolutions? But then the new Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, gatecrashed my festive mood by dropping the F Bomb in Parliament.

As we all know by now, Mahmood, who is ethnically Pakistani, told MPs that she had frequently been called a “f***ing P***” and had been shouted at to go back home. Her words would be strong in any setting, but particularly in the House of Commons. She had to apologise, but was she wrong? Or did she fairly reflect what’s going on in the UK these days? Sadly, I think she has a point.

I accept that living in a place like Newton St Cyres is not much use in trying to divine the state of social integration across the country. Like most of this part of the world, the village is almost exclusively white and largely uniform in outlook and attitude. Life here bears as much resemblance to what’s going on in multi-cultural Stockport, for instance, as living on the moon does to the French Riviera. But I think we can see that racism across the country is now more prevalent and more in your face than at any time since the glorious “Peace” days of the 1960s. Why?

Well, I have a couple of theories – and they start with Brexit. Beyond the patently suicidal decision to turn our back on our biggest trading partner, the vicious anti-foreigner tone of the Leave campaign encouraged the xenophobes to think their views are now acceptably mainstream. Racism became OK – and the unspeakable Tommy Robinson and others like him emerged from the shadows.

And then there’s the foreigner-baiting nastiness of the right-wing media. In my view, the Daily Mail sometimes shows itself to be the most appallingly xenophobic publication in the English-speaking world, but it has company in the form of the Daily Telegraph, the Sun, the Daily Express and others of that ilk. Whenever I see the Daily Mail in someone’s basket at the Tesco check-out, I have to stop myself grabbing it and whacking the buyer over the head with it.

Reluctantly, I also list the seemingly unstoppable wave of immigration as a factor in the surge of racism. My instincts urge me to sympathise with the boat people, but what’s going on now is way beyond acceptable. Way beyond. I can barely believe I am writing this, but I think something truly precious is being lost. Does that make me a racist? Does it? Gosh, this is a tricky and perilous subject.

Sorry about wandering so far away from the Christmas spirit like this. But at least I’ve left myself enough space to wish everyone in Newton and beyond an enjoyable Christmas and a rewarding 2026. And, before I go, a special word for Peter Hawksley, editor of this magazine since time immemorial. As I write, Peter is in hospital waiting for heart surgery. We’re wishing you all the best, Peter. See you soon!

Peter Cordingley is content editor of the Newton Wonder, However, the opinions expressed in his column are his alone. His views, like all opinions we publish, do not represent the editorial view of the Newton Wonder.

Newton St Cyres 200 Club

The winners for November 2025:

No. 222	L Wride	£50.00
No. 155	J Hawksley	£10.00
No. 102	P Hoey	£10.00
No. 225	Q Palmer	£10.00
No. 245	L Keeley	£10.00

The club is registered through Mid Devon District Council Licensing Department as a Small Society Lottery under the Gambling Act 2005
Jane Hole

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Newton St Cyres Gardening Club

So, we are fast approaching the end of another year. Where did the last quarter of a century go? I hope it has been a good year for you and that you are happy with



Rob with cacti and succulents

all of the work you have put into your gardens/allotments. Ambitious projects, new plants with special memories, or days out to visit shows and other people's gardens, providing

inspiration for changes/additions to your own 'patch'

At the end of October, it was lovely to welcome back Rob Vincent, of Hutch Houseplants in Exeter, where he and his wife Frankie have an amazing shop on Bampfylde Street (near the bus station). If you were unable to attend the talk, do pay a visit to the shop, where they have a huge display of plants for sale. If you are dining at The Ivy in Exeter, you will see the displays that Rob & Frankie provide and care for.



Camellia Yuletide

Rob first came to speak to us back in March 2022, when we held our first indoor meeting post- Covid. This time his talk was all about Cacti & Succulents. Rob

provided us with a lot of interesting details about these groups of plants, including the fact that cacti are either Dessert or Jungle and each have different needs.

Rob's advice was that, rather than following the plant label (which could have been produced in any number of countries), you find out the native habitat of your purchase and try to mimic that as best as you can. Along with a huge selection of the plants that were the evening's topic, Rob brought a selection of other houseplants and many of those attending the talk were tempted, and went home with one or two or more!!

Continuing the theme of Christmas plants, this year I thought I would provide some information on *Sarcococca* – also known as Christmas Box or Sweet Box. There are a dozen or more species of these evergreen plants, which have a beautiful fragrance in mid-winter, due to the little tassels of creamy-white flowers that give off a strong, sweet scent. It is compact and bushy, and the upright stems have slender, dark green leaves. An ideal location to plant this is near a path or in a front garden to fully appreciate the fragrance. They also have berry like fruits which may be red, purple, black or blue-black when ripe. It is suitable for large pots, borders, or a woodland garden in partial or full shade and in reasonable soil.

Most species are fully frost hardy, and do not require pruning, but benefit from being sheltered from cold winds. If growing it in pots, use a soil-based potting compost and keep plants evenly moist. Species recommended for growing in pots include *S. hookeriana humilis* and *S. hookeriana digyna*. If growing in the ground, water the plants for the first growing season until established. When purchasing plants, check that they already have plenty of buds, and avoid those with yellowing leaves. Should you wish to propagate, semi-ripe summer cuttings are best.

The second plant is *Camellia x vernalis* 'Yuletide', which is a winter flowering evergreen shrub. It has glossy dark green leaves and scented, single flowers of brilliant red with prominent yellow stamens. It should flower from the end of November to January. Care details include sheltering from the early morning sun, as buds and flowers may be damaged by the frost melting too quickly – in the same way that rain can damage them. It should be planted in ericaceous soil, and as it is a fairly compact shrub, it can be grown in a pot for several years.

JOBS FOR DECEMBER & JANUARY

- Leave ornamental grasses uncut, as the bases of the stems provide hibernating places for insects.
- Check tender plants and provide winter protection.
- Raise patio containers onto feet or bricks to prevent them sitting in water
- If you have large tubs, wrap them in bubblewrap, hessian or fleece, to insulate them over winter.

- Winter is a good time to dig a new border. Leave the soil in clumps, as the winter rain and frost will help to break it down naturally. This will also expose any pests to natural predators and the cold.
- Continue to put out food and water for birds
- Clean your greenhouse to maximise light and minimise the risk of pests and diseases
- Sort through your 'stock' of plastic pots and be realistic about which ones you will re-use. Clean them all, and those not required can then be taken to collection points at garden centres.
- Sit down with a cup of tea, coffee, hot chocolate – or something stronger – and plan ahead for 2026 by ordering seeds for next year. If you are still looking for something to add to your Christmas list, the National Trust publish a "Gardener's Almanac" and the RHS publish "The Garden Almanac", both available from good booksellers
- Take time to relax with friends and family, and accept any praise they give for all of your hard work!

WHAT'S ON? (not all garden related!)

- Until 31st January 2026 RHS Rosemoor Winter Sculpture Exhibition. Normal opening hours.
- Until 30th December, 4.30pm – 8.30pm RHS Rosemoor Glow at Rosemoor. Tickets must be booked in advance and admission prices vary. With new breathtaking installations, this year's trail is more magical than ever. Full details at www.rhs.org.uk/gardens/rosemoor/whats-on/____rosemoor-glow
- 6th–7th December Saturday 11am–4pm, Sunday 10am–4pm RHS Rosemoor Magic of Christmas Craft & Food Fair. Please note: On Saturday the fair will be closed between 4pm & 4.30pm. After 4.30pm, admission is included with the Glow tickets. See details above.
- Throughout December (except 24/25/26) until 4th January 2026. Daily opening 11am–4pm Victorian Christmas at Knightshayes, where each room on the ground floor celebrates a different Christmas tradition. Also, on 6/7, 13/14, 20/21/22/23 December 12pm–7pm The evenings may be dark, but that means that Knightshayes can sparkle! Discover the twinkling lights and decorations bringing a festive glow to the house and stables. Stop by the café for a hot drink or sweet treat and explore the shop for those festive presents. Normal admission prices apply for non-members of the National Trust.

- Throughout December (except 25/26) until 4th January 2026 Killerton House The ground floor of Killerton house is traditionally dressed with lush green garlands, sparkling trees, decorative fireplaces and hand-made delights. The centre-piece of this year's display is the internationally acclaimed 'Red Dress Project'. See: <https://reddressembroidery.com>. Outdoors, playful activities for all ages lead you through the gardens, parkland and Chapel grounds. These are inspired by games from around the world, shared with us by our local communities. Trees, lovingly dressed by local groups adorn the Chapel. Please note that the house is open from 11am-4pm. Last entry to the house is 3.30pm. Killerton is closing at 2pm Christmas Eve (last entry to the house 1.30pm), and is closed on Christmas Day and Boxing Day”.
- Saturday 13th December 10.30am Crediton Town Band. Carols at Homeleigh Garden Centre
- Tuesday 23rd December 7pm Crediton Town Band – Carols in the Square Crediton
- Wednesday 31st December 7.30pm Newton St Cyres Parish Hall – New Year’s Eve Ceilidh. £20 per person to include a light supper. Book by 19th December from me, on 01392 851985
- Saturday 10th January 2026 6pm Sandord Wassailing Meet in the Square Sandford EX17 4LW & 8:30pm Wassail Traditional Folk Songs in the Lamb Inn, Dowrich Room. Free Event
- Tuesday 27th January 7pm Crediton Library – Rob Vincent. Houseplant 101 Crediton Garden Club.

Our details of speakers for 2026, will be published in February’s Newton Wonder and we hope that you will be able to join us.

Wishing you all a Peaceful Christmas and Happy New Year

Nicola Baker

A vibrant advertisement for Bernaville Nurseries. The background is a lush field of dahlias in shades of orange, red, and yellow. The text "GET GARDENING" is written in large, bold, white capital letters, with "with" in a smaller, cursive font. Below this, "Bernaville" is in a serif font, followed by a circular logo containing a daisy-like flower, and then "Nurseries" in the same serif font. To the right, a text box says "SCAN TO SIGN UP TO OUR LOYALTY CARD FOR EXCLUSIVE OFFERS AND 10% OFF PLANTS EVERY TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY". Below this text is a QR code inside a white circle, with a small arrow pointing to it. At the bottom, a line of text reads "FIND US JUST PAST COWLEY BRIDGE, EXETER • WWW.BERNAVILLE.CO.UK • OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK".

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with
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LOYALTY CARD FOR EXCLUSIVE
OFFERS AND 10% OFF PLANTS
EVERY TUESDAY & WEDNESDAY

FIND US JUST PAST COWLEY BRIDGE, EXETER • WWW.BERNAVILLE.CO.UK • OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK

Fireworks at the Rec rocket to success

F.A.N.S (Friends of Newton St Cyres School) raised £5,400.00 at the display held on 5th November.



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Coffee and Chat

Join us in

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For refreshments

**A relaxed get together to discuss ...
whatever subject comes up!**

The Pathfield Oak

Celebrating a local veteran

*They are that talk of going
But never get away;
And that talk no less for knowing,
As they grow wiser and older,
That now they mean to stay.
My feet tug at the floor
And my head sways to my shoulder
Sometimes when I watch trees sway,
From the window or the door.
I shall set forth for somewhere,
I shall make the reckless choice..
Extract from "The Sound of Trees" by Robert Frost*

The Pathfield Oak is today situated in splendid and statuesque isolation a field that is now , prosaically, known as Pathfield. It is sat hard by our Public Footpath Number 8, which takes you up the hill from Marsh Lane in West Town to Tin Pit Hill.

On entering the field, the tree presents itself immediately as a beautiful landscape feature with its strong stout trunk, hollowed in part and seriously damaged by the ravages of centuries. Its broad-domed crown is still healthy and vigorous, with many large low branches supporting a huge dome-like canopy. Healed and decaying calluses that once held branches are clearly evident. It is typical of many similar ancient oaks trees that were once pollarded as part of routine farming practise.

It is a true veteran oak with a girth (at 1.5 metres from its base) of over 4.9 metres (over 16 feet in circumference). It's difficult to date the age of an oak solely from its girth . However its girth and spread must mean it is at least 300 to 400 years old. It's quite possible that the tree was a sapling at the time of the Civil War (1642-1651). General Thomas Fairfax and his troops may have passed it in October 1645 on their way to lay siege to Exeter as the last Royalist stronghold in the West of England.

Like most oaks hereabouts, it is a pedunculate oak (*Quercus Robur*). It holds its acorns at the end of pronounced stalks. It is one of two species of common native "English" oak that share a range across most of Europe and Western Asia, the second being the Sessile Oak (*Quercus Petraea*), which has its acorns snugly held in the arms of its mother twig. To confuse us, the two species often hybridise with one another.



Acorn Weevil

straight from a Sci Fi magazine (pictured), several species of moth caterpillar, and seven common species of gall wasp. These gall wasps use enzymes that appear to interfere with the DNA of the tree to force it to create specialised galls as a food source for the wasp's larvae, thereby replacing the acorn that the tree had planned for itself. Each species of gall wasp has its own unique shape of gall by which it can be identified.



Pictured here are galls created by Knopper Gall Wasps taken from the Pathfield Oak.



The Pathfield Oak

Fortunately, the oak produces plenty of leaves and acorns to satisfy most of its customers. Measurements taken on oaks of a similar size indicate that the Pathfield Oak produces over 700,000 leaves each spring, many of which may have to be replaced following early

predation by moth caterpillars. The tree is a sensitive reactive organism that “talks” to itself. As well as producing more leaves to replace those lost it has evolved complex defence systems against mass predation. Mass caterpillar attacks in spring result in the tree rapidly producing toxins in its leaves in the form of tannins and phenols that act an effective deterrent to hungry insects.

Unhappily for farmers who keep cows, sheep and/or horses, these leaves can also be toxic to those animals that graze on them, as can the acorns themselves. This may have been offered as an explanation for the height at which this and other oak locally have been pollarded , ensuring that branches grew above the height that could be reached by older breeds of grazing cattle.

Most oaks have what is called “Mast Years”, where the tree produce a superabundance of acorns. This year is one such year. In a mast year, our oak might be expected to produce 10,000 acorns, most of which will lie for weeks and provide plentiful food for birds and the many mammals that are able to eat them with impunity. Acorns are particular favourite of jays. Forgetful jays, as well as absent-minded squirrels, are important agents to ensure oaks spread their progeny far and wide.

Mast Years were also, in the past, an important event for the most rural households enabling a plentiful source of free food to help fatten and condition the household pig or, for the lucky, pigs to provide meat for the winter. The right to turn one’s pig onto the Lord’s land at acorn time was called “Pannage”. The right to Pannage and the term are still current in the New Forest.

To compensate the dairy farmer for the danger to cattle, our oak will produce around 100,000 litres of oxygen each year via photosynthesis to replenish some of that used by humans and cows alike . In doing so, it requires over 150,000 litres of water sucked up via an amazing root system over 30 meters in diameter. The roots of the tree form a huge and intricate network with mycorrhizal fungi that derive nutrients from both stone and soil that would otherwise be unavailable to the oak’s roots in isolation.

As winter approaches, our oak takes back nutrients from its leaves and transfers some of these to its roots for safe keeping. Its also converts starch to sugars, which act as a natural antifreeze for the plant. The cellular fluid within the living cells becomes concentrated with natural sugars, which lowers the freezing point inside the cells, while the water between the cells is allowed to freeze.

Right now our oak is preparing for one more long, cold winter and its limbs will soon again be naked to the elements. Next time you’re passing, wish it well for leafing again next spring.

Footnote on pollarding

Many (if not most) veteran oak trees were ‘working trees’ i.e. their wood and leaves were used, as an essential part of everyday life, for much of the recorded history of rural Britain. The management methods that predominated may have helped individual trees to survive (e.g. pollarding and coppicing).

Pollarding involves the deliberate and often regular pruning of the branches of a tree at a trunk height of two to three metres in a bid to encourage the formation of a spreading canopy of large branches. Usually, the reason for cutting high up was to allow animals to graze among the trees without damaging the next crop of branches by browsing them and without poisoning themselves on tannic leaves. Thus, the height of the pollard was partly determined by the type of animal being kept. The products of pollarding were leaves, twigs and bark for pig fodder, bark for tanning, oak beams for building, wood for fuel and charcoal and oak galls for the production of ink. Pollards were probably first cut when the maiden tree was quite young and small in girth, with subsequent cuts made at intervals.

Words and pictures by Graeme Barnell



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NEWTON ST CYRES HISTORY GROUP



Elsie Knocker – Exeter's Florence Nightingale

We have had some excellent talks over the nearly 15 years of History Group meetings, but November's was right up there among the best. Dr John Dean delivered a splendid presentation on

the life of the exceptional Elsie Knocker.

He explained how his interest in her had come about because he became aware that there were no statues to a woman in Exeter. True, there is a generic representation of a nurse on the war memorial in Northernhay Gardens, but that's all. John's talk was well-timed because it was about a nurse in the Great War, and was delivered the day after Remembrance Day.

Born in Barnfield Crescent in 1884, Elizabeth Blackall Shapter came from a well-known and affluent Exeter family.

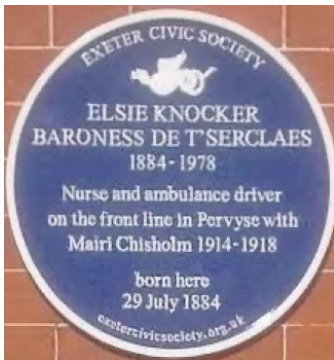


Elsie Knocker (left) Mairi Chisholm (right)

Her grandfather was Dr Thomas Shapter, known for his study of the 1832 cholera outbreak in Exeter, and whose work influenced Dr John Snow and thus the development of the science of epidemiology.

Elsie (as she was known) and her four siblings were orphaned, and at the age of six she was adopted by Lewis and Emily Upcott of Wiltshire.

Her parents had left her well provided for in a trust so she was well-educated and at her finishing school in Switzerland she learned fluent French and German. This was to prove very useful when she reached the Western Front. Elsie trained as a nurse then married in 1909. Her husband, Leslie Duke Knocker, was "the first man to take any notice", but although they had a son, Kenneth, Leslie turned out to be abusive and an alcoholic. Elsie left him in



Plaque on the house where Elsie was born in Barnfield Crescent

1911 and sued for divorce on the grounds of adultery and cruelty. This was a radical step for a woman at this time and shows Elsie's determination not to be intimidated or downtrodden.

This strength of character stood her in good stead during the war. Nevertheless, society judged divorced women harshly and even Elsie protected herself by passing herself off as a widow rather than a divorcée.

She put Kenneth in the hands of her adoptive parents, and returned to nursing, as well as developing a passion for motorcycling. This activity introduced her to Mairi Chisholm, a fellow motorcyclist 12 years her junior, and the two became great friends. The year was 1914. At the outbreak of war Mairi and Elsie volunteered for the newly formed Women's Emergency Corps to act as dispatch riders. They were soon invited to be part of the Flying Ambulance Corps, founded by Dr Hector Munro to transport the wounded men of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) from the front to the hospitals in Flanders, and affiliated to the Belgian Red Cross. Both women were skilled drivers and mechanics; Elsie had the additional skills of her languages and her nursing training.

It rapidly became clear to Elsie that many soldiers died during the transfer from the battlefield to hospital. She said "I knew why this happened. They were victims of shock, the greatest killer of them all." She goes on to say, "It takes a woman to know these things. Men are so blind and often insensitive to suffering."

She took the bold step of establishing a dressing station only 100 yards from the front line, in a cellar in the bombed town of Pervyse, near to the coast, east of Dunkirk and north of Ypres. Here Elsie delivered first aid, and Mairi then moved the men to the hospitals away from the front line. John was clear that between them Elsie and Mairi saved thousands of lives during their three and a half years of work at Pervyse.

Nevertheless, their position was controversial. No women were allowed on the front line. They could no longer have funding from the Red Cross or the BEF and relied on fundraising efforts in England. Elsie's determination and confidence eventually led to permission from the Belgian and British command to remain in Pervyse. There were no other women at the front line on either side throughout the war.

They became well known and were visited by people such as Ramsay Macdonald, Marie Curie, and Prince Alexander Von Teck, a member of the British royal family and a leader of the BEF who in 1917 changed his name to Alexander Cambridge, 1st Earl of Athlone, renouncing his German titles. However, Elsie and Mairi referred to him fondly as 'Tecky'. In 1915, King Albert I of Belgium made Elsie and Marie 'Chevaliers de l'Ordre de Leopold'. They were written about in the newspapers and referred to as 'the new Ladies of the Lamp', and 'the Madonnas of Pervyse'.

In this hectic atmosphere, Elsie had a whirlwind romance with a Belgian reconnaissance pilot, Baron Harold de T'Serclaes, and they were married in January 1916. After the war it came to light that Elsie was a divorcee and Harold, a Catholic, filed for divorce. However, Leslie Knocker had died, and the divorce was not granted. Elsie remained a baronness. Baron de T'Serclaes became a German collaborator during World War II, was sentenced to death in 1947 for this, but evaded capture and lived out the rest of his life in hiding.

John told us how useful Elsie's fluent German could be. A British plane crashed and Elsie and Mairi ran to help the pilot. In her own words, "The Germans called out to me, "Is he wounded?" I snapped back, in German, "Well, what the dickens do you think after something done like that? Of course he's wounded, and we are going to take him." In fact the Germans did not want to kill any women, particularly when Elsie and Mairi were adamant in looking after any German wounded men, not just British or Belgians. They told Elsie and Mairi to wear their nurses' caps when retrieving the wounded, not their tin helmets, so that they would not be shot by mistake.

Even on the Western front, hostilities ceased from time to time. John recounted how they found a punt, which they put in a water-filled bomb crater, and invited people to have a picnic at Henley! Three miles away some of the men built a giant see-saw and John showed a photo of Elsie high in the air at one end. There was a catch to this, because visiting staff officers, who were not very often shot, were asked to get on it. They willingly agreed, not realising that the plank was so long that the man at the top of the swing was fully exposed to rifle fire from the German soldiers. Elsie said that "it was fun to watch this stupid but comical game, and to hear and see the serious expressions that ensued".

Despite the difficult, relentless and exhausting work she and Mairi did in winter and summer, during four years of war, it seems that this was the only period of her life when Elsie felt truly alive and filled with purpose. In March, 1918 the cellar in Pervyse was bombarded heavily: the sandbags and the steel door (provided by Harrods) were not enough to protect Elsie and Mairi from a gas attack and they were invalided back to England. The gas killed Shot, the little stray dog who had been with them for three years, and Elsie said that after all she had been through, it was this that made her want to kill a German. Both Mairi and Elsie lived to a good age despite their experiences. Elsie died in 1978 of pneumonia and dementia.

John pointed out that there is a BBC *Woman's Hour* recording from 1964 available online, in which Elsie talks about her experiences. The reality and brutality of the war in Belgium was recorded by Elsie in her diaries, held by the Imperial War Museum. John thanked the museum in his talk for the access provided to Elsie's letters, diaries and photographs. And we thank John for his wonderful talk.

There is no statue to Elsie and Mairi in England or Pervyse, but there is one in Ypres, and Shot is included. A blue plaque has been placed on the house in Barnfield Crescent in which Elsie was born.

Isobel Hepworth

Next Meetings

Wednesday December 10th 2025 in the Parish Hall, 7.30pm: Christmas Meeting: mince pies, wine and welcome! 'Colourful Stories from the past of Newton St Cyres'.

Wednesday February 11th 2026 in the Parish Hall, 7.30pm: Tony Gale 'The Prayer Book Rebellion'

£3 per meeting to include a hot drink and a biscuit.

No special membership charge. **Everyone welcome.**

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FAYRE PLAY



There was festive spirit galore in the parish hall for the church's much-anticipated Christmas Fayre. Stalls selling everything under the sun proved to be a magnet for scores of bargain hunters.

The Raffle had some great prizes



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DECEMBER PROGRAMME

Thursday 4th
Jazz on the Green
Music and Food
7.00pm



Friday 5th
Music
The Jeremiahs
7.30pm



Saturday 6th
Crediton Heart Christmas Craft Fair
10.00am-4.00pm

Sunday 7th
Crediton Heart Christmas Craft Fair
10.00am-4.00pm



Friday 12th
THE BIG Christmas Quiz
7.30pm



Thursday 18th
Music - Moon Jazz
7.30pm



Friday 19th
Music - Solstice Live Lounge
7.30pm

JANUARY PROGRAMME

Thursday 8th
Jazz on the Green
More quality jazz and
delicious Sri Lankan
cuisine **7.30pm**



Friday 9th
Film
German Expressionist Double bill
The Cabinet of Dr Caligari (1920)
is regarded as the quintessential example
of Expressionism in cinema;
F W Murnau's Nosferatu (1922)
7.30pm

Friday 16th
Theatre
Fagin's Last Hour
7.30pm



Friday 23rd to
Saturday 24th
Theatre - So Many Words
A rich evening of monologues,
poetry and spoken word
7.30pm

Friday 29th
Film -
Last Thursday Picture Show
7.30pm

Tickets through the Arts Centre, ring or go to [www.ticket source.co.uk/creditonartscentre](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/creditonartscentre)

Full Details and Tickets - www.creditonartscentre.org
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Getting to know our new County Councillor

It's been just six months – a very hectic and testing six months – since he became county councillor for Newton St Cyres and the surrounding parishes.. Ann Quon Cordingley has been talking to Steve Keable. Unsurprisingly, he has a lot on his mind.



Steve Keable: Having a hectic time.

It's been just six months – a very hectic and testing six months – since Steve Keable became county councillor for Newton St Cyres and the surrounding parishes. Unsurprisingly, he has a lot on his mind.

"I've got so many inquiries coming in that being able to deal with them in a timely way is frustrating," he says.

Road safety, potholes, public transport, children's education, clean rivers, affordable housing and the looming shake-up of local government are just some of the issues in his in-tray as the new county councillor for Creedy, Taw and Mid-

Exe. In his job, he is responsible for the biggest constituency in Mid Devon, with 29 parishes.

To get up to speed with the concerns of such a large constituency, his priority has been to attend as many parish council meetings as possible, including Newton St Cyres.

"Road safety is probably the biggest issue for Newton St Cyres, what with the new primary school," he said. The lack of speed limits or signage to indicate the presence of a school has been a long-standing problem, and he backs the Parish Council's call for a 20-mph speed limit on Station Road and signage indicating a school zone. He believes a recent policy change at Devon County Council to

support villages that want 30mph limits reduced to 20mph, will mean full support for the idea.

He also backs a traffic island on the A377 at Tytheing Close, which is a perilous spot for residents trying to cross the busy road. "A pedestrian island would help slow down the traffic and improve safety," he says. Steve is in talks with the county highways officer to find a solution.

Says one informed observer: "He seems like a breath of fresh air and is prepared to take our problems seriously."

Steve sees his role as talking to constituents about their problems, figuring out the gaps in policy and finding a solution. An example is the speed limit issue at the primary school, where he says he went to the county council Highways Department to explain the problem and was told that the school needed a travel plan before anything could be done. "So my next action was to talk to the school, get that travel plan and give it to highways so we can get things to move on."

Aged 72, Steve took over the county council seat from Margaret Squires, who retired after 40 years in politics. He says it helps that he is also a district councillor (for Taw Vale) as many problems at the district level can be solved at the county level. But that can happen only as long as the two communicate with each other, he says.

A big issue is how small villages like Newton will be impacted if the authorities choose to impose much needed new housing on the area. That would hinge on whether central government gives the green light to a £160 million project to upgrade the existing junction 28 on the M5 to relieve traffic congestion. That would pave the way for plans to build 5,000 new houses near Cullompton. If that goes ahead, it would take the pressure off small villages like Newton to find room for more housing. "If it doesn't go through, there will be a lot of pressure right across Mid Devon for housing developments to happen, not only the larger towns, but in some of the small villages as well," he says.

Whatever the outcome, Steve feels it is important to invest more in rail and bus links to meet growing demand for improved public transport. "On the Tarka Line we need to double passenger capacity by doubling trains to every 30 minutes and for the trains to meet the buses," he says.

"Demand will only grow as the central government promotes house building. Growth must be planned, with investment along the Tarka line. More trains, improved access, car parking and coordinated public transport. People, planet and prosperity are my priorities," he says.

Steve was born and grew up in Ilfracombe, North Devon, during the post-war years. During the war, his father was a Royal Engineer who had fought against

the Nazis, while his mother worked in the Canadian Embassy in Glasgow. After the war, seeking a quieter life, his father settled in Ilfracombe to work in a hotel, where he met his future wife. Together they bought a farm and started subsistence farming.

Steve's interest in community service started at a young age when he joined the local parish council, and at the age of 29, became Ilfracombe's youngest-ever mayor. "I was always interested in youth and community work, so I became a youth worker," he said. He spent eight years in Hereford and Oxford, working with communities there before returning to Ilfracombe. His return coincided with a period of high unemployment among school leavers. "More than 50% of school leavers couldn't get a job, and that made me very frustrated because I couldn't do anything for the kids," he says.

That led him to a new career with the Devon County Council in project development, where he would take ideas, turn them into viable projects and find non-taxpayer money to pay for them. "It was finding creative ways to work with young people and getting them involved in their communities."

Eventually the County Council asked him to move from Ilfracombe to Exeter to work out of the County Hall for the whole of Devon. So he relocated to Lapford, where he still lives with his wife Jane. They have a blended family of five (now adult) children and six grandchildren.

Although a Liberal Democrat supporter, Steve was barred as a civil servant from actively taking part in politics. That started to change when austerity hit in 2010 and he decided to take early retirement. "Funding sources were shutting down, the willingness to do things especially for young people was shutting down, the country was running down its youth services," he said. "That's when I decided that after all my shouting at the radio, I had to do something. And that's when I started to be more politically active by working with other people and supporting Lib Dem candidates."

In 2023 he took the plunge to enter politics himself and won a seat in the Mid Devon District Council and was given a top cabinet job for Planning and Economic Regeneration. That includes Plan Mid Devon, which will guide development up to 2043, including big-ticket items such as the reopening of the Cullompton Railway Station and construction of the much-needed Cullompton Relief Road.

However, with the much-heralded local government reorganisation just around the corner – and the current two-tier system of district and county councils being abolished and replaced with a single authority – the big question is whether he and his fellow councillors will be around to see through their remaining terms of office, let alone Plan Mid Devon.

“It’s going to mean that that will be fewer democratic representatives,” Steve says. “At the moment within my county division, there are nine councillors from both the county and district level. Under the local government re-organisation, that would become two. So under the new system both of my positions will disappear and a new local authority will be formed.”

The new single authority will be responsible for all local services such as education, social services, waste collection, and planning, with the aim of making local policy and service delivery more efficient and streamlined. However, critics say it will lead to less democracy and representation as central government increases its control by having fewer people to consult at the local level.

The district and county councils have until the end of November to submit their own proposals to the central government. In spring next year the government will make a decision and in May 2027 elections will be held for a new unitary council to replace the district and county councils. Steve, like many of his fellow councillors, accepts that change will come and that they may be out of a job

So what does he do in the meantime? His reply: “Whatever the outcome, we’ve got a job to do and we have got to continue working together”.



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December on the Farm

The end of another year! And finishing with a glorious autumn, golden leaves lingering on the trees, turning early and staying late. All this amid a landscape so vividly green it took your breath away. Now everything's tucked up gone to ground, resting and restoring for the year to come. The drought of the summer is a distant memory. The pastures then were almost completely brown, grass completely dormant. The cows were eating rapidly into their winter fodder. The rain came in September; we feared it wouldn't know when to stop. We had a blessed autumn, warm with showers. The cows stayed out into late in the year, eating tender young leafy grass. We even conserved the best silage of the year in October. Luckily, we had sown more of the crop ground to a mix of clover and grass to nourish the soil. We harvested some rich clover for winter feed for the cows.



Mary and Jane with the Spring Herd.

Almost all the animals are inside now, hoping for an early spring. We would love one like this year's. The cows only came in in January, and went out again early. The rain and sunshine came at the right time all through the

spring. The birdsong was the loudest I'd ever heard, and the blossom joyous in hedgerow and orchard. The fruit set well and ripened over the hot summer into laden trees, full of hawthorn berries, sloes and apples. My quince trees gave the best harvest I've ever seen. I've crystallised some quince and popped it into my Christmas cake. Completely glorious with some of our Vintage Cheddar.

The dry weather didn't suit nectar harvesters and insect eaters. The house martins called it a day and went back to Africa in August. The maize died off before it fully grew, giving hard grains like raw popcorn. We chopped the grain

when we harvested it, hoping the cows would be able to digest it fully. You can find hard little undigested fragments if you look in the appropriate place (the joys of being a dairy farmer!). We've short of wheat and barley grain and straw for feeding and bedding.

Over the autumn, we converted a barn we've used over the years for silage, straw and grain into cubicles for the spring calving cows. Cows have their own space to lie down when they want, while allowing them to lie companionably with their friends. Cows inside means taking care of their manure. We built two pits for their manure and washing water. In a slow elaborate dance of large machines, we dug the pits, made walls from clay, rolled the walls watertight, smoothed the banks to make them part of the field, made ramps to take stuff out and made fences to keep animals and people safe. That's set us up for the future.

Theoretically, we could grow all the crops and grass we need from the nutrients in the manure, in a beautiful perpetual motion machine driven by the sun and the rain. We can never get everything to each corner of the farm when it needs it, and it's a vision to go for. These pits get us that bit closer.

Our cheese store is less full than it's been for a while, and we are making a lot of cheese to catch up. We are starting to sell fresh curd, that most delicious way-station. We've made some lovely cheese this year, despite the dry weather. Dry grass seems to suit cows: they eat more nourishment with each bite.

Jane went to Bern in November to judge cheese for the World Cheese Awards, where 400 judges from around the world judge over 4,000 cheeses, also from round the world. 100 cheeses come out of the first round and a final 14 make it through to the thrilling final round, judged in public, broadcast by World Cheese Awards TV. A delectable Gruyère became World Champion cheese.

Our Cheese Shop is open until 1pm on Christmas Eve should you wish to pick up any cheese or festive treats ahead of Christmas. Our fabulous team in the shop are also sending online orders out for delivery right up until Tuesday 23rd December.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Mary Quicke

SEASONED LOGS

5m³ DOUBLE LOAD £460 <i>loose tipped</i>	3.75m³ 1 ½ LOAD £350 <i>loose tipped</i>
--	--

2.5m³ FULL LOAD £240 <i>loose tipped</i>	1.25m³ ½ LOAD £130 <i>loose tipped</i>
--	--

o.625m³
BULK BAG
£75

PART SEASONED LOGS

5m³ DOUBLE LOAD £420 <i>loose tipped</i>	3.75m³ 1 ½ LOAD £320 <i>loose tipped</i>	2.5m³ FULL LOAD £220 <i>loose tipped</i>	1.25m³ ½ LOAD £120 <i>loose tipped</i>	o.625m³ BULK BAG £70
--	--	--	--	---

Part seasoned logs will be ready to burn from autumn onwards if bought in spring/early summer and stored off the ground in airy conditions, e.g. log store.



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Events are held in the village hall. Contact: June Nicks 01392 841272
Annual membership £15. Non-members welcome at all events (£4 per talk)

Annual Garden Club

CHRISTMAS DINNER

Friday 21 November – 7.00pm

Free Welcome Drink – Raffle – Quiz

£20 per person

To book – call June 01392 841272



CHRISTMAS WREATH MAKING

@ the Village Coffee Morning

Monday 1 December – 10.00am

Make your own Xmas Wreath – guided by a professional florist, Katrina, from BLOOM BLOOM of Upton Pyne.

A ready mossed 12" ring and wire for fixing foliage, plus ribbon, will be provided. These rings can be made into a wreath of your own design. You will be asked to bring your own foliage or decorations. The tutorial will last for 2.5 hrs at a cost of £20 per person. **Please reserve and pay for your place by Saturday 22 November.**



SAVE THE DATE!

**UPTON PYNE
OPEN GARDENS
SATURDAY 9 MAY 2026**



A special fundraising event



jointly organised by
**UPTON PYNE & DISTRICT GARDEN CLUB
and THE FRIENDS OF UPTON PYNE**



Interested in opening your garden?

Contact: jilly.clubevents@gmail.com / 0776 674 9310

Newton St Cyres Parish Council

NOTICE OF VACANCY for PARISH COUNCILLORS

**Would you like to join the Parish Council?
We meet monthly on the first Thursday**

**You would be very welcome – we are a friendly
bunch and training would be provided**

***For an informal discussion about the role of a Parish
Councillor, please contact Liz Ouldrige, Chair (01392
851621) or the Parish Clerk***

parishclerk@newtonstcyres-pc.gov.uk

***To be eligible you must be a British subject, or a citizen of the
Commonwealth or the European Union and must appear on the
current register of the Voters List; or you should during the whole
of the twelve months preceding the date of this notice have resided
in or within three miles of the parish; or your only place of work
during the whole of the twelve months preceding the relevant date
is in the parish.***

**For more information about council activities please visit the
council website at [https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/
newtonstcyres](https://www.middevonparish.co.uk/newtonstcyres)**

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The Crediton Heart Project

Christmas Craft Fest

6th & 7th December

at Crediton Arts Centre
Christmas creative fun for all!



Workshops: age 16+ £5, under 16s £3

Saturday 6th December

Block Printing

Make your own Christmas cards
& wrapping paper
10am-1pm

Pottery Tree Decorations

Cut out and decorate shapes
to hang on your tree
2-5pm



and a **FREE** Christmas film for all ages

A MUPPET CHRISTMAS CAROL

Saturday 6th December 6pm for a 6.30pm start

A festive evening with Christmas food and
drinks before the film

Sunday 7th December

Yule Log Decorations

Create Yule log decorations
10am -1pm

Wreaths and Mini Trees

Make wreaths for your doors and
mini trees for your table
2-5pm



Book tickets at www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-crediton-heart-project

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Get Creative at the Crediton Heart Christmas Craft Fest 6th & 7th December

If you fancy getting creative this Christmas, by making your own cards and decorations, the Crediton Heart Project is offering some inspiration and guidance at their Christmas Craft Fest.



Children's Block Printing Workshop

Following the success of their Summer Arts Festival in August, the Crediton Heart Project has invited back some of their talented tutors to run four Christmas craft workshops on Saturday 6th and Sunday 7th December.

The workshops will take place at Crediton Arts Centre and are open to anyone aged five and above. Parents and carers are most welcome to join in.

On Saturday the programme includes Block Printing Christmas Cards and Wrapping Paper from 10am to 1pm, followed by Pottery Tree Decorations from 2pm to 5pm. On Sunday there will be Yule Log Decorations at 10am to 1pm, with Wreath Making from 2pm to 5pm.

To add to the fun, on the Saturday evening there will be a free screening of the popular film 'A Muppet Christmas Carol' suitable for all the family. The doors will open at 6pm for festive refreshments and the film will start at 6.30pm.

Workshop tickets are just £3 for under 16s and £5 for anyone over 16 and can be booked online here <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-crediton-heart-project> Although the film is free please do book a ticket so we know how many to cater for.

Children aged 11-15 must be accompanied by an adult or a permission form signed at the venue. Those aged 5 to 10 years must be accompanied by an adult who can participate or watch.

The Crediton Heart Project is a volunteer-led charity working to keep the heart in our communities by running and supporting local projects and events. We are grateful for the support of Arts Council England, the National Lottery, Crediton Town Council and Devon County Council.



Yule log



**Torridge, North,
Mid & West Devon**

Accessing Foodbanks

Heating or eating; it is a stark choice faced by increasing numbers of people as the costs of both continue to rise. Citizens Advice Torridge, North, Mid & West Devon (CA TNMWD) is working with Trussell in North Devon and we have an adviser available at Foodbanks in Bideford, Ilfracombe, South Molton, Braunton and Holsworthy. We also have a presence in the Tavistock food bank on Friday mornings.

Foodbanks are community organisations that can help if you can't afford food or if you need emergency food, but a referral is usually needed before you can use one. You can get a referral for yourself and any family members you live with including your partner.

You can be referred to a food bank by CA TNMWD or from your GP, local council, housing association or social worker. Whichever organisation refers you will give you a voucher – but be careful to check if it is only valid on a particular day. CA TNMWD has advisers in attendance at food banks to make people aware of any benefit that they are eligible to claim, advise on other help that is available such as referring to our Energy Team for advice on energy savings or getting fuel vouchers if you qualify. Very often people have no idea what help is available to them and that is where we come in; if we cannot help you directly, we can usually signpost you to other organisations that can. The aim is to give people alternative solutions to relying on a food bank.

When you visit a food bank you will need to let them know about any allergies or dietary requirements. A food parcel usually contains enough food for three days and you may also be able to get essential toiletries like toothpaste or deodorant. Some food banks have a limit on the number of times you can visit but a chat with our Adviser will hopefully have opened up other avenues to help.

People are coming to CA TNMWD in greater numbers with problems that are increasingly complex. As ever, our plea is that if you could volunteer for maybe one day a week to please get in touch. There is information on our website www.citizensadvicetnmwd.org.uk or you can contact recruitment@citizensadvicetnmwd.org.uk. Volunteers get full training and ongoing support, they make new friends and know that they are making a valuable contribution to their local community. Why not join the team?

Rosanna Teale

How well do you know your village?

Can you answer the following questions:-

1. WHEN was the picture taken?
2. WHERE was it taken?
3. WHO is in the Picture?

No 105



For a closer look see our website:-www.newtonwonder.net/picture-quiz.html
you will find this picture and all the quiz photos so far .



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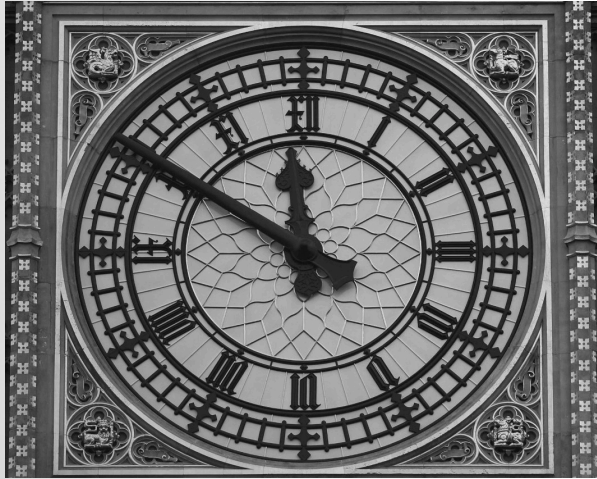
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NEWTON ST CYRES CEILIDH



**Barnstormers Ceilidh Band, Raffle,
Licenced CASH Bar & Light Supper
(please specify if Vegetarian option is required)**

DATE 31st December 2025

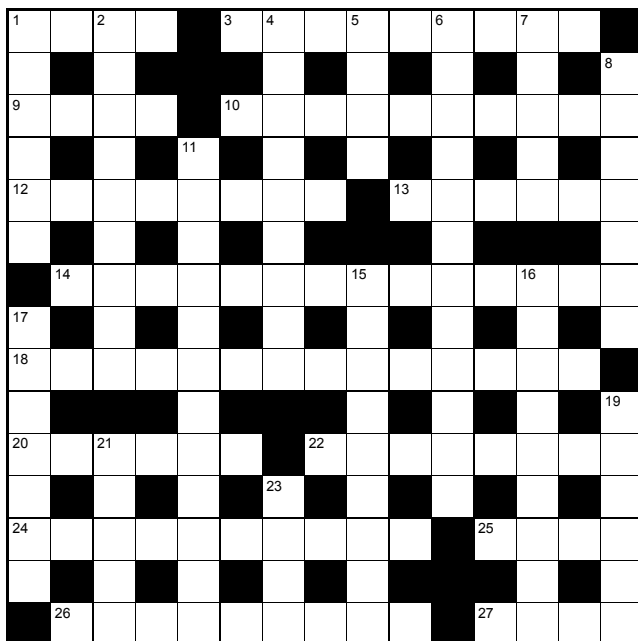
TIME Doors 7.30 for 8.00pm

VENUE N S C Parish Hall

**Advanced Booking Required
by Midday 19th December**

**£20 per person
from Nicola (01392 851985)**

Cryptic Crossword



ACROSS

- 1 Adorn the platform (4)
- 3 Diana's touring severe regions (9)
- 9 Kelvin abandons fortunate girl (4)
- 10 Best end of lamb with inedible coating (10)
- 12 Non-professionals in area must struggle (8)
- 13 Alternatively, agreement could be a nightmare (6)
- 14 Cobra contorts flexibly around one different snake (3-11)
- 18 How a British comedy drama is presented? (14)
- 20 Without hesitation train for duty (6)
- 22 Prosperous, with source of oil on the agenda (4-2-2)
- 24 Egalitarian comic rated badly (10)
- 25 Collection of myths is somewhat dated, darling (4)
- 26 California is not so perfect! (9)
- 27 Cart needs to reverse three feet (4)

DOWN

- 1 Daughter is on a roll, changing currency (6)
- 2 Dead chuffed to give bird a ring (4-1-4)
- 4 Not knowing or caring, one messed up (9)
- 5 Supports for flower (4)
- 6 I'm in eternal bother, chiefly – put another way it's endless (12)
- 7 Submit story about bishop (5)
- 8 Cleared off to make a statement (7)
- 11 Artistic style, one wrongly associated with Mozart's type of music (12)
- 15 Attempts to go round posh French island, a feature of Paris (9)
- 16 Unreasonable request by Watutsi monks? (4,5)
- 17 A tiresome chore, removing Ned's cigarette butts (3,4)
- 19 Italian meets unknown gypsy (6)
- 21 Butterfly makes mark on the page (5)
- 23 Listen to man in armour (4)

Sudoku

All you have to do is fill in the squares so that each row, each column and each square contain all the numbers from 1 - 9.

	3			1				
			9			7	6	2
5	2				7		1	
		1		7				8
		8				6		
9				8		5		
	8		2				7	6
2	9	3			4			
				9			3	

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Solution to November 2025 Cryptic Crossword

1	N	O	S	E	3	B	A	4	G		5	I	V	6	A	N	7	H	O	8	E
	I		H		E		R		D								A				L
9	P	O	U	N	D	C	A	K	E					10	D	R	U	I			D
	P		T		R										U			T			O
11	E	L	E	M	I				12	D	I	13	S	A	P	P	E	A	R		
	R		Y		D					I		C						U			A
		14	D	E	A	D	T	O	T	H	E	15	W	O	R	L	D				
16	O				E		S		O			A								O	
17	F	I	18	N	A	N	C	I	A	L	T	I	M	19	E	S					
	F		O						T		A		S		V		20	W			
21	D	E	S	T	22	R	O	Y	E	R			23	T	E	A	S	E			
	R		H			I					S		C		S					I	
24	I	N	O	F	F			25	S	C	H	O	O	L	I	N	G				
	V		W		L				A		I		A		V					H	
26	E	A	S	I	E	S	T				27	P	A	T	I	E	N	T			



Celebrating Women's Lives

Friday 5th December
7pm

The Exeter's Function Room
Thorverton

You are cordially invited to another evening exploring and planning a series of events across our parishes and villages to celebrate the amazing, incredible contribution women have made to the rich tapestry of our society, our world, throughout history, and continue to do so now.

We look forward to seeing you there!

For more information, please contact
Revd Tim Collins 01392 860767/, tim.collins@netherexe.org

Celebrating Women's Lives

An Update

The first gathering to explore a programme of events celebrating the lives of women took place on 4th November. There was a great feeling of enthusiasm and support for the proposal, looking to set up a yearlong programme of events focused on the women who have written out of history, those forgotten and missing, those sidelined or just simply ignored – but who have contributed extensively to the life and colour and rich tapestry of the world around us.

It is hoped that the events will not only celebrate the lives of women but will also raise awareness of the challenges women faced and still face, today; and even begin to challenge the evident inequality that exists.

During the meeting ideas and suggestions quickly flowed, and by the end there were already some firm proposals:

- *"Authentic Voices"* - a project to develop a record of local women's lives, which would then become an immersive exhibition, to include pictures, audio, writings. This will be progressed by two women (and others) from Newton St Cyres and Upton Pyne
- A Retrospective Exhibition of the Thorverton Art Festival, particularly showcasing the art of local women.
- A Flower Festival in Stoke Canon

Other ideas included a film festival, and an expanded Book Club, concerts and exhibitions, quizzes and discussion evenings. The embryo of many ideas – but all with great potential.

This is just the beginning, and we know that there will be many other events to get involved with, to help organise, to engage with next year.

If you would like to come along and share your ideas, then the next meeting is at:

7pm on Friday 5th December in the Function Room at The Exeter. (see the poster!)

Come along and add your voice to the celebrations.

All blessings

Revd Tim Collins
Rector, Netherexe Mission Community
 01392 86076/07449 111663
tim.collins@netherexe.org



1st Crediton Scouts Christmas Post

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Christmas Tree Festival Café (Sat 6th only), with additional post boxes
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Last posting: midday on Friday 12th December

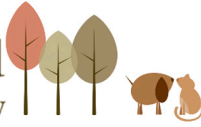
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The Parish Church of St Cyr and St Julitta

page 62

www.newtonwonder.net

It's Christmas (well, nearly)!

Let me ask you a question: With the ever-familiar strains of Slade or Wizzard or the Pogues in the background; with the perennial favourites like Mistletoe and Wine, or The Fairytale of New York, or Santa Baby no doubt playing on the radio, in the shops, and in the car; and as we all begin that magical countdown to the 25th December, I wonder: what is your most favourite part of Christmas?

Is it those days of eager anticipation, counting down the days? Opening the windows on the calendar, lighting the numbered candle.

Is it that time of preparation and planning – thinking about the presents to buy, the food to get, and actually really enjoying looking through the catalogues, or wandering the shops, soaking up the atmosphere, walking lightly in the air. Decorating the tree.

Or perhaps the first notes of that first carol - *Once in Royal David's City*, or *In the Bleak Midwinter*? Revelling in that angelic alto hitting that perfect note, as the people sit in candlelit darkness, listening to the story unfold in verse and song; the mulled wine and minced pies.

Then again, perhaps it is the actual present buying – getting that perfect gift for the most important person in your life, the one that they have always secretly wanted, but didn't know that you actually knew.

For parents with young children, maybe it's going along to the church or the school for the Christmas Nativity – stages crowded with shepherds and kings and donkeys and stables, with mumbled, missed lines, scenery wobbling in the background. But the whole filled with such deep love and boundless joy.

Or travelling to be with family, of all being safely gathered together, once more. Even if it is a little crowded at times.

Or maybe it's the early Christmas morning, and that look of joy and surprise on faces as they unwrap their perfect presents, so lovingly sought, so carefully wrapped, amid shouts of great delight and laughter.

In many ways, that very first Christmas, over 2000 years ago, was very much like all of the above – though perhaps not with Slade or Wizzard in the background – (mind you, they have been around for quite a while, so who knows ...) But that first Christmas **was** filled with eager anticipation, **was** a time of preparation and of planning, **was** a time with many travelling to be with family, **was** a time of crowded rooms and noisy people, of heavenly singing, of shepherds and kings (or wise men...), and incredible, unexpected, perfect gifts.

For hundreds of years, God had promised something extraordinarily special; for many years the people had been watching and waiting and counting the days. And on that night in a tiny almost forgotten village, the most unexpected, most perfect of gifts was given. Definitely a surprise, definitely not what many thought God's promise would be. But this little child wrapped in the arms of his mother and surrounded by love would change the world. From the moment that God walked among us, nothing would ever be the same again. This baby would be what the world needed – even if we never really realised then, and don't realise even now.

And my most favourite part of Christmas? Well, for me, it's walking out of church after the midnight service, into the quiet, moonlit streets, slightly exhausted but full of the absolute joy and wonder and beauty and love that is the very essence of Christmas.

May you have the most blessed of Christmases

Tim

Revd Tim Collins, Priest-in-Charge,

*Netherexe Mission Community
01392 860767*

tim.collins@netherexe.org

Newton St Cyres Churchyard: A Parish Questionnaire

Following a meeting held earlier this year to discuss and plan for the future of burials in Newton St Cyres, I, on behalf of the church community, am now seeking the opinion of as many people from the village and wider parish as possible.

We are very aware that there are only about a dozen spaces left for burials (though there will continue to be space for the burial of ashes). And so, we need to plan now for what happens when there is no more space. Any person who lives in the civil parish of Newton St Cyres has the automatic right to be buried in the churchyard – it does not matter if that person has a particular faith or no faith.

Currently, there is a piece of land next to the churchyard, generously given by John Quicke to the parish council. There is a proposal to pass this land to the church for it to be developed as an extension of the churchyard. So, in order to determine whether this is required or not, we would welcome your response to the questions on the next page:

Churchyard Questionnaire

1. Should Newton St Cyres maintain the option for people to be buried within the parish? YES/NO
2. If yes, who should manage and maintain the parish burial ground?
 - a. The Church
 - b. The Parish Council
 - c. An independent body
3. Establishing a new burial space will incur costs, not only in setting it up, but in maintaining and managing it. How should this be funded?
 - a. Donations
 - b. An additional amount added to the parish council precept (which is included in the Council Tax)
 - c. Other suggestion
4. Recognising the ongoing cost of maintaining the burial spaces, would you be willing to be part of a group of volunteers who would maintain the grounds of the cemetery? YES/NO

If Yes, please provide contact details:

**PLEASE RETURN YOUR QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE CHURCH
BY 31st DECEMBER 2025**

**THERE WILL BE BOX IN THE PORCH TO POST YOUR RESPONSE
YOU ARE ALSO WELCOME TO EMAIL YOUR RESPONSES TO ME AT:
tim.collins@netherexe.org**

**Thank you for your careful consideration of this matter
Revd Tim Collins**

Rector, Netherexe Mission Community

CAROLS at 6.30
By Candlelight
In Newton Church
On December 21st



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SERVICES & INFORMATION DECEMBER 2025

The Netherexe Parishes - A community of Anglican churches in Devon

Please see our website at www.netherexe.org under "Services" section.
We also have a calendar for services & latest events are under "news".

Wednesday 3 December

09:30 am	Mid-week Holy Communion	Thorverton [Exe Valley Farm Shop]
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Sunday 7 December

10:00 am	Communion/Toy Service	Stoke Canon
11:15 am	Café Church	Rewe
05:30 pm	Carol Service	Huxham

Sunday 14 December

09:30 am	Communion	Thorverton
10:30 am	Communion	Upton Pyne
06:00 pm	Carol Service	Cadbury

Tuesday 16 December

07:00 pm	Carol Service	Netherexe
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Sunday 21 December

09:30 am	Communion	Brampford Speke
11:15 am	Communion	Cadbury
05:00 pm	Carol Service	Thorverton
05:00 pm	Carol Service	Stoke Canon
06:30 pm	Carol Service	Newton St Cyres

Monday 22 December

06:30 pm	Carol Service	Brampford Speke
----------	---------------	-----------------

Tuesday 23 December

11:00 am	Bubble Church Nativity	Thorverton
05:00 pm	Carol Service	Upton Pyne

Wednesday 24 December [Christmas Eve]

04:00 pm	Crib Service	Stoke Canon
05:00 pm	Carol Service	Rewe
05:00 pm	Crib Service	Brampford Speke
08:00 pm	Christmas Mass	Newton St Cyres
11:30 pm	Midnight Mass	Stoke Canon

Thursday 25 December [Christmas Day]

09:30 am	Family Communion	Thorverton
10:00 am	Christmas Service	Brampford Speke [Joint with Upton Pyne]
10:00 am	Christmas Service	Cadbury
10:30 am	Christmas Service with Communion	Huxham [Joint with Stoke Canon]

Sunday 28 December

09:30 am	Communion	Newton St Cyres
10:00 am	Messy Church – Share & Play	Stoke Canon
11:15 am	Communion	Rewe

Every Tuesday at 6:00pm we gather for prayer in Rewe Church

At **Communion** services we share bread and wine: you are welcome to join us for the service and to share communion if you wish. A lay minister occasionally leads this service.

At **Coffee and chat** we enjoy time together in conversation with coffee and cake to hand.

At **Services** we share together in song, prayer and the bible. Special services are noted in the description.

Bubble church is for young families and **Messy Church** for families who enjoy craft.

Rev'd Tim Collins [Rector] Tel: 01392 860767 tim.collins@netherexe.org

For more information about the Netherexe Parishes please see www.netherexe.org or contact:

Juliette Lea [Administrator]
Tuesday & Thursday [09:00 – 15:00]
Tel: 07594 714590
Email: administration@netherexe.org

Peter Shepherd [Administrator]
Monday & Wednesday [09:00 – 13:00]
Tel: 07551 844321
Email: administration@netherexe.org



CHRISTMAS EVE
Holy Communion Service
In Newton Church
at 8.00pm

A WEEK IN NEWTON St CYRES PARISH HALL

Tuesday (Weekly)	Line Dancing	7.30pm	Paula Benford	01392 210830	pbenford45@gmail.com
Tuesday (Weekly)	Adonai Community Kitchen	1200 – 2.00pm	Jocelyne Whittaker	07508 871172	TheAdonai- CKitchen@outlook.com
Tuesday (fortnightly)	Young Farmers Club	8.00pm	Amy Taverner	07966 982815	amytaverner@gmail.com
Wednesday (Weekly)	Adonai Community Kitchen	1200 – 2.00pm	Jocelyne Whittaker	07508 871172	TheAdonai- CKitchen@outlook.com
Wednesday (monthly)	History Group	7.30pm	Jean Wilkins	01392 851337	jeanwilkins@btinternet.com
Wednesday (x 4 months)	Gardening Club	7.30pm	Nicola Baker	01392 851985	n.e.budden@exeter.ac.uk
Wednesday (Term time)	Greenshoots Montessori	Daytime	Melanie Grabowski		mmgrabowski@hotmail.com
Thursday (Term time)	Greenshoots Montessori	Daytime	Melanie Grabowski		mmgrabowski@hotmail.com
Thursday (2X per month)	Mah Jong	2.00pm	Geoff Jackson	01392 851551	megalops@btinternet.com
Thursday (monthly)	Parish Council	7.00pm	Jane Hole	01392 851148	parishclerk@newtonstcyres- pc.gov.uk
Friday (weekly)	Table Tennis	7.00pm	Roger Wilkins	01392 851337	rogerwilkins@btinternet.com
Fridays (some weeks)	Art Class	10.30am	Sue Rose	01363 772284	suerose9@hotmail.com
Saturday (second of each month)	Village Coffee Morning sponsored by various groups	1030 – 12 noon	Church (Sue Browne) Alternate months	01392 851460	suecbrowne@gmail.com
Saturday (some months)	Model Train Group	2.00pm	Ann Feetham	01392 215837	annfeetham@virginmedia.com

If you wish to book the Hall or learn more about the facilities, please contact our Bookings Secretary, Peter Watts at peterwatts369@btinternet.com or by phone at 01392 851369

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MAIN HALL

HOURS	LOCAL RATE	NON LOCAL RATE
Up to 3 hours	£26.00	£40.00
Up to 6 hours	£40.00	£60.00
Up to 9 hours	£52.00	£80.00
Up to 12 hours	£66.00	£100.00

CLUB ROOM

HOURS	LOCAL RATE	NON LOCAL RATE
Up to 3 hours	£15.00	£22.00
Up to 6 hours	£21.00	£31.00
Up to 9 hours	£28.00	£42.00
Up to 12 hours	£36.00	£55.00

Neighbourhood Watch Deputies

Sue Gee	Church Area	Glebe House	851164	asgee@btinternet.com
Tom Dowle	Court Orchard	24	851704	tomdowle@live.co.uk
Allan Pearce	Godolphin Close	8		
Chris Lee	Langford Road	Greenlands	851280	
Mike Kersey	Half Moon	12	851603	
Penny Pearkes	Newton House	9	851517	pearkes4@gmail.com
Wayne Meeton	Norton	Glenacre Sweetham	851954	wayne@wvmstudio.com
Derrick Rhydderch-Evans	Pump Street	Old Beams	851443	derrickrevans369@btinternet.com
Anna Mace-Leska	Sand Down Lane	Compass House	851441	leska@btinternet.com
Jacqui Ward	Smallbrook	2 Broadgate Cottage	851918	Jacquiward30@yahoo.co.uk
Jill Hawksley	Sweetham	Station Cottage	851269	peterbrew@aol.com
Clive Wootton	West Town	4 Meadowlands	851428	hollywallydoda@outlook.com
Vacancy	Woodlands			
Vacancy	Tytheing Close			
Geoffrey Jackson	"The Village"	Shaplands Cottage	851551	megalops@btinternet.com

For help, further information or to submit a report please go to the Parish Council website or contact the NSC Parish Council Co-ordinator, Monika Herpoldt-Bright monikaherpoldt-bright@newtonstcyres-pc.gov.uk, 07834 76447

WHO'S WHO IN THE VILLAGE

Priest-in-Charge	Rector: Rev. Tim Collins	
Church Wardens	Sue Browne, 1 Glebelands, Sand Down Lane	01392 851460
PCC Hon Secretary	Pita Burt pitaburt@gmail.com	01392 851410
PCC Hon Treasurer	Jackie Enright	01392 851859
Electoral Roll Officer	Jen Holt, 21 Woodlands	01392 851521
Tower Captain	Mary Quicke - mary@quickes.co.uk	07729 844945
Doctors (Crediton)	Redlands Primary Care Joseph Locke Way, Crediton, EX17 3FD https://www.redlandsprimarycare.nhs.uk/	01363 727111
Newton Wonder Magazine and Website	Editors:-Peter Hawksley - editor@newtonwonder.net Peter Cordingley - cogscord@outlook.com	01392 851269 01392 851778
Parish Council	Chairman - Liz Ouldrige lizouldridge@newtonstycyres-pc.gov.uk Clerk - Jane Hole	07752 959845 01392 851148
Parish Hall	Chairman – Nigel Chambers nchambers@ctc.uk.com Booking Sect - Peter Watts, peterwatts369@btinternet.com	01392 851400 01392 851369
Primary School	Head of Teaching - James Akhurst School Office	01392 851267 01392 851267
Newton Nippers Pre-School	Contact the school	01392 851267
Newton Nappies Toddler Group	Contact the school	01392 851267
Recreation Club	Chair- Carrie-Ann Finning - email: finning-newtonstycyresrecreationalclub@outlook.com Bookings - Claire Digby - email: newtonrecbookings@outlook.com	07834764471
Art Group	Jenny Hallam:- jennyhallam6@gmail.com	7787383658
Neighbourhood Watch	Monika Herpoldt- Bright. monikaherpoldt-bright@newtonstycyres-pc.gov.uk	
Footpath Warden	Graeme Barnell	01392 851308
Newton Environmental Wellbeing Group	Gill Melling newnewgroup@protonmail.com	07527 071663

Community Police	PCSO Nicola Payne, Police Station, Crediton Nicola.payne@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk	Dial 101
District Councillors	Sandy Chenore:- schenore@middevon.gov.uk Martin Binks:- mbinks@middevon.gov.uk	
County Councillor	Steve Keable steve.keable@devon.gov.uk	07967 655045
Local M P	Mel Stride mel.stride.mp@parliament.uk	01392 823306
Friends of NSC Station	Chris Southcott	01392 851569
Luncheon Club	John Salter, Hill Park	01392 851346
Mah Jong Club	Geoff Jackson _megalops@btinternet.com	01392 851551
Newton Ramblers	Rosemary Chambers	01392 851400
Tennis Club Secretary	Laura Leigh	01647 24259
Young Farmers	Harry Grigg harrygrigg456@gmail.com	7453034637
Archery	Alison Couling	01392 841282
Gardening Club	Nicola Baker	01392 851985
History Group	Jean Wilkins	01392 851337
Table Tennis	Roger Wilkins	01392 851337
Friends of the Arboretum	Secretary: Helen Iles friendsnewtonarboretum@gmail.com	07717 062810
Adonai Community Kitchen	Jocelyne Whittaker	07508 871172
Community Allotment	Gail Meldrum meldrumgail@gmail.com	07999 958799
Crediton Citizen's Advice	Adviceline (10.30 - 3.30)	03444 111444

The **NEWTON WONDER** is delivered within the Parish at a charge of only
£10.00 per year(in 2025. Subscriptions are due in January.

Please contact Gerry Radford on 01392 851504 or email
paul.radford3@btinternet.com.

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Please contact editor@newtonwonder.net

The **Newton Wonder** team consists of Peter Hawksley and Peter Cordingley (editors). Mark Phillips, Sue Phillips, Martin Taylor and Gerry Radford.

Articles for Publication: Please email to Peter Hawksley, editor@newtonwonder.net. Tel: 01392 851269

Notices of Local Events: Please email to Peter Hawksley as above.

Local voluntary Village events are included free of charge.

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Small	£40	£50
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Full Page	£200	£240

All items for publication must arrive by the 15th of the month before publication. Please send by email wherever possible otherwise they should be sent to the Editor at Station Cottage, Newton St Cyres EX5 5AS

We aim to distribute the **Newton Wonder** at the beginning of the month but this cannot be guaranteed. It is recommended, therefore, that events taking place early in the month be advertised the previous month.

The **Newton Wonder** (Monthly except January) is delivered to local households and businesses at an annual charge of £10

The editorial team of the **Newton Wonder** does not necessarily agree with the views of contributors contained in their published articles. This is a **community magazine** and it is our policy to print reports, articles and submissions that might be of interest to the community - provided that we have sufficient space to do so and they are not libellous in content.

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Our Vision and Goals

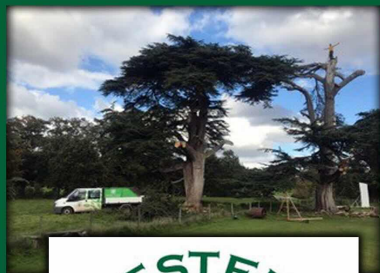
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**DELIVERY WITHIN THE VILLAGE - IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO COME WHY NOT EMAIL US AND WE WILL TAKE
YOUR MEAL TO YOU (1.00 - 2.00) Or you can collect it from the Parish Hall from 12.30 -2.00pm**

We are looking for volunteers/young people doing their DSV, Tintors or looking for community experience for their CV, before attending university. We also would appreciate anyone that is free on a
Tuesday or Wednesday from 11 to 3pm to help with our Community Kitchen in Newton St Cyres Parish Hall.



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