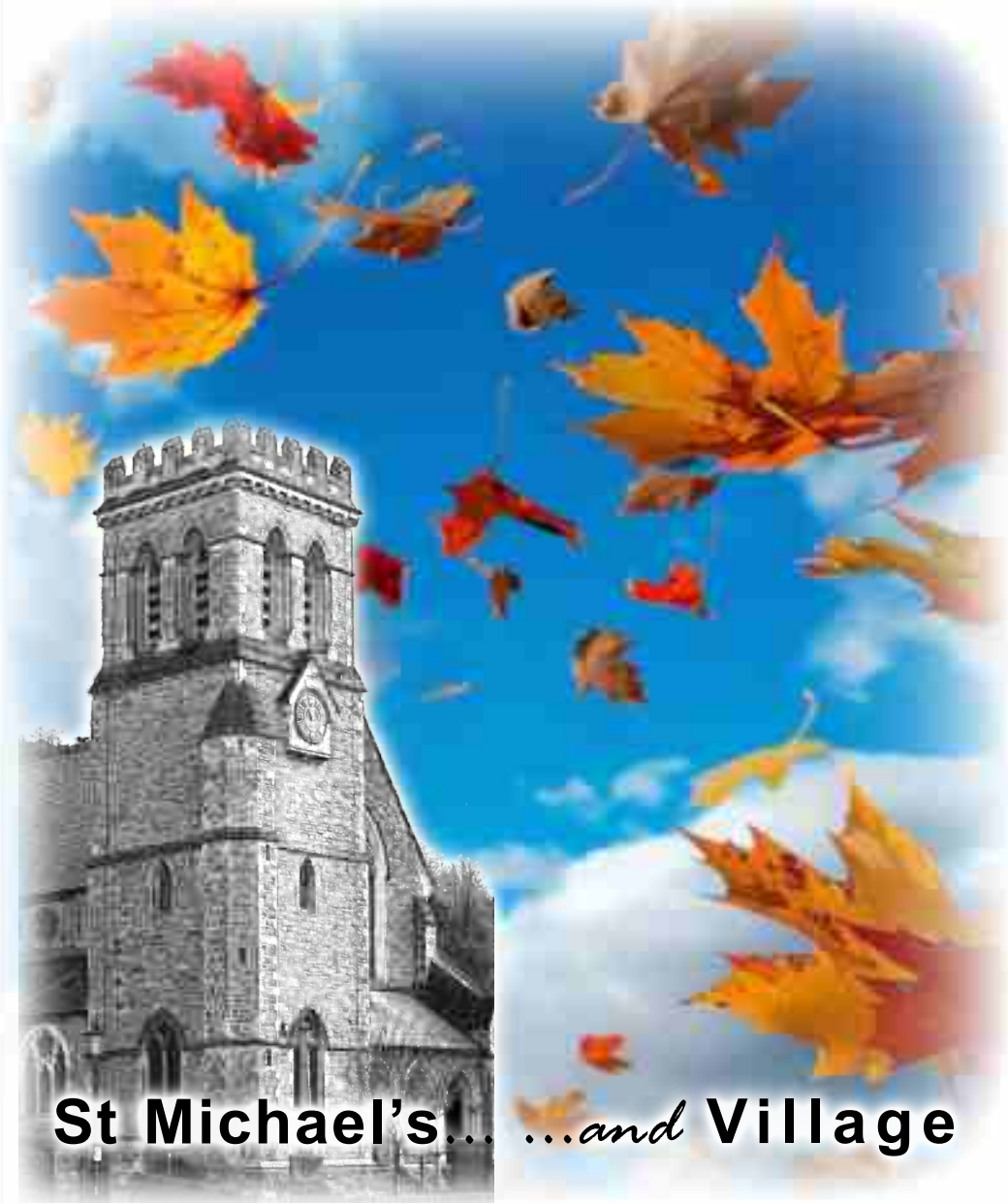
Beer Parish News

October 2026



St Michael's... ...and Village

CHURCH DIRECTORY

www.coastalchurch.org.uk

VICAR **Rev Justin Montague** coastalvicar@hotmail.com 07308 264614

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Parish Finance Officer Helen Moulding cmctreasurer@hotmail.com

Local Pioneer Minister Rev Shuna George Pritchard shuna.art@gmail.com

ST MICHAEL'S ...

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Altar Guild: Mrs P. Bewick 21954

Mrs Y. Hawker 22191

Choir: Dr G. Butler (Practice Tuesday 5-6pm) 21375

Organist: Dr G. Butler 21375

Children's Society: Ann Stott seatonchurch@hotmail.co.uk 23656

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Mrs Y. Hawker, Mrs P. Bewick,
Mrs E. Singleton,
Mrs S. Anderson



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Area code for all phone numbers above is 01297 unless shown otherwise

In an emergency, parishioners should contact the Churchwarden (see above for phone number).

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St MICHAEL'S CHURCH

Coastal Mission Community
www.coastalchurch.org.uk

St Michael's Church, Beer

Calendar for OCTOBER 2026

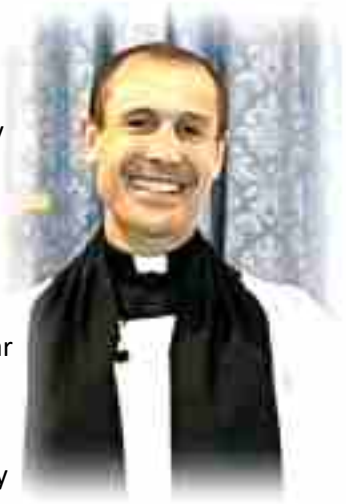
Sun 27th Sept	**9:30am Holy Communion**	*17th Sunday after Trinity*
Wed 30th	10:00am Prayer for Church 150th Anniversary	
Thurs 1st Oct	6:30~8:30pm "Orpheus in the Caves" rehearsal	
Fri 2nd	10:00am Mickey's Music Makers	
Sun 4th Oct	**8:00am Holy Communion** **9:30am Morning Praise**	*18th Sunday after Trinity*
Tues 6th	5:00pm Choir Practice	
Wed 7th	8:30am Open the Book at Beer School 10:00am Reflective Prayer Group	
Fri 9th	10:00am Mickey's Music Makers	
Sun 11th	**9:30am Holy Communion**	*19th Sunday after Trinity*
Tues 13th	5:00pm Choir practice	
Wed 14th	8:30am Open the Book at Beer School **10:00am Holy Communion at BEER**	
Fri 16th	10am Mickey's Music Makers	
Sun 18th	**9:30am Morning Praise**	*20th Sunday after Trinity*
Tues 20th	3:15pm C.A.B. meeting 5:00pm Choir Practice	
Wed 21st	8:30am Open the Book at Beer School 10:00am Prayer for 150th Church Anniversary **5:30pm Evening Prayer at SEATON**	
Fri 23rd	10:00am Mickey's Music Makers	
Sun 25th	**9:30am Holy Communion**	*Last Sunday after Trinity*
Tues 27th	10:00am Altar Guild Meeting	
Wed 28th	**10:00am Holy Communion at SEATON**	
Fri 30th	No Mickey's (Half-Term)	
Sat 31st	10:00am~12noon SOS (Seriously Occasional Singers)	
Sun 1st Nov	**9:30am Holy Communion** **4:00pm "All Souls" Thanksgiving Service at SEATON**	*All Saints Sunday*

****

Sunday services in Beer are usually on Facebook. If you can't come to church, you can watch and hear them there, either live or later at a time convenient to you!

From Justin

Rev's Ramblings



October is a month when I find myself thinking particularly about family. Within the space of a single week come the birthdays of my mother, my dad and my brother. They are dates associated with celebration, memories, cards, presents and, of course, cake! All these things and more remind us of our closest relationships and the people who play such an important part in our lives.

But later in October come two very different anniversaries for me: the deaths of a brother and, a year apart, one of my closest friends. Perhaps that is something many of us recognise?

Our calendars tell stories. Certain dates arrive carrying memories with them. A birthday, a wedding anniversary or the day somebody died. Sometimes a date which means very little to everyone else can mean absolutely everything to us.

When I think about family, one of my abiding childhood memories is Sunday teatime. For the first part of my childhood, it was my mum, my two brothers and me. Then Mum met the man who would become my stepfather and, when they married, our family suddenly became much bigger, with two further brothers, a sister and a stepfather.

Sunday was the day when we were all together, and teatime became quite an operation. There were a lot of children around the table, all apparently possessing completely insatiable appetites. Egg sandwiches seemed to emerge from the kitchen on a conveyor belt, and no sooner had one plate arrived than it disappeared and another was required.

For us children, it was one of the highlights of the week, though I'm not entirely sure our parents remember it quite so fondly! But for me, looking back, there was something rather wonderful about that table. Different personalities, adventurous stories, plenty of noise and laughter, and probably the occasional disagreement. But above all, somehow, we had become 'family'.

Recently I was reflecting on a short passage from Mark's Gospel, chapter 3.31–35 (ESV). Jesus is teaching when someone tells him:

"Your mother and brothers are outside seeking you."

Jesus looks around at those gathered with him and says:

"Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of God, he is my brother and sister and mother."

At first, those words might sound rather strange. Is Jesus dismissing his own family? Not at all. I believe Jesus is actually 'expanding' the concept of family here. He's saying that belonging can extend beyond blood, biology and surname. Around him a new family is being formed, the family of God, into which people are invited through Him, welcomed and given a place to belong.

And perhaps the image of a table helps us understand something about that.

Over the years, the people in our homes and around our tables change. People join the family. Children grow up and fly the nest. Family members form new relationships, families expand and new people are welcomed in. People also move away and, inevitably, there are empty chairs. People whom we would dearly love still to have sitting around the table. Voices we would love to hear again. People whose birthdays remain written on our hearts long after we can no longer celebrate with them.

Love and grief are never very far apart, because we grieve precisely because someone mattered. This is one reason why, during the coming weeks, we will hold two particularly important services in our churches.

Our Thanksgiving Service (4pm, Sunday 1st November) in Seaton gives us an opportunity to remember before God those whom we have loved and lost. Our Remember Our Child service (4pm, Sunday 18th October) provides a gentle space particularly for those carrying the loss of a child, at whatever age and however long ago.

Neither service is about pretending that grief has disappeared, and the Christian hope is certainly not about telling people simply to somehow 'move on'. It is about bringing our memories, our gratitude, our sadness and our hope into the presence of God, and placing our trust in Jesus Christ, who walks with us in our grief and points us towards a hope greater than death itself. Perhaps that is why those words of Jesus mean so much:

"Here are my mother and my brothers."

Jesus reminds us that family is about more than sharing a surname. It is about relationship. Belonging. Knowing that we have a place, and that our lives are bound up with the lives of others.

Whether your calendar looks similar to mine this autumn, whether you have upcoming anniversaries or celebrations, or perhaps people you will particularly be remembering, there may be an empty chair at your table that still speaks loudly of someone who once sat there.

Our Thanksgiving Service and Remember Our Child service provide space to remember those people: to give thanks for them, to acknowledge honestly the sadness of their absence, to hold all that means before God, and to light a candle in their memory.

I sometimes think back to those noisy Sunday teatimes: our crowded table, carefully keeping tabs on how many sandwiches each of my siblings had consumed, and a family that had become much bigger than I had once known.

And perhaps that is a fitting image with which to finish this month's ramblings. Jesus looks around at a collection of very different people and is saying:

"Here are my family."

And through Him the table is bigger than we ever thought. This 'expanding' family includes a place for you and me.

Take care, God's blessings.

Revd Justin

Steve Rogers, our speaker, unfortunately had an accident so he couldn't speak but has now been booked for our February meeting. A speedy recovery, Steve.

We were, at short notice, lucky to find Hilary Bradt MBE who gave us a talk entitled, 'taking a risk – my adventures in travelling and publishing'.

She was an excellent and entertaining speaker. Hilary decided when she was 21 to explore America after seeing The Royal Hunt of the Sun in London and became fascinated with the historic sanctuary of Machu Picchu.

She left London and went on her own to the United States and worked for 5 years before she was ready to start her expeditions. She trekked through Peru in the 1960's (a very different place then with less tourists and travel facilities). She then continued to explore from Columbia to Argentina and Brazil.

This was followed by many trips including a journey with her husband from Cairo to Cape Town.

Another trip was a 1000 mile journey on horseback around Ireland.

In 1974 Hilary decided to set up Bradt Travel Guides with her then-husband during an 18 month backpacking trek across South America, relating her stories and giving advice about travelling often organising trips for other people.

All this resulted in producing guide books which are still in use and can still be purchased. These books cover off the beaten path, challenging destinations such as Madagascar, Rwanda, Albania and Socotra.

Thank you Hilary.

We continue with our groups.

Cards are every Thursday afternoon

Creative writing and book club groups meet monthly.

WI trip on October 23rd to the town mill in Lyme Regis.

Quiz night November 18th in the Congregational Hall.

Our monthly meeting is on the first Wednesday of the month at 7.30 pm in the Congregational Hall.

Please contact Chris Paul 01297 792129 for further details.

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

Last meeting held Tuesday 1st September 2026

As we go into the Autumn St. Michaels church thanks everyone for their support during the summer season and all the events held in the church and look forward to your continuing support.

Feedback from Harvest Festival Service held Sunday 20th September, this was well attended and was followed by a "Harvest Breakfast" all held in the church which was enjoyed by all, earning very positive comments with a lovely atmosphere and delicious breakfast delights.

It was a lovely way of marking this special time of the year and again the church looked beautifully decorated. There was a fabulous amount in the way of donations for AVCAP and very generous amount of donations behalf of the Seaton Food bank.

Pat Bewick chair of the altar guild committee heartily thanked everyone who supported and worked hard to make this another successful event.

Please come and join us, everyone is very welcome

Next meeting: Tuesday October 27th 2026 @ 10am.

Children's Society.

Our annual Children's Society House Box collection will take place during October. Please bring your boxes to St Michael's Church or contact the Parish office – 01297 23656 / email seatonchurch@hotmail.co.uk to arrange collection.

Thank you, *Ann.*

OVER 70s CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Beer WI are pleased to confirm that we will again be holding the Christmas Lunch for over 70s this year, on Thursday 3 December in Mariners Hall.

Admission will be by **TICKET ONLY.**

APPLICATION Form on page 29 - numbers limited so act now and hand it in at Beer Village Stores (Top Shop).

ANNA CHAPLAINCY OCTOBER and early NOVEMBER worship and events – If you have a loved one or friend you visit in one of the Seaton care Homes, please consider joining us for our monthly worship. You would be most welcome. Kindly check with the care home prior to your visit in case anything changes at the last minute.

Monday 5 October - THORNFIELD 11.00 a.m

Wednesday 7 October – CHECK HOUSE 11.00 a.m.

Monday 14 October – NETHERHAYES 10.45 a.m.

Tuesday 13 October – 2-4 pm. MEMORY CHURCH St Gregory's church centre Seaton. Worship, afternoon tea, fun, and fellowship. Church for those who find our church buildings difficult to access for whatever reason. We have disabled facilities and a loop system for the hard of hearing. We welcome you!

Tuesday 20 October - LYME BAY VIEW 10.45 a.m

Wednesday 21 October– 2-3 pm - ANNA'S PLACE St Michael's Church Beer. A shorter reflective service with Holy Communion for older people, followed by refreshments. All are welcome.

Monday 26 October – THE MANOR 11.00 a.m.

Tuesday 27 October – THE SEATON 10.45 a.m.

NOVEMBER

Monday 2 November - THORNFIELD 11.00 a.m.

Wednesday 4 November - CHECK HOUSE 11.00 a.m.

Anna Chaplain Mary - 07805655335 Anna Chaplain Sue – 07802649155

Anna Chaplain Kathryn - 07864110230

The church office - CONTACT 01297 23656 email: seatonchurch@hotmail.co.uk







The weather over the past month has produced some rain, although the soil is still very dry, and temperatures have remained high. Many of the plants in the garden have begun to recover, and we have hopes of a reasonable display of dahlias after all. Some of them have struggled to stay alive during the heat, so it is lovely to see them producing flower buds. As most people have discovered, grass goes into a dormant stage when it is too dry, and in most lawns it has been revitalised by a few showers.

The hot weather has brought us a feast of butterflies. Amongst the usual suspects such as Red Admiral, Peacock, Brimstone and Common Blue we have seen the occasional flash of bright yellow indicating a visit from a Clouded Yellow butterfly. These distinctive butterflies are regular visitors to England, often in very small numbers. This year appears to be one of their occasional mass immigration episodes and hopefully the conditions will have enabled them to breed successfully. In the garden we have only seen one at a time.

Even though Autumn has hardly started, we have already brought in some hops to decorate the living room as well as bringing us good health and fortune for the next year. We continue this old custom in honour of my father who came from the centre of the hop-growing area of Kent. However, these hops have come from Worcestershire where they grow in the hedge at a sailing club on the river Avon. Hops were grown in this area too, many years ago, so these plants are probably the remnants of a cultivated variety.

The local tawny owls have been particularly vocal recently. The youngsters leave home and disperse to new venues in autumn, so one wonders if the nightly outpourings are related to this activity. Leaving parties?

At the moment you can see a lot of activity on the cliff face just to the east of the Fine Foundation Centre. The mining bees are busy making nests for their eggs. Each queen bee will ensure that there is pollen and nectar in the nest before laying her eggs, and she will die before the grubs hatch. Although the bees on the cliff appear at the same time, they are not social animals and do not interact with the other mining bees. You probably have some solitary bees in your garden, making nests in patches of bare soil.

I expect that you will already be familiar with the telephone box art gallery in Seaton Hole. The artist who displays his work there, Simon Wellington, donates the proceeds from his work to local charities. This year he has decided that Beer Village Heritage will be his chosen charity. Thank you, Simon.

Our thanks also go to Anna and Graham Hughes for their donation to BVH. Anna and Graham manage one of the Craft Fairs in the village and ask for donations to local charities in lieu of an entry fee. We really appreciate this continued support from them.

Thank you to everyone who has paid their subscriptions for this year. If you wish to pay by bank transfer, please ask David Morling for our bank details. If you prefer to use cash, please put it in an envelope with your contact details written on the outside, and either post it in the diving tank at the centre or hand it in at the post office. Subscriptions for 2026/7 are £5 per person. Beer Village Heritage is a registered charity, and we rely on annual subscriptions and donations in order to run the Fine Foundation Centre and the Bomb Shelter. You'll find the Beer Village Heritage walks and I-Spy online via our website: http://www.beervillageheritage.org.uk . We apologise that some of the links on the site are still not working.

Axe Valley Heritage Association is holding their Annual General Meeting on Friday 30th October at 1400 in the United Reform Church in Cross Street, Seaton. The final AVHA Talk of 2026 will take place at 2pm on Monday 2nd November at the Gateway Theatre. The speaker will be archaeologist and TV presenter, Julian Richards, who will be revealing all the latest about Stonehenge. Tickets are now available online and at Paperchain on Marine Parade.

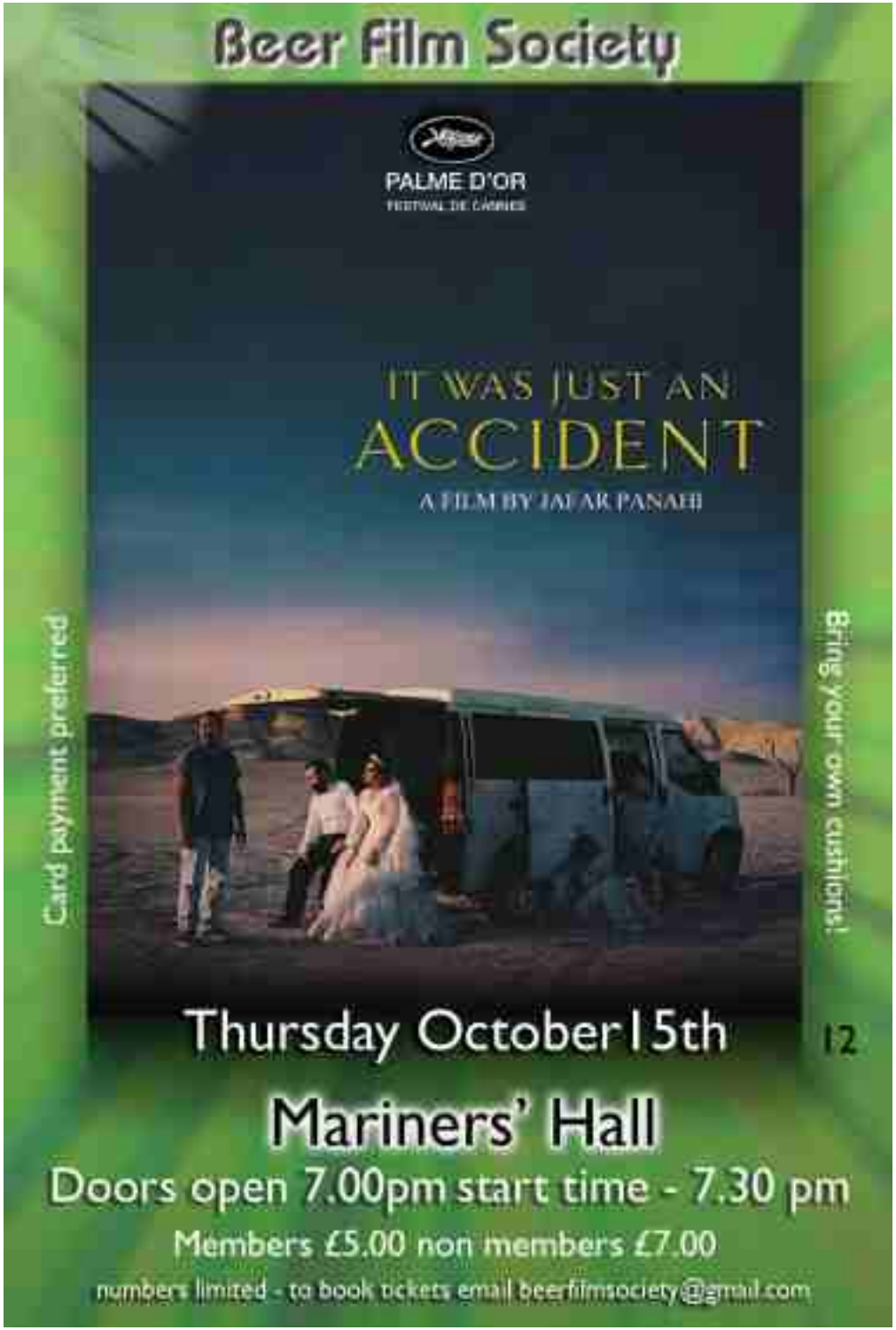
The Pebblebed Heaths Conservation Trust is hosting a variety of activities over their "Wetland Weekender" which will be based in the Otter Estuary over the weekend of 23rd – 25th October. These range from a talk on ospreys to creating an embroidered panel – so look at their "what's on" page for something to whet your interest.

The Branscombe Project is hosting their biennial Exhibition in the village Hall on October 24th and 25th. It is entitled "Where Memory meets History" and will be open from 1000 – 1700. After the exhibition closes on the Sunday evening, there will be a showing of the recent film discussing climate change, "People's Emergency Briefing".

Barbara Farqharson is the subject of the Sid Vale Association's "Meet The Author" event at 1430 on October 28th in their offices in Church Street Sidmouth. She will be discussing "The Burnt House at Weston".

Did you manage to go on a guided walk to Cannington Viaduct recently? More on the celebrations next month!

Thanks to our sterling volunteers, the Fine Foundation Centre is open every day and continues to welcome a steady stream of visitors.



Beer Film Society

IT is a complete change of pace for Beer Film Society's October movie on Thursday 15th as we screen a film from one of the most courageous directors in world cinema.

'It was Just An Accident' (2025, 12, 1hr 40mins, sub titles) is the latest work from dissident Iranian director Jafa Panahi and made the shortlist for both the Oscars and Baftas this year and won the prestigious Palme d'Or at the Cannes Festival.

Panahi has run in trouble with the Iranian regime on many occasions and in June this year a Tehran Revolutionary Court upheld a one-year prison sentence for charges of engaging in 'propaganda against the state.'

Despite this and also facing a two-year travel ban he returned to Iran after travelling abroad to promote this latest film in his ongoing and acclaimed career, arguing that he belongs to his community and family.

Sadly Iranian film-makers, prominent media figures and celebrities are closely monitored in Iran and their work reviewed for content deemed critical of Iran.

In his previous troubles with the regime Panahi has received support from Hollywood stars like Tom Hanks, Robert de Niro and Francis Ford Coppola.

His latest film centres on an unassuming mechanic, who is reminded of his time in an Iranian prison when he encounters a man who he suspects to be his sadistic jailhouse guard .

Panicked, he rounds up a few of his fellow ex-prisoners to confirm the man's identity.

This is a thoughtful and provoking film that deals with issues like justice and revenge, while also offering warmth and sympathy for its characters.

As one national critic remarked: 'As with all of Panahi's work, you applaud the simple fact of its existence.'

We highly recommend it.

The Mariners' Hall doors open at 7pm with the film starting at 7.30pm. The bar will be open and Baboo ice cream creams will be on sale.

Since my September report we had a great and successful time at Seaton Carnival Classic Car Show on Sunday 30th August and Seaton Carnival Street Market on Monday 31st August. We thank Seaton Carnival for allowing us to share their gazebo and for their help and support. We sold RNLI Christmas Cards, calendars, diaries and RNLI gifts and souvenirs and people placed donations in our RNLI Ted's collection bucket at all the events.

We had a great time in the Seaton Carnival Procession on Saturday 5th September. Our entry RNLI Summertime Rescue was entered in Class D4 and we were very pleased to receive third prize. Kate, Wendy M and Ann gave out sea safety information leaflets and stickers during the procession. Meg and I were with our inflatable D Class lifeboat and RNLI Ted 1 and RNLI Ted 2 were in the lifeboat.





On Wednesday 16th September I was delighted to present a Certificate of Thanks to Steamers Restaurant for £600 raised from £2 from each Shared



Fish Board sold between September 2025 to the date of September 16th. We thank Steamers Restaurant very much for their continuing support.

As I wrote my October report we were looking forward to being at the Restore Volunteer Fair at Seaton Gateway on Saturday 26th September, collecting at Tesco Honiton on Saturday 10th October as part of the RNLI Lifeboat Saturday and our Coffee Morning in conjunction with the Fisherman's Mission at Beer Sailing Club on Wednesday 21st October. Our Annual Sponsored Walk is being re-scheduled from our usual mid-October and details will be advised when the date and route are decided. Additional walkers are always needed and welcome to take part. During November and December we will be going to events and Christmas Fairs at Beer, Colyton, Seaton and Axe Yacht Club. Our Tesco Seaton Christmas Collection is on Wednesday 16th December.

Our RNLI Shop at Jubilee Gardens is due to close for the winter at the end of October but additional volunteers are still needed and welcome on a rota or relief basis at our RNLI Shop at Jubilee Gardens. Call in to the shop on Friday mornings when our Shop Manager is usually there and/or see our volunteers. Help is still needed with fundraising collections, at our events and events we attend in our area with our sales stall. Please come and say hello when you see us.

Best wishes to everyone as we proceed through the last three months of 2026.

Wendy Cummins, Secretary Fundraising/Events
Seaton Beer and District Branch RNLI

Coffee Morning

@ Beer Sailing Club



WEDNESDAY 14TH OCTOBER

ALL WELCOME

10AM UNTIL 12PM



COME ALONG BETWEEN 10AM AND 12PM FOR TEA, COFFEE AND CAKE

Early notice!

Book your child's visit to Santa. More from Puffins at Christmas on \page 23.

Santa is here!

At Puffins



3RD DEC

SANTA IS ATTENDING OUR CHRISTMAS FAIR FROM 3PM

Meet & Greet

Please Book

01297 20403

admin@puffinsatbeer.co.uk

£3 per child

Christmas 2026 in Beer

The big Christmas weekend (4-6th December) will look a little different this year with the highlight of a Victorian Fayre on Saturday 5th December!

We are planning something for everyone … or so we hope! With a free drop in Circus School for the youngsters, live music including the songs from Oliver and the Beer Wurlitzer, ghost walks, lace making, Victorian themed stalls and skittle alley fun and even fortune tellers.

The shops will be judged as always on their themed windows, but we are hoping that many of them and you will dress in Victorian dress and there will be prizes!

How can you help? Do you have any props or costume pieces that you can loan to add atmosphere on the day? Or can you join us in costume to add to the day? We have costume hire for a town crier, Victorian policeman, gentleman explorer or lady of leisure!

Friday will still have our hugely popular Craft Fair in St Michael's Church, the switch on of the lights and the children's disco. Plus a mini late night shopping centred on Umma Gumma and Chocolate & More.

Sunday afternoon will see Carols in the Chapel but we will be publishing a full schedule in the November issue of the Parish Magazine. So for info about Santa Paws (best dressed dog), best decorated homes and more do watch this space!

If you can help or have an idea, please call Jo on 07447558757.

Christmas trees in Beer

Small trees, chosen specially for the tree brackets along Fore Street or cosy homes will go on sale outside the Mariners Hall on Saturday 21st November. It's also the day of that month's Horticultural Society table top sale.

If you'd like to pre order a small tree or order a larger tree, please do speak to Woozie.

POPPY APPEAL LAUNCH



It's that time of the year again when the poppies appear and we commemorate our Armed Forces. This year Beer will be awash with poppies, including knitted ones – made by so many people – thank you so very much. The Appeal starts on Thursday 22nd October with a national launch and smaller version in Plymouth. Here in Beer, we decided not to left out and will hold our own launch!

On Saturday 24th October between 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. everyone is invited to the Congregational Church Hall for tea and cakes, free entry, but with the inevitable raffle. You can be one of the first with your poppies, silk or knitted and help us launch Beer's Poppy Appeal. We might be a small village, with few wonderful shops and no supermarket, but the community spirit lives on and everyone so very generous.

Our new Poppy Appeal Organiser, Jo Fox, will be there to greet you, together with Sybil and Peter Anderson and their special table of poppy merchandise.

Up at St Michael's, John and Di will erect their soldier and wreath, and we are hoping for one more surprise.

Remembrance Sunday on the 8th November will, as usual, commence at 11.00 a.m. at St Michael's with bugler and a parade from the Scout Hut leaving at approximately 10.45 a.m.

The reading of the names and wreath laying will be followed by a service in the Church, led by our Chairman and Vicar Rev Justin Montague. Then on the 11th there will be a short service by the Memorial at 11 a.m.

A poignant and often emotional time during the Appeal with memories going far back to WW1, but important that we never ever forget.

Just for your diaries the Devon County Festival of Remembrance will be held at CTCRM Lympstone on Saturday 31st October. Our anniversaries will be remembering The Falklands with special message from Simon Weston, Vice President of our Dartmoor branch, Afghanistan and Iraq and our band will be the Salamanca and Bugles of the Rifles. This year we are delighted to invite Gregory Seward as our soloist with one of his songs being "Bring Him Home". If you wish to attend, please either contact me or go on to Eventbrite where you will see the link. An excellent evening, I am assured.

I am still trying to organise a military concert, mainly for Beryl and Kath – our two 'Bond Girls' and we will hold a concert in Beer Caves next Spring.

Carole Arnold 07710809765 / carole.arnold123@gmail.com

THE BRANSCOMBE PROJECT
October 24-25 10 to 5
EXHIBITION
30 YEARS of the BRANSCOMBE PROJECT
WHERE MEMORY MEETS HISTORY



The Project has been going for thirty years and we want to celebrate! We hope you'll enjoy this retrospective show. There'll be excerpts from some of the more memorable exhibitions and reminders of all the talks, walks, drama docs and books that have taken place over the years. There'll even be a new special souvenir book.

In the social room there'll be a viewing of the Napoli CD, the Favourite Places map (with an invitation for you to add *your* own favourite places), the Talking Head video, Flickr photos, and the Fixed Point video showing how the landscape has changed over the years.

The Fixed Point video will be on view from 10 to 12 am on both Saturday and Sunday, the Favourite Places from 12 – 2, the Talking Heads from 2 – 4. Flickr photos and the Napoli CD will be on show the whole time.

And, of course, there will be cream teas (from 2.30 to 4.30)

This may be the last Project exhibition. Perhaps you would like to see what we've been doing over the last thirty years … Or, if you're a regular attendee, you might like a trip down memory lane.

Sunday, October 25

'Peoples Emergency Briefing'

A Film

On Sunday, October 25, after the exhibition closes, there will be a showing of a very powerful climate change film 'Peoples Emergency Briefing' . Do come if you can …

More from The Branscombe Project

October 28th 2.30 pm

MEET THE AUTHOR

Barbara Farquharson

The Burnt House at Weston

Winners and Losers in an Eighteenth-Century Landscape

at The Sid Vale Association, Church Street, Sidmouth

Nigel Hyman will talk with Barbara Farquharson about the book that she wrote with John Torrance – 'The Burnt House at Weston', Branscombe. Winners and Losers in an Eighteenth-Century Landscape'. There'll be time for Questions and Answers. Tickets £2.50 for SVA members, £5 for others.

Monday November 23 7:30

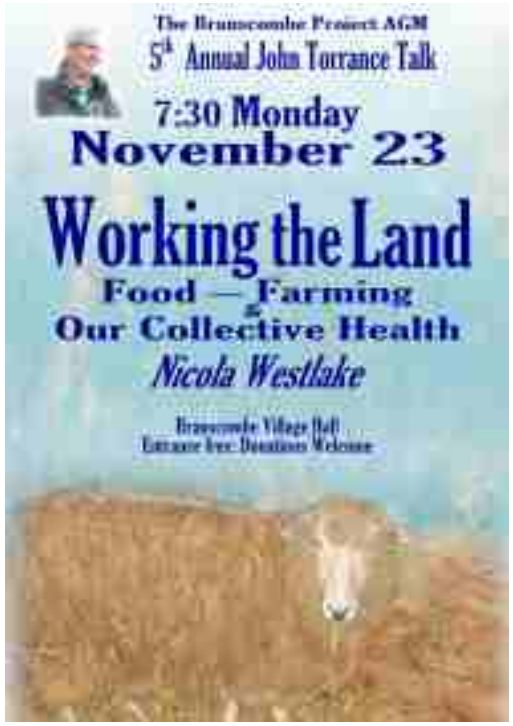
The Branscombe Project AGM

5th Annual John Torrance Talk

Working the Land

Food – Farming & Our Collective Health

Nicola Westlake





Puffins at Beer



Puffins at Beer

BEER PARISH COUNCIL

Local Government Reform (LGR) The New Unitary Authorities (UA)

A lot of people are starting to ask questions about this, so I will try to answer with information available at present, which is not much. Trying to get information is difficult, even to the point that the Westminster government only announced the changes for Devon on the day before it started Its summer recess, but its implementation is planned for April 2028, so there is not much time to implement changes.

The general idea of a Unitary Authority (UA) is to remove the many layers of local government - County, District, Town and Parish councils - and replace them with one all-encompassing organisation, thereby gaining many cost savings by replacing the duplicated departments and elected councillors in district councils with one central organisation.

Unitary authorities were first mentioned by Harold Wilson in 1966, before the previous major reorganisation of local government. Since then, successive governments of both main parties have played with the idea – in 1986, 96, 2010, 2025 and 26 – and one would have hoped that after all this time they would have worked out what to do.

The answer however is "NO" there is no standard format as to how LGR will take place, with each local area trying to outdo neighbouring areas to get the best deal.

This has now been revealed in Devon with a plan proposed by Exeter and Plymouth councils, for 4 planned unitary authorities covering Exeter, Torbay, and Plymouth, and everything else controlled by The Devon Council (DC). What effect will this have on the residents of DC, is yet to be seen but it does not appear to be a good deal in any way shape or form for its residents.

The existing unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay have increased the size of their respective areas, and now operate along with a new Exeter authority, who cherry picked the main population and revenue generating centres of Exeter, Exmouth and Cranbrook. The DC becomes very much the poor relation being left with the scraps and expensive liabilities no one else wanted.

Each unitary authority will set its own council tax, and will pay for Social Care, Education, and Roads along with the rest of the services in its area it administers. The three authorities Exeter, Torbay and Plymouth each have a relatively small geographical area, with a large population to serve, but also have a very large number of residents and business who will have the tax burden spread amongst them, and have no doubt done their calculations to be able to balance the books.

The fourth area DC covers everything else, from the Somerset and Dorset borders in the east to the Cornish border in the west, and a very large section of both the north and south Devon coastline. It has a wide spread of low-density rural population, a couple of small towns providing smaller revenue generating potential, whilst having greatly increased costs due to the size of the area in which they have to operate. In the new DC area it is about 75 miles from one side to the other both East West and

North South compared with about 15 miles in each direction for the new Exeter Authority, What the cost per head of population and to business will be, is yet to be decided.

To put this into perspective the new DC area encompasses about ¾ of the area Devon County Council used to administer but only has about ¼ or less of the present revenue generating potential, to pay for all that needs to be done.

One area of greatly increased cost will be the road network, Motorways are funded separately by Central government, however, most of the major trunk roads A30, A303, A38, A35 etc run through the DC area, taking traffic to the 3 smaller but economically independent UA. This is in addition to funding all repair works on the thousands of miles of smaller road networks, of Lanes, Footpaths, Bridleways and Public Byways in the new area. This places a huge financial burden on the residents of DC.

The new DC also takes on responsibility for most of the problematic coastlines and eroding cliffs, including the road at Slapton Sands, as well as large parts of Dartmoor, Exmoor and the South Hams. Where is all of the money to maintain the existing assets, liabilities and infrastructure coming from?

Where will this new authority be based? Barnstaple, or Okehampton have been suggested, both of which will require journey times of 2 hours both ways to reach East Devon. Leaving DC to pick up the greater operating costs.

Representation of the electorate is another area of concern, Local District councillors at present have responsibility for around 1500 to 2000 residents and they are being abolished. The number of new DC councillors is to be reduced, with one councillor at the moment allegedly going to be responsible for 5000 to 6000 residents, but it is likely that this figure will be much higher.

Representation at truly local level, town and parish councils, is at present unsure – there is no detail in the legislation as to how these elected but unpaid councils will continue. Some existing unitary authorities have abolished these locally elected representative councils and have replaced them with local unelected committees. When we asked what was likely to happen in Devon, the reply was the town and parish council may have to step up and take more responsibility, but there is no money available, it is just expected that these unpaid councillors will have to take on more.

The upshot will be if you have a concern or problem, you will have to contact your UA councillor in say Okehampton to get a drain unblocked say in Beer or Axmouth.

What is likely to happen in the future is unclear, however we do know that DC has already earmarked all of the existing council carparks for itself. There has been a lot of talk about the public toilets with the parish councils originally being coerced by EDDC into taking them on. Initially a dowry was to be paid for refurbishment of the toilets, from a large pot of money (several millions) initialled for a programme of toilet refurbishments, now the running and ownership of the toilets is not going to be

continues...

...continued

discussed until after formation of the DC. You should be aware however that there is no legal duty for a council to provide public toilets.

Planning control is another area of concern. If the parish and town councils are abolished, the initial but limited planning control is no longer available, with the district councils who had the greatest influence on planning decisions no longer in place, local planning control will rest with the DC based who knows where.

The Hangman's Stone nutrient recycling plant is a prime example. At present it is Devon County Council who is responsible for giving approval. In April 2028 that responsibility passes to DC, how will a new cash hungry authority look at a proposed large scale industrial facility, that could have either significant environmental effects, or provide a very large slice of revenue.

What happens to all of the other activities such as emergency housing, emergency and disaster relief, social housing, street cleaning, rubbish and recycling, hedge and verge cutting, playgrounds normally carried out by the District council? Again, no one knows

Given that implementation of the new UAs is only 18 months away, you would have assumed that the senior officials in local government would have already started to disseminate information, but no. It would however appear that the greatest level of activity is amongst the council official themselves, each jockeying for a suitable position in the new authority before many are made redundant from their soon-to-be-non-existent (but previously well paid) district council posts. How much are just these redundancy payments going to cost? The effects are already being felt with ordinary council workers leaving their jobs to start new ones before the redundancies begin.

To the future, no one can actually say what the landscape will look like, but I think we can all be sure that the lack of easily accessible local elected representation will cause many issues, getting small to medium local problems solved will become very difficult, all services provided will be very much reduced, but you can almost be assured that the price we pay for these diminished services will increase.

Local government at town and parish council level has always been apolitical with no party politics or bias, This decision has removed that neutrality and has been foisted upon us all by the political council leaders in Exeter and Plymouth, with their completely disrespectful "I'm alright Jack, damm the rest of you" attitude an extremely unjust and unfair decision which has been endorsed by the government, something to remember when the prospective new councillors come looking for your vote.

Tim Stevens

These are my observations and views on the subject, given the information available at present.

August 2026

BEER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH - SERVICES & NOTICES



OCTOBER

Sunday October 4th - 10am Morning Service with Holy Communion
Sunday October 11th - 10am Morning Service
Sunday October 18th - 10am Morning Service
Sunday October 25th - 10am Morning Service
6-30pm Harvest of the Sea Service preceded by Hymn Singing at 6-15pm and followed by refreshments in the Hall

NOVEMBER

Sunday November 1st - 10am Morning Service for All Saints' Day with Holy Communion

COFFEE MORNINGS IN THE HALL EVERY 2nd and 4th THURSDAYS - 10-30am - 12 noon

Julian Group

THE JULIAN MEETINGS

We are a small group who meet regularly in order to grow in the practice of Contemplative Prayer in the Christian tradition.

Julian Meetings welcome people of ALL denominations or none. Meetings usually take place on the 2nd Monday of each month 7.20pm for 7.35pm at St Gregory's

For more information contact: The Church Office on 01297 23656

The Value of Suffering

- Hindrances. Obstacles. Difficulties. Your life has contained many hardships.
  All the things that stop life from being comfortable and easy.
  But if all of life was comfortable and easy …. we would be asleep.
- Hindrances are necessary for consciousness to grow. When you were a child you knew little about the world. Now you know a lot. But you have suffered – all across the scale of suffering from irritation right through to heartbreak and trauma. And it is the suffering that drives you to find the energy and strength to endure.
- There are times when it's difficult to accept that a personal trauma has arisen for a purpose, and that you will come through it. The experience blinds you for the moment. Saying an inward "Yes" to something unpleasant or even wounding -- allowing it to be what it is -- may not come easily.
- You endure suffering by sitting with it, by being still and present. That is, no story-telling, no judgement. Holding the attention in the space of stillness opens you to an infinite well of intelligence and insight. Every person has the capacity to do this.
- Bad things happen to people. And in the midst of crisis it's difficult to see a reason and purpose behind it. But everything that happens in life – whether you brought it upon yourself or it was inflicted on you – is there for a purpose. It is to expand your consciousness and deepen your capacity to absorb what happens.
- Suffering has purpose. Its purpose is to end suffering. Through it you take your awareness to a level where you discover endurance and strength and transformation of your consciousness. In short, you grow wise.
- For suffering to exist it needs time. Presence is timeless. If you are as yet unable to hold your attention in the focus and depth of Presence, then you still need more time and more suffering …. in order to see that you do not need time or suffering.

OVER 70s CHRISTMAS LUNCH

Beer WI are pleased to confirm that we will again be holding the Christmas Lunch for over 70s this year, on Thursday 3 December in Mariners Hall.

Admission will be by **TICKET ONLY**, and, due to Health and Safety concerns, numbers will be strictly limited to **80**.

If you would like to apply for a ticket, please fill in the application form below and hand in at Beer Village Stores (Top Shop); tickets will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and will be sent out in the middle of November. Additional forms are available at Top Shop.

————————————————————————————

I wish to apply for a ticket for the over 70s Christmas lunch (max 2 per form please)

Name ……..

Address ……..

Tel/email ……

Any special dietary requirements ……

……..

————————————————————————————

YOUR LOCAL CONTACTS

Parish Council

John Heath	cllrjheath@beer-pc.gov.uk
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(Chair)	07855 023482
Karen Stevens	cllrkstevens@beer-pc.gov.uk.com
Simon Whitelock	cllrswhitelock@beer-pc.gov.uk
Carole Arnold	cllrcarnold@beer-pc.gov.uk
Mark Finney	cllrmfinney@beer-pc.gov.uk

Clerk to the Council: clerk@beer-pc.gov.uk
Tess Nishino 07354 390682

Internal Auditor: Jacqui Peskett - Aalgaard Renshaw Business Solutions Ltd.

East Devon District Councillor
John Heath 07966 089257

Devon County Councillor
Paul Arnott paul.arnott@devon.gov.uk

Member of Parliament Richard Foord
Email: Richard.Foord.MP@parliament.uk
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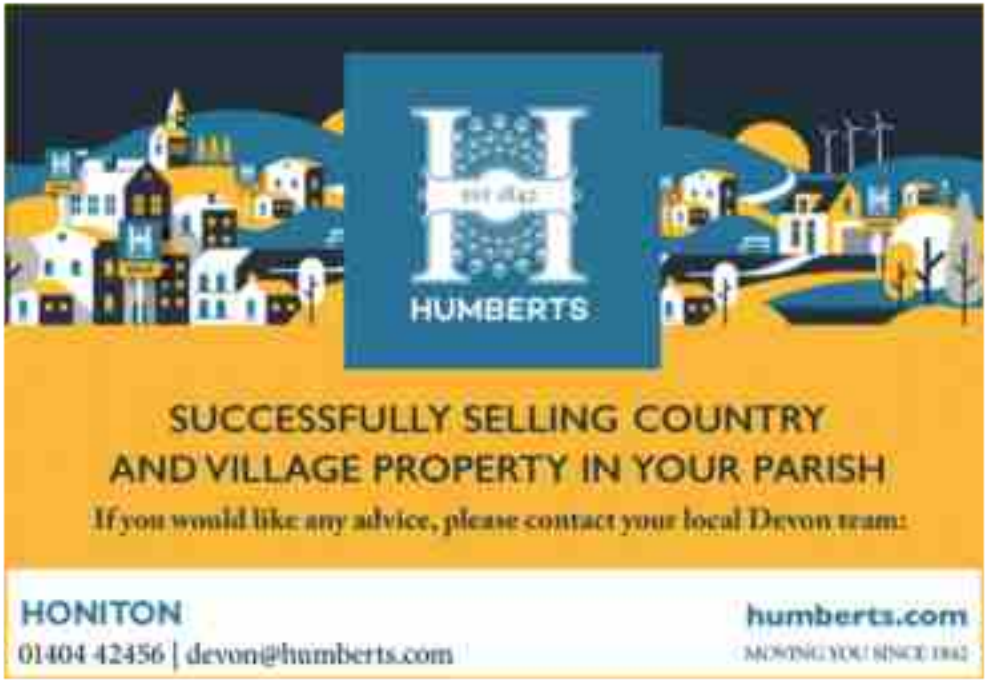


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