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Local Police Updates

Neighbourhood policing is a key part to the way that Devon and Cornwall Police deliver policing within the community. Your neighbourhood team consisting of Inspector David Turner, Sgt Matt Clark, PC Richard Jephcott and PCSO Paul Fudge (pictured) provide visible and accessible engagement, working with the community to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and respond to community concerns.

Recently there has been a spate of push bike thefts across the Exeter area.



We would encourage bicycle owners to attend one of our bike register events that are advertised through our media posts. Please report incidents or criminal offences to the police via 101 non-emergencies or 999 where there is an offender on scene or serious risk. Occasionally there are reports of 'Rogue Traders' that operate in the area. If anyone calls at your door offering gardening services, roof repairs or general home repairs and asking for cash payment and you haven't requested them to call, our advice is to say NO Thank You. Always use your door chain before you open the door fully. Keep up to date with what's going on in the area by logging on to Community Messaging alerts. Sign up to receive your updates at Home Page - Devon and Cornwall Community Messaging.



Your Garden needs you! Litter picking volunteers sought

The local community's wish to see Queen's Crescent Garden owned by the community was not only driven by recognition that it could and should serve as a public greenspace for all to use and enjoy in the heart of St James, but that much-needed regeneration and re-establishment of careful maintenance would help to renew a sadly eroded sense of pride in the whole neighbourhood.

First significant steps towards achieving the Community's Masterplan have already been made, but equally transformative has been the quiet contribution of dedicated volunteers, not least the team of litter pickers who, taking turns on a daily rota, ensure that the Garden remains litter-free. After many years of loyal service to the community, a couple of volunteers have had to retire, so please consider whether you might be able to join the rota. Get in touch to discuss: qcgc@exeterstjames.org.

Similarly, do get in touch if you would like to use the Garden for an organised activity or event. The Trust will be keen to approve wherever possible.

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A Publication by Exeter St James Community Trust Delivered to all Properties in St James

Issue 22

Winter 2025

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St Sidwell's School Climate Change workshop

Children from St Sidwell's Primary School were invited to be part of a climate change workshop with a cartooning focus. They were special guests at the interdisciplinary, multigenerational event which was held at the University of Exeter's St. Lukes Campus. Throughout the day, the children listened to keynote speakers who are world-leading climate scientists, asked thoughtful questions, and explored their expertise in greater depth. They also enjoyed a performance by the Argentina-based Kamishibai Cardboard Theatre Company, who creatively combine drama and cartooning to explore themes around climate change and environmental awareness.

Through the afternoon, the children worked in small groups alongside scientists and artists to create their own climate narratives through cartoons. It was a fantastic event and, hopefully, one which will remain with the children as they continue their education and reflect on their place and responsibilities in our changing world.



Bury Meadow Park

Bury Meadow Park Volunteers have been busy planting bulbs and keeping the Park looking cared for this year and the Park has been a focus for neighbourhood picnics in the summer, a lovely way for neighbours to meet.

The volunteers have a new partnership with the Gateway to Independence course based at the Hill (the hub for Independent Living and Learning) at Exeter College. This was arranged by their International Baccalaureate Student volunteer, Amelia Pearmain. Nine students and college staff members work in the park on a Friday afternoon and their help is very gratefully received.

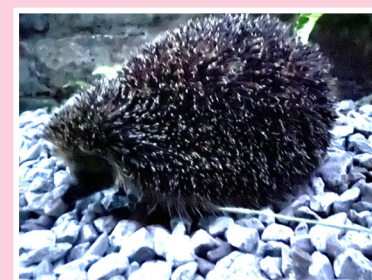
The volunteers meet on the 2nd weekend of every month 3:00 on Saturdays and 10:00 on Sunday. It is a very inclusive group of neighbours from the area, ages 6 to 80 and it's a lovely opportunity to meet neighbours, and to enjoy this beautiful and historic city park.

Other groups are very welcome and if your group is interested in getting involved then please contact by email
ruth.gilson@
googlemail.com



Wonderful Wildlife

For many years, Powderham Crescent Residents' Association has been delivering welcome letters to new student residents. In the past couple of years, information about keeping wildlife safe has been included. No one in St James can miss the wide range of wild birds, but the Crescent regularly has foxes visiting and badgers have been seen in the past, probably living on the railway embankments. The Crescent garden has boxes for bats and birds and squirrels are living there too. This year was good for returning nesting swifts with wonderful shows by large flocks swooping and screeching joyfully overhead. In the past couple of years, residents have been pleased to find hedgehogs snuffling around their gardens after years of not seeing many. One student house was delighted to have seen a hedgehog in their garden. This maybe an urban area, but there is plenty of green space for wildlife.



Remember, Remember

The Powderham Crescent Residents' Association bonfire party on 5th November wasn't dampened by a badly timed shower at the beginning of the evening. It is held in the Crescent garden where around 90 people enjoyed a thrilling firework display accompanied by music. Households brought a large firework or packet of rockets to create the display. Residents brought food to share resulting in an impressive and delicious buffet. PCRA supplied 35 litres of mulled wine to wash it down. After most had gone home, several residents enjoyed a chat around the fire. Despite the event



not being overly friendly to wildlife, the bonfire is checked thoroughly for sheltering animals before being lit. In previous years, a fox was seen in the garden on the night and on following nights, seemingly enjoying any buffet bits that fell to the floor.

TWRA rabbit talk!



Thornton West Residents Association, TWRA, held its AGM in September and were delighted to host a talk by Libby Chapman, a PhD student at the university who is studying the rabbits in the Hoopern Valley. Neighbours may have seen her in the valley watching the rabbits through binoculars or a telescope. Libby observes the rabbits' behaviour to understand how they respond to stress and how this differs depending on whether they are alone or with other rabbits. Overall, it seems rabbits thrive better in company – they spend less time scanning their surroundings and more time doing what rabbits enjoy – mainly eating!

TWRA is also organising regular Street Clean-ups on first Sunday of each month, and the neighbourhood Winter Gathering will take place on 7th December.



Local Councillor is Mayor

Cllr Anne Jobson, who lives in our area, was delighted and privileged to be elected as Lord Mayor of Exeter in May. She not only chairs Council Meetings, but also attends many diverse events:

- Meeting inspirational Exeter College Apprentices; Sea Cadets; St John's Ambulance and young performers at the Barnfield and Northcott
- Royal Marines exercising their Freedom of the City; Coldstream Guards being presented with new colours at Windsor Castle
- VJ Day and Remembrance Day with time to reflect and remember
- Topsham St James 150th anniversary cricket and the Caribbean Windrush cricket festival
- Women's Rugby World Cup with a full cathedral cheering the French and Italian Teams, plus a Guildhall celebration for the New Zealand Team and exciting matches at Sandy Park
- Anniversaries celebrating Exeter's history - Topsham Charter

Day's 725th Anniversary and Lammas Day with the big white glove and its 1330 Charter

- The Cathedral's 975th anniversary of its dedication
- The 300th anniversary of the South Street Baptist Church
- 25th anniversaries for Krispies Fish and Chips and the South West Grid for Learning (pioneers in online safety)
- 10th anniversary of the Meet and Remember Group.

Anne also promotes awareness of her charity for the year, Riding for the Disabled – Exeter Group, at monthly coffee mornings from 10.00am (13th December, 31st January and 28th February) and an art exhibition on 12th December. Do support these at the Guildhall.

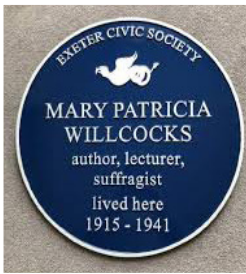


Devon's "forgotten feminist" in St James.

Edwardian novelist Mary Patricia Willcocks was born near Ivybridge on the edge of Dartmoor in 1869. She became a teacher publishing her first novel "Widdicombe" in 1905. Her second, "The Wingless Victory", was sufficiently successful for her to give up teaching and in 1907 she moved to Exeter with her mother living first at 38 Powderham Crescent. Later, after her mother's death, she moved to nearby 35 Pennsylvania Road and then a few years later further up the road to number 88.



Able to concentrate on writing she became a pioneer of the radical feminist novel eventually publishing more than twenty books featuring strong female heroines and stories often set in rural Devon. As an early supporter of Women's Suffrage she campaigned vigorously for Votes for Women and in 1913 she joined hundreds of West Country women in the suffragist march from Penzance to London. In November 1918 she stood unsuccessfully as a candidate for the City Council in our St James Ward.



Feminist, socialist and pacifist she died in 1952 and is buried in Higher Cemetery. In 2023 Exeter Civic Society unveiled a Blue Plaque at her former residence 88 Pennsylvania Road.

Community Engagement Officer Update

The University's Community Engagement Officers work alongside Rory Cunningham and Sophie Meadows (the University's Community Liaison Team) to offer peer support and guidance to students living in the community, as well as being the main point of contact for Resident Associations and Community groups.

The Team began the term by helping a number of Resident Associations distribute their own welcome letters to new students and assisting with the annual Prospect Park Street Party. The Officers also teamed up with 'Apps Ice-Creams' to distribute copies of our Student Community Guide (with free ice-creams) in the heart of the St James Ward.

The team would like to extend thanks to all of the residents who met with the Community Engagement Officers at the 'Community

Challenge' event, organised in partnership with the University's Sustainability Team and Community Panel. The Team helped gather feedback from residents at this special sustainability-themed event - exploring how they can work together to create new projects that boost recycling, whilst tackling food waste, overconsumption, and more. Some exciting project ideas were discussed and more details will be made available soon. Looking forward, the team will also be focussing on a range of social media videos to boost the use and uptake of the new doorstep food collection system introduced by the City Council - particularly in the lead up to the end of term. If you have any feedback, ideas or queries for the Community Engagement Officers, they can be emailed on: communityengagement@ex.ac.uk



Percy Prowse retirement

The Bury Meadows Residents Association was honoured to celebrate Percy Prowse's retirement and elevation to Alderman at their AGM. They presented him with a lifetime membership to the Association to recognise the support and advice he has given to the community over his 16 years of service. He has been a City Councillor, Lord Mayor of Exeter and County Councillor. In all those roles he has always been there for the community. We wish him well in his next adventure!

Friends of Hoopern Valley

By the time you read this Friends of Hoopern Valley, FoHV, will have had their second AGM, and have ideas for the next year of activities. Their goal is to facilitate members of the community to run their own nature related events in the valley, as well as to organise some themselves. Hoopern Valley is a beautiful natural facility managed by University of Exeter and FoHV is the link between the University and the local community encouraging understanding, sustainability and enjoyment of this glorious place. Membership costs just £5 per household per year. Information is on their website at: www.hoopernvalley.org/home



Welcome new support for Queen's Crescent Garden

Earlier this year a staff team from Exeter College, including those with combined bricklaying experience of over 100 years, spent a day repairing a cracked section of original Victorian wall. The Trust is very grateful to Dave O'Connor, Head of Faculty-Construction and the Built Environment, for arranging for highly-skilled members to focus attention on our community garden while sharing their expertise with colleagues. A great team and a great job done to ensure the ongoing safety of this section of wall until funds are available for permanent renovation!

Streetlight Trial

Devon County Council (DCC) has been converting its 79,000 streetlights to low energy LEDs. Once complete the authority will have reduced the carbon emissions generated by its street lighting by 75%, which corresponds to an annual £6 million saving. DCC first introduced part-night streetlighting in residential areas in 2009 and the Council's Central Management System currently allows adjustments to be made remotely to around 80% of Devon's streetlights.

Following a 2024 small-scale pilot on of 550

streetlights, the DCC Cabinet approved, in December 2024, the trialling of a 12-month reduction in lighting countywide in residential areas only, not main roads. They calculate that this will achieve a reduction of circa 225 tonnes of carbon and a saving of £300k per year. They took into account the separate needs of city, market towns and rural communities, as well as recognising the importance of dark skies, and the benefits to wildlife and the environment.

A phased roll out of this trial across Devon began on 1 April 2025, starting in Exeter. The publicity states that in Exeter, residential streetlights will be dimmed to 40% output

from 9:30pm – 12:30am, before being switched off from 12:30am until 5:30am, and returning to 40% output from 5:30am-6:30am. Looking out the window in St James this clearly was not the case. Enquiries revealed that St James was being lit to the main route regime, i.e. dusk to 9:30pm – 100% output, 9:30pm to 12:00am – 75%, 12:00am to 5:00am – 50%, 5:00am to 6:00am – 75% and 6:00am to dawn – 100%. The findings of the trial will be reviewed in 2026.



Friends of Hoopern Valley Insect Safari

On 6th October we were lucky enough to have 2 local entomologists join us in Hoopern Valley for an insect safari. Dr. Clive Betts and Zoe Mack led the walks for 15 local residents over 2 sessions. Storm Amy meant that fewer species were evident, but still 32 different examples of insect life were found including ladybirds, shield bugs, gall wasps, butterflies, spiders and a cricket. Zoe Mack, who runs an apiary on the university campus gave a fascinating talk about the Asian hornet, an invasive and predatory species which is now found in the UK. Fortunately none were found on this safari. We hope to invite them back in the Spring when there should be a greater variety of insects to discover. If you'd like to join the mailing list please for to our website: www.hoopernvalley.org/home

