

PARTNERSHIP NEWS

Issue 21
Winter 2011

EAST DEVON TENANT REPRESENTATIVE GROUP NEWSLETTER

Produced by tenants for
tenants and leaseholders

It's snowman season!

'Shame we won't be here when the new-look spring newsletter comes out!'

Your newsletters are changing!
Read more on page 7

Snowman spot the difference on the kid's activity pages - see page 16

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Tenant
Representative
Group

PARTNERSHIP NEWS

EAST DEVON TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER
CUSTOMER PANEL NEWSLETTER

Photos on this page and front
cover by Christine Batchelor



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reward for Powell Close residents.

Update on your newsletters

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questionnaire, we are changing!

We want to hear from you!

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To request this newsletter in an alternative
format or language please call 01395 516551
or email csc@eastdevon.gov.uk.

We consider requests on an individual basis.

ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

Honiton Residents visit Thelma Hulbert Gallery

Residents from Dunning Court, Honiton, enjoyed an afternoon of tea, cakes, and chat with Curator Angela Blackwell and exhibiting artist Nicky Thompson at the Thelma Hulbert Gallery earlier this summer. Some of them took the opportunity to try out Nicky's photo print techniques to produce their own work, which was declared 'Better Than Bingo!' by one gentleman.

Dunning Court is adjacent to the Thelma Hulbert Gallery (Elmfield House) in Dowell Street, and residents enjoy a close and happy relationship with the curator and staff.



LOCAL RESIDENT HONOURED

Services to the community rewarded at Buckingham Palace

A resident was honoured for her relentless services to the community over many years with an invitation to a garden party held at Buckingham Palace.

Rosemary Pavey was a founder member of the popular Variety Club in Branscombe originally held in the local school over 30 years ago. Funds were raised to build a new village hall and Rosemary became a member of the hall committee for 24 years, which led to her role as Chairman and now President for many years.



Rosemary Pavey with her invitation to the garden party held at Buckingham Palace

Rosemary has also been a member of the British Legion for over twenty years and for twelve of those years spent much of her time fund-raising. During her busy schedule of voluntary work, Rosemary managed to find time to drive people to hospital that were unable to get there on their own.

At 74 years of age Rosemary continues to be an active voluntary member of a thriving community. She is modest about her achievements but was thrilled when she received her invitation and grateful to all the villagers for her recognition which is well deserved.

HELP US SAVE MONEY

Would you like to receive your newsletters by email?

We believe that it's important that tenants get the best value, and are always looking for ways to save money if possible. So we'd like to highlight another way to receive your newsletters.

If in future you would prefer to receive your newsletters by email, please let us know. We will then send you a PDF copy of the newsletters as soon as they are released. Please email us at tenantparticipation@eastdevon.gov.uk with your name and address, stating that you'd like to receive your newsletters this way. If you'd like more information, please contact Tenant Participation (details on page 2).

GET INVOLVED

Calling all tenants: we need you!

We are looking for individuals who are committed to improving services for all tenants to be part of our Tenant Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel is fairly new and is a completely different way to get involved in how services are checked and improved. The panels' role is to scrutinise services, make recommendations, and work with Housing officers to make improvements to services if they are not meeting our tenants' and leaseholders' needs.

Panel members will have a real opportunity to make a difference and gain some valuable work experience.

If you are enthusiastic, committed, and looking to be involved in the Housing Service, we want to hear from you! Giving more really does mean

getting more – the more you put in the more you will get out.

We have vacancies on the Tenant Scrutiny Panel which we would love you to fill – so if you would like more information or would like to apply, please contact us (details on page 2).

What does joining the panel mean for me?

- Training and mentoring tailored to you
- Valuable skills
- Developing your self-confidence
- Meeting new people and making new friends
- Making use of your time in a productive way and keeping you active
- Expenses for travel and child care will be covered

IN THE COMMUNITY

100th birthday celebration for Mrs Crispin

A party was organised for Mrs Crispin which her friends and family attended. She also received a special birthday card from Queen Elizabeth II.

Mrs Crispin has lived in her property at Burnside, Exmouth for over thirty-seven years. She is active and still goes and gets her shopping with the assistance from the local shop. Mrs Crispin does all her own housework and most meals. Mrs Crispin has a supportive daughter, granddaughter, and good friends and neighbours.

Mrs Crispin is partially sighted, hard of hearing, and has arthritis – but this does not stop her sweeping up leaves! She also sings with her good classical voice, having previously sung on stage in the war. Mrs Crispin says: 'We never had microphones – we had to project our voices!'



Mrs Crispin with her special birthday card from the Queen

LOW-COST GARAGE RENT

Garages to rent

We currently have vacant garages in Axminster, Beer, Branscombe, Budleigh Salterton, Chardstock, Colyton, Exmouth, Honiton, Lupitt, Lymptstone, Musbury, Offwell, Ottery St Mary, Newton Poppleford, Payhembury, Plymtree, and Seaton.

The cost of renting a garage for council tenants is £10.68 per week and for private applicants it will be £12.82 (including VAT).

For further information and if you are interested in renting a garage please telephone Housing Needs on 01395 517469.

KEEP UP-TO-DATE

Dates for your diary

January–June 2012

JANUARY

- 11** Sheltered Housing Service Review Group, Sidmouth: 2 pm
- 12** Housing Review Board, Sidmouth: 6pm
- 18** Dray and Morgan Court Residents Association meeting, Exmouth: 11 am
- 18** Age UK talk, Morgan Court, Exmouth: 12 noon
- 19** Lymebourne and Arcot Park Residents Association meeting: 2.30 pm
- 24** Housing Drop in Session, Honiton: 2.30 pm

FEBRUARY

- 7** St Gregory and Mead Way Residents Association: 2 pm
- 21** Tenant Representative Group meeting, Sidmouth: 10.30 am

MARCH

- 8** Housing Review Board, Sidmouth: 6 pm
- 14** Housing Drop in Session, Exmouth: 10 am
- 22** Customer Care Commitments Service Review Group, Sidmouth: 2 pm

APRIL

- 3** St Gregory and Mead Way Residents Association: 2 pm
- 17** Tenant Representative Group meeting, Exmouth: 10.30 am
- 25** Sheltered Housing Service Review Group, Sidmouth: 2 pm
- 26** Lymebourne and Arcot Park Residents Association meeting: 2.30 pm

MAY

- 3** Housing Review Board, Sidmouth: 6 pm
- 25** Housing Drop in Session, Axminster: 4 pm

JUNE

- 5** St Gregory and Mead Way Residents Association: 2 pm
- 21** Customer Care Commitments Service Review Group, Sidmouth: 2 pm

CARING FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN DEVON

Devon Disabled Holidays

Devon Disabled Holidays (DDH) was originally formed in 1959 by the Devonian Orthopaedic Association (DOA) with involvement from the St John Ambulance since 1962.

The DDH arranges a week's holiday once a year for individuals with physical limitations who are unable to travel or go on outings without assistance.

The Anchorage Hotel, Cary Park, Torquay (image below) is the preferred venue and has been used since 1992. The hotel welcomes up to twenty holiday residents annually and provides a 'full board' holiday. Six rooms are on the ground floor and the remainder have lift access. There is also evening entertainment at the hotel, apart from Wednesdays.



The Anchorage Hotel, Torquay

The date for 2012 will probably be Saturday 5 May to Saturday 19 May 2012. For further information on Devon Disabled Holidays please contact DDH Co-ordinator Mrs Maureen Thomas on 01271 345850.

Result for Powell Close!

By Christine MacDonald, Mobile Support Officer

EARLIER this year residents at Powell Close in Seaton were awarded a Community Initiative Grant. This was to enable residents to enhance and improve the communal area around their flats. Doreen Source, a resident, had planted flowers in front of her window – however residents asked if they could cut their own grass and keep the area tidy. They said that the project ‘was not just for the benefit of the residents, but for the people passing by’.

Since receiving the funding the residents have worked very hard completely transforming the area within a couple of months. They have planted more flowers, provided hanging baskets,

The project has brought people together as a community and residents are proud of what they have achieved

and built a new path along which they have planted a variety of vegetables. A hose was purchased to water all the flowers, a compost bin to take the grass cuttings, and a secure shed to store the mower and a strimmer. Finally, the residents purchased a barbeque so they can relax and enjoy their garden.

This project has brought people together as a community. Residents are proud of what they have achieved, and it has all been made worthwhile when people passing have been complimentary of the lovely garden. This area has also been enhanced by the hard work residents have put into their own individual gardens in Powell Close. If you wish to apply for a Community Initiative Grant please contact Tenant Participation (details on page 2).●



Above: the new shed, funded by the Community Initiative Grant
Below: residents celebrating with a BBQ
Right: the well-kept gardens at Powell Close



Update on your newsletters

By Sue Dawson, Community Research Group member

A BIG thank you to all the tenants who took time to answer and return the questionnaire sent out earlier this year asking for your views on the newsletters (*Housing Standard* and *Partnership News*) published by East Devon District Council. As stated in the summer newsletter, the Community Research Group received over 1,200 replies.

A presentation of the findings was given at the Council Offices in Sidmouth in November. A final decision on what format future newsletters take is still to be decided.

The results showed most tenants wanted the newsletters to continue. It would appear that tenants would not mind if the newsletters were combined, putting the *Housing Standard* and *Partnership News* together. Tenants would like to have the newsletters in colour with a silk finish. Most enjoyed the articles in the newsletters although some tenants would like to see more articles on items relating to things tenants do. Tenants also wanted to know how to access the newsletter via email or web pages (please see page 3 for details).

We found tenants also wanted to be informed of programmed works in their area and the timescale of these. Hopefully these details will be included in future publications. Other suggestions included items such as a 'for

sale/wanted' column, useful tips, contact numbers for various organisations, more items for and from younger people.

There were numerous comments on potholes in the roads and this comes under Devon County Council Highways and not East Devon District Council.

Look out for the new-look newsletter due out in spring 2012!

The results from the questionnaire were very informative and helpful. We can confirm that the newsletters will continue being produced either twice or three times a year, with more items tenants want to see.

We can only include items from tenants if you send them in – if you have any items you want to be included in the spring edition of the new-look newsletter, please send your ideas to Tenant Participation at East Devon District Council by February 2012. The response from *you*, the tenants, was overwhelming. Thank you all very much. ●

The Community Research Group's presentation on the newsletters, attended by tenants, councillors and EDDC staff



‘Everyone’s home is their castle’

By Sue Saunders, TRG member

EAST DEVON District Council owns just over 4,270 properties across the district and actively encourages their tenants to work alongside the Council in the management of their homes. To date, only 217 tenants, myself included, are actually making a contribution toward this working partnership and we want to show others that they really can influence the decisions being made by Housing officers.

Tenants are offered a wide variety of opportunities to get involved and have their say. There is something for everyone; it can be as easy as completing a feedback form, picking up the phone to speak to an officer or joining one of the many groups committee etc; each one dealing with a different aspect of housing management.

At present, most of the active tenants are retired or disabled and clearly these two groups are best placed to make a regular time commitment to involvement. Whilst we work extremely hard to ensure the best interests of East Devon’s tenants, it does mean that tenant’s views are represented by members of the older generation. East Devon District Council needs to know what younger people think.

We recently came up with an idea which we hope will reach younger tenants and minority groups. We have built Camelot Castle, complete with turrets and a drawbridge. Having agreed that perhaps we could reach these groups through their children, the active tenants came up with the idea of the castle. We then had the problem of who was going to build it for us. This was where

East Devon District Council needs to know what younger people think



Lloyd Soper from Skinners with his hand-crafted castle

Skinners, East Devon’s repairs and maintenance contractor came in.

Skinners’ Managing Director Phil Tucker said they would be delighted to help and assigned the task to apprentice carpenter Lloyd Soper. We met briefly and

discussed the basic design and from this rough sketch, Lloyd has built the most beautiful castle, which clearly shows he has a great skill in carpentry and is a valued asset to Skinners. We thank Lloyd for all his hard work. It is designed to work like an advent calendar: each part of the castle, such as the windows, opens to reveal a prize. There will be a prize every time!

We are absolutely delighted with the castle and are sure it will attract a great deal of attention at fetes, fairs and housing events across East Devon. We need to make sure East Devon are aware of the issues which affect tenants of all ages and we are hopeful that Camelot Castle will be our gate way to achieving our aims. If you would like to get involved with Tenant Participation please contact us (details on page 2). ●

SWITCH on your potential – make a difference in your community!

By Polly Anderson, Community Development Worker

COMMUNITY Development Workers Victoria Robinson and Polly Anderson have been working on some really exciting activities and events in communities across East Devon.

They have successfully worked together with The Children Centre in Littleham, Exmouth to set up the 'Little-uns' parent and toddler group. A 'Confidence in Cookery' course and a first aid course has also been run. They have again worked with award-winning filmmaker Peter Snelling to make three films: *Teenagers Through the Years* and *I Could Live Yours* are both based in Littleham and a 3D film has been based in Axminster. All of the films are to be previewed in the prestigious Phoenix Arts Centre in Exeter in January 2012. Victoria and Polly have also worked together with the Exmouth Festival to provide fun, games, and performances by the SWITCH crew.

SWITCH has run an after school/creative space club in Littleham throughout the Spring and Summer term. The Creative Space club for ages 16 + has seen two young people successfully get in to Deep Blue Sound in Plymouth to do a BTEC in DJ production. It ran a Job Club information service on Thursdays and helped several people explore options of future employment and training .

SWITCH worked together with other landlords across Devon to see what young people thought about where they lived whilst at a Devon Tenant Participation Group (DTPG) outing to the River Dart Country Park. Victoria and Polly have worked with youth clubs in Sidmouth, Budleigh, and Axminster. They have also worked with the Children Centre to provide activities at their outdoor events in Lypstone, Woodbury, Otterton, Knowle, and Littleham. Community Festivals in Littleham, Axminster and Honiton have been held. These



Clockwise from top: face painting at the All Hallows play day, at the 'Confidence in Cookery' class, and having fun making movies

SWITCH is all about getting switched on to positive free time activities, doing something different, and making a difference in your community.

events are designed to create links between the groups running in these areas, celebrating the communities we have and promoting involvement from all ages.

SWITCH is all about getting switched on to positive free time activities, doing something different, and making a difference in your community. If you would like to help put on a SWITCH event or help run a club in your area please get in touch with Polly Anderson or Victoria Robinson on switch@eastdevon.gov.uk or call 01395 516551 ext. 2372. Check out our new Switch Facebook page too at tinyurl.com/c76jnve. We would love to work with you to make East Devon an even better place to live! ●



Listening to your opinions is important to us

We want to hear from you!

We'd like to know what you'd like to see in your newsletters

By Bev Anderson, Tenant Participation Assistant

IT'S IMPORTANT to us that your newsletters are good value, and that they keep you up-to-date with what's going on as well as provide you with what you want.

In line with the changes that are happening to your newsletters, we'd like to know what you, as young people, would like to see. So we're asking our younger readers some questions:

- What are you interested in?
- What would you like to see in the new-look newsletter, due out in spring next year?

Get involved – tell us what you're interested in and if you're helping in your community

- Do you help other people? If you do, we'd like to know your story!

We'd love to have your answers, so please email or post them to us, or give us a call – Tenant Participation's details are on page 2.

Wanted!

We want volunteers to help put on community events and clubs – we need your help!

By Polly Anderson, Community Development Worker

HAVE FUN and do something for you and your community by providing activities for people in your area. Certificates for getting involved and references could also help with future employment. We are also offering free training in first aid, parachute games, circus skills, play, and face painting.

For more information please contact Polly Anderson, Community Development Worker (youth) on 01395 516551 ext. 2372 or panderson@eastdevon.gov.uk.



Volunteering helps your community

Do you have a disability and need help in your home?

By the Repairs department
.....

DO YOU have a disability and need help in your home? If you are finding it difficult to, for example, have a bath or shower, cook your own meals, clean your home, or do basic food shopping, you are probably having to cope with a disability, whether physical, sensory, or both. You may need hand rails, level access to your home (such as a ramp) or a walk in shower amongst other things. East Devon District Council works in partnership with Care Direct to provide help – all requests must go through Care Direct.

Adult and Community Services work with a number of partners to support the social care needs of people in Devon: older people, people with physical and sensory disabilities, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, and carers.

How can Care Direct meet your eligible needs?

When Care Direct has decided that you are eligible, they will consider what services would best meet your needs. This could be rehabilitation, home care, supported employment, equipment, carer support, and so on. This process is known as ‘care planning’ and will take account of help from family and friends or support from other organisations.

Care Direct aims to encourage you to find solutions to your own problems (if possible) by providing you with information and advice. We consider the involvement of carers, families, friends, and other organisations and provide short-term help to enable you to become independent or give you time to arrange your own services. We provide help so that you can



Care Direct is here to offer support to people with disabilities

live as independently as possible over the longer term.

Where you have eligible needs, we consider the use of Direct Payments – you may be given the money to buy your own care within agreed limits. It is our aim that we meet your eligible needs in the most cost-effective way, taking account of your cultural needs.

For more information, or advice on equipment, personal care, support for carers, blue badges, benefits, staying independent, please contact Care Direct on 0845 1551 007. ●

Hearing Dogs for the Deaf

By Mr and Mrs Macmillian, Broadclyst

We have been part of Hearing Dogs for the Deaf with The Grange for four years. So far we have looked after five puppies. It is very rewarding to see the puppy grow up and help someone.

At The Grange, dogs are trained for alerting deaf people to select household sounds and danger signals in the home, work place, and in public buildings – providing a life-changing level of independence, confidence, and security.

Hearing Dogs volunteers are the lifeline of the Charity. Without the tireless support of our volunteers across a wide range of roles, we would not be able to provide so many life-changing hearing dogs to deaf recipients.

There are many ways you can be involved: by being Puppy Socialiser; a puppy walker, or running a fundraising event. For example, Puppy Socialisers are needed to take hearing dog puppies into their own home from around eight weeks of age through to about twelve to fourteen months. At the end of the puppy socialisation period, the young dog then progresses onto sound work training at one of our two training centres.

‘It is very rewarding to see the puppy grow up and help someone’

Puppy Socialisers are required to teach their pup basic obedience and social skills and introduce them to all the different sights, sounds, and environments that they will need to become familiar and comfortable with in their career ahead as a hearing dog. Equipment and food for the puppy are provided. Puppy Socialisers need to be able to spend enough time with their charge and to attend a fortnightly puppy training class locally to them.

If you are interested in any of the volunteering roles previously mentioned or other volunteering opportunities, please contact Lucy Dacre, Volunteer Development Co-ordinator, on 01759 322299 or volunteer@hearingdogs.org.uk. ●

Hearing Dogs provide support to many people – have you considered helping by caring for a puppy?



Satisfaction from supporting Age UK



By Mr Harry Roberts, Woodbury

I **FIRST** met Nina Parnell, of Age UK Devon, in March 2010 at a training day organised by East Devon District Council. The aims of the day were to let people of pensionable age know about the financial benefits that are available to them.

Nina also informed the group about a service Age UK Devon offers to help people complete complicated benefit forms in the comfort of their own homes. She explained that so many people who may have entitlement to a benefit such as Attendance Allowance don't bother to claim as they can't face filing a long and often quite complicated form. The service – which has been running for nine years and has helped people claim in the region of £20 million – could not operate without the help of a dedicated team of volunteers, who make the home visit and assist people to complete their forms.

I approached Nina after the training session and expressed my interest in becoming a volunteer with the Advocacy Service. She was very enthusiastic and appreciative of my interest, and asked me to complete an application form and then attend an interview to determine my suitability for the volunteering role. Following the completion of my interview, I attended a day's training course with Nina at their office in Exeter and then accompanied her on a home visit to see how my new found knowledge and skills would be put into practice to help someone complete an Attendance Allowance form.

This volunteering role really interested me as I could really see how I could help to make a real difference to people's lives. So as soon as Nina had completed all of the necessary CRB checks and references I was ready to go, and visited my very first client in Seaton.

Since then I have visited over 100 clients throughout East Devon, and I have helped people to claim over £88,000 per year in additional income. The extra money helps people to continue to live independently in their own homes and in so

'It is so rewarding to know that I have helped somebody to have a better standard of living'



Harry Roberts working with Tenant Participation on the production of this newsletter

many cases, eases the constant worry of being able to pay their bills.

This has been the most interesting voluntary position I have been involved in to date, and it is so rewarding to know that I have helped somebody to have a better standard of living.

Nina Parnell, Age UK Devon says, Harry's story is a shining example of how our volunteers make such a difference to the lives of older people and their carers. We rely on their support, to help older people throughout Devon to claim their financial entitlements and last year they helped people to claim over £1 million of additional income.

Each year up to £5 billion of benefits goes unclaimed in the UK – that is money for older people on low incomes. If you are aged 60 or over and would like to find out if you could be entitled to benefits that you haven't been able to claim before, or you are interested in becoming a volunteer for Age UK Devon please phone 0845 296 7810. ●

KID'S ACTIVITIES

MAKE A JIGSAW!

Cut-out Santa

To make a cut-out Santa jigsaw, simply cut out the shapes below, jumble up, and put back together!



SEND US YOUR SUGGESTIONS!

Send us your ideas for activities, or tell us about games and activities you like doing or jokes you've laughed at! Tenant Participation's details on page 2.

RECIPE

Marshmallow treats

Ingredients:

- Large marshmallows
- Dark chocolate, milk chocolate, white chocolate or chocolate chips (approximately 1 cup per bag of marshmallows)
- Chocolate sprinkles, hundreds and thousands, or other decorations

Put the sprinkles or other decorations onto a plate ready for dipping. Melt the chocolate, either in a double boiler or in the microwave. Dip each marshmallow into the melted chocolate and then into the sprinkles. Leave to set.



MADE ANYTHING TASTY?

Have you helped make any cakes, desserts, or dinners recently? Send us any recipes you've made that you've enjoyed!



SPOT THE DIFFERENCE ...

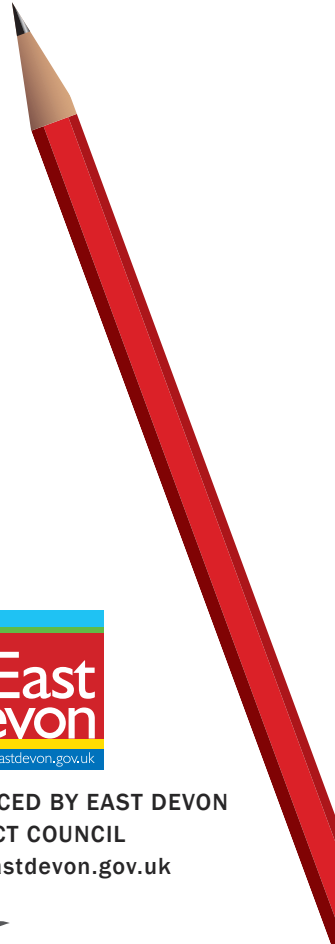


Do you have any suggestions for what you'd like to see in your newsletters? Let us know – contact details on page 2.

Winter wordsearch

From Mr Eric Howard, East Budleigh

C A P P L E S A U C E A D Y S E I P E C N I M
 A H O L I D A Y T G C H R I S T M A S B V E M
 P A R T Y H A T S L P O A T F B H N A D E A J
 X Z H A B A B Y T E K S T H G I L Y R I A F F
 P P O F R T A H V S E W S S T A B L E R E R S
 O R D R O F X Z T N H N U M R N A D S T A R R
 E E R T H A T E B I Y T C S I G B T C N H O E
 V S E Z R T O N D T E M C V E E R T K E J K E
 E E K P O F Y T S L E I G H A L A I K G N B H
 D N A B B A B G H P Y J H E R S N S L O R A C
 B T C R I A P R E V U H E A S S D R W O E E X
 O S S A N T A F P W A D G T E N Y F S R I K T
 B F R N D T R W H A D O D N M V S F R C N H S
 G C U D T U T S E W B T C I T Y A A E S D O T
 K I D Y B R Y W R R P E O U N X U M G T E P M
 F T Y H B K J U D R S Y O P A G C I N R E A T
 S C V H C E E P S S N E E U Q Y E L A E R T M
 F S K J R Y K E S T U F F I N G T Y M Y R R H
 O L B E E C U A S Y R R E B N A R C E V B R C
 D O P O T G H N D T X C A R D S Y I W I E A K
 L S R E K C A R C F R U D O L P H Y L L O H T
 O W I S E M E N M T U E S N O I T A R O C E D
 G S O C A R O L S I N G E R S X T M W Q Q P U



How many words can you find?

- | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Angels | Eve | Queens Speech |
| Apple Sauce | Fairylights | Reindeer |
| Baby | Family | Robin |
| Brandy | Frankinsence | Rudolph |
| Brandy sauce | Gold | Santa |
| Carols | Holly | Scrooge |
| Carol Singers | Holiday | Shepherds |
| Cake | Ivy | Sleigh |
| Cards | Manger | Stable |
| Cheer | Mince Pies | Star |
| Christmas | Myrrh | Stuffing |
| Cranberry sauce | Party | Tinsil |
| Crackers | Party Hats | Tree |
| Custard | Presents | Turkey |
| Decorations | Pudding | Wisemen |



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