



downendvoice

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FREE EVERY MONTH IN DOWNEND, MANGOTSFIELD, STAPLE HILL, BROMLEY HEATH & FRENCHAY



Bridging the gap

A 750-ton crane lifted giant steel beams across the M4 to make the frame of a new bridge to carry the A432 Badminton Road between Downend and Yate

Picture: Above Horizon Photography



Goodbye, Rudi

A FORMER councillor who represented Mangotsfield and became the first black chair of South Gloucestershire Council has died.

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Staple Hill revamp

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200 new homes

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Fireworks record

DOWNEND Round Table's firework display has set a new fundraising record, making £61,000 for good causes.

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Factory flats plan approved

PLANS to demolish a historic Staple Hill factory and build more than 50 homes on the site can go ahead.

South Gloucestershire Council's development management committee has approved plans by Woodstock Homes to build 44 two-bedroom

flats and 12 one-bedroom flats on the former Bristol Uniforms site in Wathen Street, behind Fountain Square and Broad Street.

All 56 homes will be classed as affordable, for social rent or shared ownership, and the developer is working with

housing association Bromford on the project.

Woodstock Homes says demolition work will start early next year, with building work following in the spring.

Turn to Page 2

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Letters to the publication can be sent to the above e-mail address or by post to Letters, Downend Voice, 6 Elkstone Walk, Bitton, Bristol BS30 6JT. The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

DEADLINE

Our January edition deadline is December 10.

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COMPLAINTS

Despite our best efforts, we sometimes get things wrong. We always try to resolve issues informally at first but we also have a formal complaints procedure. If you have a complaint about anything in the Downend Voice, contact the publisher using the details below. We aspire to follow the Code of Conduct of the NUJ (National Union of Journalists), which holds journalists to a high standard of behaviour. Further details of the complaints process can be found on the Voice website here, or can be obtained by contacting the Publisher.



How Woodstock Homes says the development will look

Factory will make way for flats

From Page 1

The factory's two-storey gatehouse building will be kept as a reminder of its historical heritage, and refurbished to provide studio office space.

Behind it, flats will be built in three-storey blocks, along with a communal garden, on the site between Victoria Street and Beaufort Road.

The final plans were for ten fewer homes than initially proposed, with smaller buildings.

A Woodstock Homes spokesperson said: "Following consultation with South Gloucestershire Council we were advised to reduce the buildings from four storeys to three storeys in height, lessening the impact on surrounding neighbours and ensuring the retained Gatehouse building remained prominent."

Bristol Uniforms' predecessor, clothing manufacturer Wathen Gardiner & Co, moved onto the site at the turn of the 20th century. Many of the current buildings date back to 1917, when the factory was rebuilt following a huge fire.

The company, now known as MSA Bristol Fire Safety Clothing, moved to a new site in Yate early in 2023.

It made uniforms for the Armed Forces during both world wars before specialising in fire safety and protective clothing.

The developers said refurbishing the factory was too expensive and access too tight for modern requirements.

At the planning meeting on October 30, agent Kit Stokes said: "The scheme has worked hard to retain stone walls and the original gatehouse."

"The site is on brownfield land in a very accessible location."

"This prevents building on greenfield land and in villages elsewhere. It's a really interesting scheme that will be a real positive for the area."

Councillors were told that the building is locally listed and architecturally significant, with red bricks, a sawtooth roof and circular windows.

It had been included as employment land on the council's draft Local Plan, which is now with the government for examination.

Neighbours objected to the plans.

Lisa Keegans-Wood, who lives behind the factory, said: "We're not opposed to this area being developed, but we still have lots of our questions unanswered."

"Loss of privacy is one of our major concerns. There will potentially be balconies overlooking our garden."

"There's a real lack of parking provision locally."

Council officers said bus links for the site are good.

Committee member Councillor June Bamford (Con, Hanham) said: "We do have it designated as employment land."

"I do understand that things have moved on since the end of the 19th century. We've got much larger lorries and vehicles that would need to go in."

"But it's annoying when we're losing employment land. We want people to work nearer to where they live."

Meeting report by Alex Seabrook,
Local Democracy Reporting Service

High Street revamp for Staple Hill

PLANS to "create a vibrant, welcoming, and resilient high street" for Staple Hill have been announced - and people are being asked to share their ideas.

South Gloucestershire Council and Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council have announced a joint 'Place Shaping Plan' for Staple Hill High Street, Broad Street and Fountain Square.

They say the plan will set out priorities to make the high street a "more pleasant place to spend time", bringing in more people to the shops and attracting new investment.

It builds on earlier work to add plants, signs and murals, remove graffiti and improve shopfronts.

The councils have launched a survey asking people what improvements they think should be prioritised from areas including: installing new trees and planters; improving shop fronts; more public art; creating new places for children to play; improving accessibility for older people, parents with pushchairs and people with disabilities; improving access from the Pendennis Estate, Page Park and the Bristol to Bath Railway Path; improving lighting and other safety measures.

People taking the survey are asked to allocate a share of "virtual funding" to show which areas they think should get most



Fountain Square is one of the places that could be revamped

priority.

The survey suggests having a "clear and recognisable identity" for the high street area could help celebrate Staple Hill's character and build pride in the area.

The councils say: "We believe Fountain Square could become a focal point for the High Street. Holding regular activities and events could bring people together and boost trade for local shops, cafes and businesses."

"Having spaces for play could make it a more welcoming place to spend time, encouraging more families and young people. As space is limited, this could include playful street furniture, interactive installations, or small play zones."

The plan is being funded by the government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Once adopted it will be used to help

identify funding for projects.

Council cabinet member for communities Sean Rhodes said: "We're inviting the Staple Hill community - residents, businesses, and key stakeholders - to help shape the future of the high street."

"We want local people to give us their ideas and suggestions to help make sure our plans mirror the needs of the local community."

A web page where people can view ideas and share their

own is open until December 14 at southglos.gov.uk/staple-hill-place-shaping.

More than 140 had commented as the Voice went to print.

Anyone who is not online can view a display at Staple Hill Library, and leave comments there.

The feedback will go into the council's Place Shaping Plan, which will be published next spring and include design proposals and recommendations for future improvements.

*Shops, venues and community groups based on high streets in Staple Hill and Downend are being invited to apply for grants of up to £4,000 to improve their shopfronts.

Applications can be made up to January 9 but national chains and charities, betting shops, vape shops and businesses in administration or with licensing issues are excluded from the scheme.

For more details visit southglos.gov.uk/asfi-grant

'Mindless vandalism' in park

POLICE and South Gloucestershire Council have condemned "mindless vandalism" to toilets in Page Park, which means they will now close early every day.

The loos were attacked on consecutive days in November, with rubbish forced down a toilet bowl, causing flooding, and locks and toilet roll holders damaged.

The block reopened last summer after a £245,000 upgrade, which included toilets for people with severe disabilities and baby-changing facilities.

Avon & Somerset police said damage was reported on November 19 and 20. A spokesperson said: "This is mindless vandalism preventing the public from using the facilities, meaning South Gloucestershire Council must spend extra money to fix them. We will be carrying out extra patrols in the area and working with Friends of Page Park to discuss how we can detect and prevent further offending."

People with information are being asked to call 101 and quote the crime reference number 5225 326 113.

Council contractors carried out the repairs and cleaning needed to reopen the toilets. Automatic timers have been adjusted so the doors will now lock an hour earlier, at 3pm each day, until further notice.

A council spokesperson said: "Mindless vandalism such as this is completely unacceptable, and we encourage anyone with information about those responsible to contact the police."

Park news: Pages 26-27

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Drink-driver who killed friend in crash is sent to prison

A DRINK-driver who killed his friend when he crashed his car off the M32 near Hambrook has been jailed.

Victor Rotundu, aged 32, was almost three times the legal alcohol limit when he lost control of his Citroen C4 car, drove off the northbound carriageway and hit a tree near the Hambrook junction with the Avon Ring Road on October 6 last year.

His passenger and friend, Andrei Griguta, 37, who lived in Bristol, was declared dead at the scene.

Rotundu, of Newport, Gwent, was injured and treated in hospital, where a blood sample was taken.

It showed he had at least 140 milligrammes of alcohol per 100ml of blood when tested.

A toxicology expert calculated that at the time of the collision, his blood alcohol level would have been 222mg - almost three times the legal limit of 80mg.

Avon & Somerset police said the fatal crash happened shortly after 10am in fine and dry weather conditions.

Rotundu admitted causing death by careless driving while over the legal alcohol limit.

He was jailed for five years and four months at Bristol Crown Court in October.

After his release he will be disqualified from driving for seven years and eight months, and will need to pass an extended test before being allowed to drive again.

In a personal statement read to the court, Mr Griguta's wife said: "I miss Andrei so much, there has been many a time that I felt I couldn't move on without him, I think of him every single day.

"I will love him for the rest of my life, no matter what.

"Andrei was a great man that everyone who met him will remember and miss him very much.

"We have all been blessed that he was in our life, even for short period of time."

Designated investigating officer Adrian Wainwright said: "No prison sentence can repair the loss of Mr Griguta's life, and our thoughts are with his family and friends at

this most difficult time.

"Victor Rotundu has admitted his guilt and bears the responsibility for his friend's death.

"He chose to get behind the wheel while more than two and three quarter times the legal limit for alcohol.

"Driving while under the influence of drink or drugs puts you, your passengers, and other road users at risk of death or serious injury. It's shocking that anyone thinks it's acceptable."

Police say drink and drug driving is one of the "fatal five" most common causes of fatal collisions, which also include speeding, not wearing a seatbelt, distractions including using a mobile phone at the wheel and careless driving.



Victor Rotundu

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- 21st The Significance of the Name of Jesus
- 28th God and Time



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Visit bristoldownend.com for more details

Memorial to air test crews unveiled



South Gloucestershire Council chair Katie Cooper unveils the memorial with Sir George White

A NEW memorial to honour flyers who died testing Bristol-built aircraft has been unveiled.

The memorial at Aerospace Bristol, the Filton aviation museum, was unveiled on November 6 - the 68th anniversary of the day a prototype Bristol Britannia crashed in Downend during test a flight, killing all 15 crew and technicians on board.

A total of 42 people who died in accidents involving Bristol Aeroplane Company and British & Colonial Aeroplane Company aircraft between 1910 and 1960 are remembered on the memorial.

Aerospace Bristol held a search to ensure as many relatives as possible could attend the unveiling: some travelled from as far as Australia to be there.

Among those present were Philip Todd, whose father William died in the Downend Britannia crash in 1957, and his daughter Esme.

Philip was seven at the time of the disaster.

He said: "I was at school, and when I went home at lunchtime, my mum said she'd had a phone call from BAC to say 'there's been an accident but we don't know what's happened'."

Philip went back to school but when he returned home, it had been confirmed that his father was dead.

Esme said: "When I talk about the crash to friends, no-one has ever heard about it."

"It's important to talk about it and remember."

Also at the unveiling was Peter Coombs, who saw the Britannia spiral out of control

from the playground of Downend Church of England School in North Street, where he was a pupil waiting for the lunch bell.

It crashed in the wooded area now known as Britannia Woods and behind homes on Overndale Road.

Peter said: "I didn't take any notice at first but then it went from a gentle left hand turn into a steep right hand turn, and went into a spiral dive towards the playground."

"It passed over me and disappeared behind the church and trees - then we saw a big cloud of smoke and it was fairly obvious what had happened."

"A few terribly badly-behaved pupils ran off down the road to see what had happened - they came back looking sheepish, and said it had crashed in the woods."

"My parents lived at the bottom of Cleeve Hill and my father was an aircraft design engineer. On the day in question a chap who was working for him, John Parry-Jones, came into the office and said 'I've got the opportunity to fly in the Britannia.' My dad said 'yes, of course'."

"He never came back."

Peter became an apprentice aero engineer after leaving school, and worked on the Concorde programme before becoming an air accident investigator.

He has looked at the records from the investigation, which focussed on a suspected malfunction in the autopilot system.

Peter said the most likely explanation is that the autopilot stopped working and prevented the crew from taking back



Philip Todd, whose father died in the 1957 Britannia crash, with daughter Esme

control of the Britannia in time to avert the crash, but the evidence is inconclusive because the instruments and equipment were destroyed in the explosion and fire.

Many people contacted Aerospace Bristol to share memories of the Downend crash after reading an appeal in last month's *Voice*.

One of them was Ray Dawe. His father George was an aero engineer working on the Britannia, and had expected to be on board the flight that crashed.

Ray, who lives near Britannia Wood, told Aerospace Bristol his family faced an "anxious wait" before his dad managed to send a message through that he was safe.

Richard Boyd, who was a seven-year-old pupil of Oldbury Court Primary School on the day of the crash, told Aerospace Bristol he heard the aircraft before seeing the explosion and fire caused by the crash, a sight which "still lives with me today".

The memorial was the idea of Aerospace Bristol trustee Bill Morgan, a former pilot and aviation engineer who was working at Filton at the time of the crash, and knew John Parry-Jones.

Bill said: "It's important to find a way of sharing these stories and show that these lives were not lost in vain."

"Perhaps their biggest impact is their contribution to something we now take for granted - the fact that we can board an aircraft today and be confident that it's the safest way we can travel."

The memorial was unveiled in



Peter Coombs

front of the museum's Britannia exhibit by South Gloucestershire Council chair Katie Cooper and Aerospace Bristol vice-patron Sir George White, the great-grandson of Bristol Aeroplane Company's founder.

Aerospace Bristol chair of trustees Sir Iain Gray spoke at the unveiling, as did Filton and Bradley Stoke MP Claire Hazelgrove.

The memorial's permanent home will be in the museum's cafe.

Those who died in the Downend crash are also remembered on a plaque at Lincombe Barn, opposite the crash site, and at a memorial in front of Britannia Woods.

Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council and South Gloucestershire Council are planning a new information board about the crash in Britannia Woods, along with a new bench.

Aerospace Bristol is still trying to trace relatives of some flyers named on the memorial.

For more details visit www.aerospacebristol.org/aviation-heroes.

Big lift puts bridge beams



Two of the beams are lifted up by a huge crane.

THE new bridge to reconnect the severed A432 between Downend and Yate is starting to take shape.

After eight 46m-long steel beams were hoisted into place by a 750-ton capacity crane in October, standing on a closed section of the M4, work is continuing apace to finish the job.

The last of three weekend motorway closures for the work started at 7pm on Friday October 24, with contractors first dismantling crash barriers to give the machines more space to work.

The huge crane, from Avonmouth firm King Lifting, was rigged up with four lorry loads of ballast before starting to lift the beams two at a time, early on the Saturday morning.

The first pair were in place by around 7am. Each outer beam weighed 115 tons and each inner beam 85 tons.

The final ones were in place by the end of that day and, on

End in sight on ring road works

ROADWORKS on the Avon Ring Road which have been underway since February are set to finish before Christmas.

South Gloucestershire Council says the project to upgrade paths, cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings between the Wick Wick roundabout north of Downend and Coldharbour Lane, next to UWE's Frenchay campus, will be complete by mid-December.

A spokesperson said all lane restrictions and closures, including at the junction of Bromley Heath Road and Quakers Road, will be cleared.

New 40mph speed limit signs will be put up on the stretch of the A4174 where the work has been carried out.

The reduced speed limit was originally intended only for the westbound carriageway, next to the new paths, but will now be in force in both directions. The council says it is intended "to make using the improved paths

safer and to meet road design requirements".

In total the council says it has improved more than 4km (two and a half miles) of cycle lanes and footpaths.

The work cost £15.3 million, paid for by the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, funding allocated by the government in 2022 for infrastructure improvement and administered by the West of England Combined Authority.

By mid-November the council said the improvements had been "substantially completed", with ring road resurfacing and traffic light works at the Quakers Road junction the last jobs to finish.

A new northbound lane to connect the Wick Wick roundabout to the new Badminton Road bridge over the M4, along with two southbound lanes from the bridge to the roundabout, will



Cabinet councillor Sean Rhodes and Metro Mayor Helen Godwin at one of the crossings.

be completed in conjunction with National Highways' bridge replacement project, which is due to finish next spring.

As well as new paths, widened existing paths, resurfacing and new pedestrian crossings, the project includes an extra left-hand lane for traffic using Coldharbour Lane.

The council says the project is part of wider 'sustainable travel' plans to make walking, cycling/wheeling and public transport the "preferred way of getting around – especially for shorter journeys".

Cabinet councillor Sean Rhodes said: "We want to provide people with

more travel options to help encourage a shift away from car use, reduce congestion and emissions and improve air quality. We would like to thank residents and road users for their patience whilst we have delivered this scheme."

Metro Mayor Helen Godwin said the project will "make a big difference to people's everyday journeys", adding: "Getting the basics right by fixing our region's roads and bridges, and improving public transport and walking and cycling options, will lay the foundations for a better transport system overall for the West of England."

into place

the Sunday, workers brought in permanent glass-reinforced plastic formwork to create a mould for the concrete bridge deck.

Some work on the bridge can now take place while motorway traffic passes below.

Concreting of the deck will take place from late November through to mid-December and may involve some overnight closures of the motorway, but there will be no more weekend shutdowns between the Bristol and Bath junctions.

Earthworks will follow the deck work, followed by the building of concrete abutments that will help carry the load and hold back the earthworks, as the bridge starts to take shape.

National Highways engineering team manager Terry Robinson said: "We are pleased the job was finished ahead of schedule and hope it caused minimum disruption.

"We'll continue to work at pace on the new bridge, and hope to have it open to the public in Spring 2026."

Terry said the bridge's estimated opening date had to be approximate because of the potential effects of unpredictable winter weather.

He said: "The earthworks will be affected if you get a long period of rain, and the waterproofing is temperature-sensitive.

"Ideally you'd want to do this in the summer, but to deliver it as quickly as we can we have to take risks and do things outside ideal times."

National Highways carried out other motorway maintenance while the M4 was closed, and work is also underway on the approaches to the bridge.

During the closure a video feed was set up next to the ring road and an observation point opened on the Winterbourne side of the bridge to allow people to watch and take pictures of the lift.

Among those who went along was the bridge's design manager Liam Hennessey, who works from the Bristol office of global engineering firm WSP.

Liam said: "It's not often we get something we've designed on our doorstep.

"You sit in rooms and plan for these things – there's a lot of satisfaction from seeing it slowly go into place.

"It's been a long time coming - I've been getting a lot of stick about it from a friend in Yate!"



The crane seen from a footbridge between Downend and Moorend.



Beams waiting to be lifted on the carriageway.
Picture: National Highways



The bridge with all beams fitted. Picture: National Highways.



Workers on the deck of the bridge.
Picture: National Highways.

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200 homes on Frenchay fields

DEVELOPERS have announced plans to build up to 200 homes on fields near Frenchay.

The housing estate would be on farmland off Filton Road, between the University of the West of England's Hillside Gardens sports complex, Frenchay Cricket Club and Sims Hill community woodland.

At least 80 of the new homes would be classed as 'affordable', for social rent or shared ownership schemes.

Housebuilder Vistry says a field to the south of the site would be kept as open space, with space for new allotments and a community orchard also included.

UWE's sports ground and another field would stand between the proposed development and the M32.

Vistry says the site has been included in South Gloucestershire Council's

Local Plan, which was recently submitted to the Government, and will offer "high-quality, sustainable homes that respond to local need, complementing the natural surroundings and well connected to growing local employment centres, local facilities and transport hubs".

The company, which owns the brands Linden Homes, Bovis Homes and Countryside Homes, is running an informal consultation to collect public responses to the initial proposals before applying for planning permission.

It says a consultation website, www.filtonroad.co.uk, will be live from November 28, with a 'drop-in' consultation event on November 29 from 9.30am to 1.30pm at Dings Crusaders' Shaftesbury Park pavilion on Frenchay Park Road.

Vistry Strategic Land & Major Projects managing director Martin Leach said: "This is an opportunity to deliver affordable, high-quality housing where people can stay close to their family and friends, while opening up new public open space for the whole community to enjoy."

"We want to create a place that feels like a natural part of

Vistry's plan of the site, with housing in yellow at the Filton Road end and a green space.



the community.

"We're especially keen to hear how residents want the new public open space to look and feel. "This is a real opportunity for the community to shape a space that reflects their aspirations and delivers lasting benefits for years to come."

Vistry says its plan will also include walking and cycling routes along Bristol Road and Filton Road, with safer crossings, as well as funding for public services.

It says homes would have air source heat pumps and triple

glazing, with electric vehicle charging points and secure cycle parking provided.

The developer says it will retain mature trees on the site and include "wildlife-supporting features".

People can email comments to filtonroad@jbp.co.uk or call 0800 130 3270 before the consultation ends on December 15.

The developer will then apply to South Gloucestershire Council for planning permission, but has not stated an intended date for building to begin.

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TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

Hear every moment this Christmas: a seasonal guide to ear wax and healthy hearing



CHRISTMAS is a time for togetherness, sharing stories, laughing with family, and enjoying the sounds of the season. But if your hearing feels a little "off," you may find yourself missing out on moments that matter.

Winter weather can cause earwax to harden, while hats, scarves, and earphones trap warmth and moisture. Colds and congestion may add to that blocked, heavy feeling. If you've noticed muffled hearing, turning up the TV, or asking others to repeat themselves, earwax might be the cause.

Professional microsuction is a quick, safe way to clear your ears before the festive rush. Unlike cotton buds or home remedies, it avoids pushing wax deeper and reduces irritation.

Make sure it's just festive bells causing the ringing in your ears this Christmas! A simple ear check with our expert audiologist can help ensure your hearing is at its best.

Whether you're enjoying carols, catching up with grandchildren, or hosting Christmas dinner, clear hearing helps you stay connected to the people and conversations you cherish.

If you'd like peace of mind this season, book an ear check. We'll gently examine your ears, show you what we see, and if needed, remove any troublesome wax there and then.

Here's to a Christmas filled with clarity, comfort, and moments you won't miss.

Deb Campbell

Debbie Campbell is a qualified and experienced Audiologist, who has joined the clinical team at Turners Opticians in Fishponds having worked for many years in NHS Audiology clinics.



Fireworks and lights at this year's display



Batala Bristol drummers

Fireworks are 'record-breaking' success

DOWNEND Round Table's firework display has set a new fundraising record, making £61,000 for good causes.

Despite wet weather on the day of the event on November 7, the display attracted more than 10,000 visitors and also had a record number of third-party volunteers to help make everything run smoothly.

The Bristol area's biggest fireworks celebration featured two displays, a laser light show and music, including a live show from drumming group Batala Bristol, although the weather conditions meant that the bonfire could not be lit to ensure crowd safety.

As well as a team of 40 from Downend Round Table and friends who set the event up on the day, more than 100 volunteers from Scouts, Guides, Cadets, churches, Tangent and

Rotary helped on the night.

A Round Table spokesperson said: "Even our lead sponsors, CJ Hole, rolled up their sleeves, with staff from the Downend and Kingswood branches running one of the gates."

Three charities were represented at the event: Julian Trust, It's In the Bag, and Andy's Man Club. They and the volunteer network, will benefit from the funds raised by people buying tickets and glow toys from the official stalls on site.

Fireworks chairman Ed Curzon-Lewis said: "This event is only possible thanks to the incredible support of our volunteers, sponsors, and the community."

"To raise £61,000 in such challenging weather is a testament to the spirit of Downend.

"Every penny will go back

into supporting local causes, and we couldn't be more grateful."

This year's event included innovations including a wireless network for ticket machines provided by Starlink satellites and a special sofa in the VIP area for a lucky family, picked from a draw, to watch the show in extra comfort.

Matthew Tosh, senior supervisor of the professional display team at Skyburst, who laid on the show, said it contained around 3,500 individual shots, each one individually timed and choreographed to the 'Through the Decades' musical soundtrack by computer.

The nine-strong display team use wind forecasts and modelling to predict where fireworks will fall to make sure they land away from the audience.

Since the event Downend

Round Table, which is open to men aged 18 to 45 and part of a national and international network of clubs, has had a "flurry of enquiries" from potential new members.

As well as the fireworks, members also take part in a wide range of activities.

The next Round Table fundraising event is the Santa sleigh tour, visiting Mangotsfield on November 30, Bromley Heath on December 5 and 6, Lyde Green on December 7 and Emersons Green on December 12, from 5.30pm to 8pm each evening.

For more information, visit downendrt.co.uk or email hello@downendrt.co.uk.

A date for next year's fireworks display has already been scheduled for November 6.



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Housebuilder updates Mangotsfield plans

A DEVELOPER planning to build up to 150 homes in Mangotsfield has updated its plans, giving more details of how homes will look.

Taylor Wimpey says it has increased the proportion of affordable housing - for social rent or shared ownership - and improved walking and cycle links to the site at Cossham Street.

But the updated plans still contain only one access road, with the housebuilder insisting this is "sufficient for the number of homes proposed".

Taylor Wimpey owns the field where it wants to build the homes, between Cossham Street and Rodway Hill Road, next to Mangotsfield United FC, Cleve Rugby Club and Mangotsfield School.

It is currently designated as Green Belt land but has been re-classified for housing in South Gloucestershire Council's draft Local Plan, which has now been submitted to the government for examination.

The developer says it has updated its planning application "in response to feedback from residents and community groups".

It now contains more details on the site's layout, and the scale and appearance of homes and streets.

Taylor Wimpey says the "key updates" include an increase in the proportion of affordable housing from 35% to 40%, which would represent a rise from 52 to 60 homes out of the 150 planned.

It has also introduced more variety in the character of proposed buildings, designed streets for low-speed traffic and



The site in Mangotsfield and, top, how the homes could look

improved walking and cycling links.

The developer says it has included "green corridors" and homes facing onto public spaces to create what it calls a "walkable, attractive environment", with open spaces, play areas, and sustainable drainage basins.

Taylor Wimpey says the development represents a £20 million investment, creating 97 full-time construction jobs, 110 supply chain jobs and more than £300,000 per year in Council Tax revenue.

Strategic projects director Chris Dolling said: "Working closely with the Mangotsfield community ensures our proposals meet local needs and reflect the village's character."

"That is why we have increased the affordable housing on-site, provided more variety in building character across the

site, strengthened walking and cycling connections, and added new green spaces.

"Providing further details on our proposals is a proactive approach to bringing forward high-quality, sustainable homes in anticipation of the Local Plan's adoption, which will enable investment in Mangotsfield's community to come forward sooner."

Objections to the plans have ranged from loss of green space to parking issues and the strain of new homes on local services - but the main concern has been over the single road access to the site, from Cossham Street, which has been described as "inadequate" by Emersons Green Town Council and a "bad joke" by one resident.

Many called for a second exit onto Rodway Hill Road.

Asked by the Voice why the updated plan still contains

only one vehicle access point, a spokesperson said: "Since the consultation and the submission of our outline application in 2024, we have carried out further testing to confirm whether a single access from Cossham Street is safe and suitable."

"This included a Road Safety Audit, which the council requested and has now been submitted to them."

"The audit concluded that one access point is sufficient for the number of homes proposed."

"South Gloucestershire Council will assess these findings before making any decision on the application."

Taylor Wimpey says the updated plan "positions the development" for a decision from the council once its Local Plan has been adopted, which is anticipated to happen late next year if the plan is approved by the government following an examination.

Asked by the Voice if this meant the developer does not want the scheme to be considered before the new Local Plan is in place, a spokesperson said the company would "follow whatever approach the Council prefers", raising the prospect that it could be considered earlier "if the Council feels that the site's proposed allocation already carries enough weight".

There have been ten new objections since the plans were updated, including from neighbouring Cleve Rugby Club.

The application can be viewed on the council's planning website by searching for reference P24/02685/O.

Good Vehicle Operator's Licence

Polsky Scaffolding, of 1 Kingsleigh Park, Bristol BS15 9PJ, is applying to the Traffic Commissioner to add a new operating centre for 2 goods vehicles at Glenfern Yard, Carson Road, Bristol BS16 9LP.

Owners or occupiers of land (including buildings) near the operating centre who believe that their use or enjoyment of that land would be affected may make written representations to the Traffic Commissioner at: Traffic Commissioner, Hillcrest House, 386 Harehills Lane, Leeds LS9 6NF, stating their reasons, within 21 days of this notice.

Representors must also send a copy of their representations to the applicant at the above address.

A guide on how to make representations is available from the Traffic Commissioner's office.



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Window firm shuts after 47 years

A WINDOW and door company based in Mangotsfield has closed down after 47 years in business.

Panoramic's showroom in Richmond Road closed as the company ceased trading on November 11.

Its nine employees have been made redundant.

The company, which also fitted doors, glass roofs and conservatories, had a further six contractors working for it when it closed.

A notice posted on the door of the shop and on the company's website said: "It is with deep regret that we announce Panoramic Limited has ceased to trade."

Creditors and customers were referred to accountants PKF Francis Clark.

A PKF Francis Clark spokesperson said: "PKF Francis Clark was instructed to assist the director of Panoramic Limited with the steps necessary to place the company into liquidation and an orderly winding down of the company's business.

"We are working with the director to prepare and finalise the necessary documents and formally notify all creditors, including employees and customers, of the proposed liquidation and its timing.

"Gavel Auctioneers & Valuers have carried out a valuation of the company's assets and have been contacted by third parties interested in purchasing certain assets.

"After they are formally appointed, the



Panoramic's showroom in Mangotsfield Picture: Michael Bell

liquidators will investigate the company's financial affairs as part of their statutory duty and will be communicating with all creditors – including customers who have paid deposits – in due course."

Panoramic's website said the company had been in business since 1978.

It said: "We've been helping customers in Bristol, Bath and the surrounding areas with double and triple glazing for their windows and doors ever since. We pride ourselves on the quality of our glazing products and the close level of service we offer our customers."

It was previously known as Crittall Windows.

The firm had also sponsored local events and organisations, including providing power to Mangotsfield Residents Association's Dame School Nativity display in 2023.

Biker injured

A MOTORCYCLIST suffered "potentially life-changing" injuries in a collision in Downend.

Police and ambulance were called to Salisbury Road shortly before 3pm on October 21 to reports that a motorbike and car had collided near the junction with Buckingham Place.

The road was closed for around two hours as emergency services helped the injured man and investigated the collision.

A police spokesperson said: "The rider of the motorcycle, a man in his late 70s, has suffered injuries which are potentially life changing."

The man was taken to Southmead Hospital for treatment by an ambulance crew.

Police are calling on any witnesses who have not yet come forward to call them on 101, quoting the incident reference number 5225 295 550.



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TURNER'S VISION

Five winter eye care tips you will be glad to know



Peter Turner
of Turners Opticians

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CHristmas is a season of joy, generosity and a little festive chaos.

But while you are enjoying a well-earned glass of wine and laughing your way through family traditions, your eyes may not be having quite as much fun.

Bright daylight, chilly winds, central heating and long days out at Christmas markets can take a toll on your eye. So, as an early Christmas gift from all of us at Turners Opticians, here's our five-step guide to keeping your eyes healthy and your vision clear throughout the festive season.

1. Stay hydrated (your eyes will thank you)

With Christmas parties, cozy festive drinks and mulled wine galore, December often brings more alcohol than any other month. It's all part of the fun – until dehydration strikes. This can leave you with tired, sore or irritated eyes. Top Tip: Keep a bottle of water with you at home and on the go. Blink & drink (water!) regularly to stay hydrated and keep your eyes feeling comfortable.

2. Watch out for holiday hazard

From mischievous pine needles to airborne champagne corks and last minute home preparations for Christmas, December is full of surprises – and not all are good for your eyes. Top tips: Wear protective eyewear when doing last minute DIY and look out for children enthusiastically enjoying their new toys!

3. Cut through the winter glare

The low winter sun can be dazzling, especially when it reflects off wet roads or icy pavements. It's particularly tricky when you are driving – and modern headlights do not make things easier at night either! Top Tip: Keep sunglasses to hand and try our driving glasses with clear comfort lenses designed from the inside out to reduce driving glare & let you see clearly.

4. Give your eyes a lens break

Cold air and indoor heating can leave your eyes feeling watery or dry, especially if you wear contact lenses; why not treat your eyes this Christmas and try our extra moist contact lens refreshing eye drops? Top tips: Switch to your glasses now and then to give your eyes a break.

5. Don't forget your greens.

It is possible to power through Christmas on chocolates and savoury treats alone – but your eyes deserve better. Nutrient-rich foods help support healthy vision, especially during darker months. Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins A, C and E all play an important role in keeping your eyes in great shape. Top tip: Add dark, leafy greens (sprouts), oily fish, walnuts and citrus fruits to your festive menu alongside the roasties and stuffing.

If your eyes are feeling the winter strain, our friendly expert team is here to help. We are proud to provide advanced eye care, specialist lenses and award-winning clinical expertise to families across Bristol. Book your appointment today by calling our Henleaze practice on 01179622474 or our Fishponds practice on 01179654434.

Thank you for reading, and from all of us at Turners Opticians, we wish you a joyful, eye-healthy Christmas.

Peter

Peter Turner is an Independent Prescribing Senior Optometrist at Turners Opticians in Bristol. He also works as a Senior Medical Optometrist at Bristol Eye Hospital and has a specialist interest in visual development and performance.

Tributes paid to former councillor Rudi Springer

RUDI Springer, who was the first black chair of South Gloucestershire Council, has died, aged 87.

Rudi was born in Barbados on February 25, 1938, and arrived in the UK at the age of 18 on a ten-day voyage to Tilbury Dock.

He came to live in Wick, where he met and married his wife Jill and sang in the church choir.

After working at the ochre works in Wick, he moved to ICI at Avonmouth where he worked for 33 years as a chemical process operator and was a union shop steward.

On retirement, Rudi was elected as a Labour member of South Gloucestershire Council for the former Rodway ward, (Mangotsfield and New Cheltenham), serving for 15 years, including a term as chair from 1998 - 1999. He also served as Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire.

Rudi chaired the (Bristol Oscar) Sickie Cell &



Rudi Springer as chair of South Glos in 1998-99 and more recently

Thalassaemia Centre, and was a former chair of South Gloucestershire Safer & Stronger Community Groups and the South Gloucestershire Police Independent Advisory Group (IAG). He was a member of the National Council of the Barbados Association.

Rudi and Jill, who died 13 years ago, lived in The Reddings area of Kingswood and had two



children, Jonathan and Sally, four grandchildren – Callie, Jade, Mitchell and Josh – and nine great-grandchildren. Rudi served as a governor at Deerswood and St Stephen's schools.

Sally said: "My dad was amazing – both my parents were. He worked really hard to give us what we wanted. He was kind and tried to help people as much

as he possibly could.

"For somebody who came here on his own he did so well. It wasn't always easy but he managed to succeed."

Rudi's great passion was cricket. He played to a high standard and later was a season ticket holder at Gloucestershire's County Ground.

Staple Hill and Rodway councillor Michael Bell said: "It was typical of him that whilst working with ICI, eventually becoming the full-time TGWU convenor for a workforce of thousands, he also managed to have management agree for him to have Friday afternoons off to prepare the cricket field for the weekend games!"

He added: "I have known Rudi since the late 1980s, both as a political colleague and as a friend, and he will be sorely missed in both capacities. On behalf of so many residents, groups and members of the public – thank you Rudi."

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Appeal to find pole attackers



Police issued this CCTV picture of three suspects

POLICE are trying to trace three people after a man was hit in the face with a pole in Staple Hill High Street.

The victim, who is in his mid-20s, needed stitches and has been left with facial scarring after the attack, which happened at around 3.15am on September 6.

After spending time in hospital he is now recovering at home.

Police have now shared a CCTV image that they have obtained of three suspects, two women and a man, and have appealed for anyone who recognises them to get in touch.

Both women, who were captured on CCTV carrying poles, were described as white, slim

and aged around 20 years old.

One had brown hair, was wearing dark clothing, and carried a red pole at the time of the incident.

The other had short brown hair and was wearing a black coat and patterned trousers at the time.

The man was also described as white, slim and aged around 20.

He was wearing a dark tracksuit, with the hood up, and had a black rucksack.

Police say they are wanted on suspicion of assault causing grievous bodily harm and possession of an offensive weapon.

They say the image was shared in November to get help from the public, after already speaking to residents and businesses in the area.

A spokesperson said: "We are aware this may come as a concern to residents in the area, but we have not received any reports of a similar nature since."

Anyone with information should call 101 and quote the crime reference number 5225 251 433.

Information can also be given to the police online and to Crimestoppers, anonymously, on 0800 555111.

Air ambulance called

A PEDESTRIAN was taken to hospital with potentially "life-changing" injuries after a collision with a vehicle in Downend.



The helicopter at Downend Cricket Club. Picture: Martin Zullo

An air ambulance landed on Downend Cricket Club's ground during the emergency response to the incident, which happened at about 1.15pm on November 18 at the junction of Westerleigh Road, Badminton Road and Downend Road, between the Sainsbury's Local store and the Horseshoe pub.

A spokesperson for the South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust said the injured man was taken to Southmead Hospital by road, as a land ambulance and hazardous area response vehicle had also attended the scene.

A police spokesperson said: "One person was taken to hospital for injuries which are not thought to be life-threatening but may be life-changing."

"Enquiries are ongoing."

Anyone with information about the collision should call the police on 101, quoting incident number 5225 323 629.

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Tributes to bar owner Adam

TRIBUTES have been paid to the owner of a Staple Hill bar who has died, aged 59.

Adam Wills had owned Bar 501, on the corner of Broad Street and Soundwell Road since 2023, having bought into the business with the previous owners in 2014.

Described by his family as Staple Hill born and bred, he was also a big rugby fan, having played the sport while at St Brendan's College, where he was a "huge part" of the team.

Adam died on October 29.

His children George, Terri and Becky said: "He was a devoted father to Terri, Becky, George, Laura, and Josh and a beloved grandad—a much-loved and respected man, and a popular member of the Staple Hill community."

"Dad, you have left a massive hole in our hearts and will be forever missed."

Almost a hundred friends and customers left messages on the sports bar's Facebook page after news of his death was announced, paying tribute to a great friend and "genuine gentleman".

Around 300 people attended Adam's funeral at Westerleigh Crematorium, in November, which was followed by a wake at Cleve Rugby Club in Mangotsfield.

Customers of Bar 501 gathered outside to send him off, as his cortège left for the funeral.

Donations in Adam's memory can be made to Royal British Legion C/O H G Harris Funeral Directors, 2a Victoria Street, Staple Hill, BS16 5JS.



Adam Wills

Commissioner to be axed

AVON & Somerset's Police and Crime Commissioner will be scrapped, the government has announced.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said in November that all PCCs across the country will be abolished in 2028.

She said the move will save the taxpayer "at least £100 million" and help to fund frontline officers.

Ms Mahmood said: "The introduction of police and crime commissioners by the last government was a failed experiment."

"I will introduce new reforms so police are accountable to their local mayoralities or local councils. I would like to recognise the efforts of all current and former police and crime commissioners, and thank them. These individuals served their communities and will continue to do so until they have completed their current terms."

The Home Office says public understanding of PCCs remains low, despite efforts to raise their profile, and two in every five people are unaware PCCs exist.

Avon & Somerset's Labour PCC, Clare Moody, was elected in 2024, narrowly defeating Conservative Mark Shelford in an election that had a turnout of just over 23%.

Ms Moody said: "It is important to stress that this is not an immediate change. The current system remains in place until 2028, and all the important work under way, including commissioning vital support services, scrutinising police performance and building safer communities, continues as normal."

"The relationships and partnerships built across our communities remain central and will be maintained throughout any transition. This will not be a rushed process. It will be carefully planned, and more details will be shared as they become available. My focus is the same – working with police to keep people safe, supporting victims and working with partners and communities to prevent crime and harm."

A spokesperson for Metro Mayor Helen Godwin, who would take over the PCC's responsibilities, declined to comment.

CHRISTMAS & NEW YEAR BIN COLLECTIONS

Your recycling and waste collections will change over the festive period.

There will be no collections on **25 or 26 December, or 1 January**.

Our Sort It recycling centres will also be closed on these dates, and will shut at **2pm on Christmas Eve**.

My collection day should be...	My collection will take place on...
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Fri 26 December	Mon 29 December
Mon 29 December	Tue 30 December
Tue 30 December	Wed 31 December
Wed 31 December	Fri 2 January
Thu 1 January	Sat 3 January
Fri 2 January	Mon 5 January
Mon 5 January	Tue 6 January
Tue 6 January	Wed 7 January
Wed 7 January	Thu 8 January
Thu 8 January	Fri 9 January
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Fly-tip hotspot

STAPLE Hill & Mangotsfield is one of the five areas in South Gloucestershire worst affected by fly-tipping.

A report to the council's scrutiny commission said dumping of waste poses a "serious and escalating challenge", with 2,171 incidents recorded in the 2023-24 financial year - up 72% on a decade ago.

In the same year there were only 18 prosecutions and 15 fixed penalty notices.

The report said there were "notable hotspots in both urban fringes and rural lanes".

Among the problems was restricted access to recycling centres, which are only open from 8.30am to 4.30pm and are difficult for people without cars to access, as they cannot book a visit online and instead have to phone or email the council.

Another was a lack of awareness that unlicensed 'man in a van' operators could fly-tip waste and that leaving unwanted items on the pavement or roadside for others to take was also fly-tipping, with some being left out for weeks.

'Two-tier' bin subscriptions

A "TWO-tier system" has left some South Gloucestershire residents paying for garden waste collections, while others get their bins collected for free.

Since July, South Gloucestershire Council has not taken payments from people renewing annual garden waste subscriptions after it changed the collection system.

This means some residents are paying £63 a year to have their green bins collected, while others who are unable to renew their subscriptions don't have to pay.

The council's cabinet was urged to simply accept payments at the current rate at a meeting in November.

Andrew Shaw, a parish councillor in Bradley Stoke, said: "What I don't understand is why the transition from an old system to a new system wasn't a changeover that maintained continuity of service, by putting the new system in place and testing it before the old system was discontinued.

"This doesn't look like competent operations or financial management.

"It's created a two-tier set up with some garden waste subscribers, like myself, paying for the service, while other subscribers have enjoyed the same level of service for nil



payment. So will I get a refund or will the other people be receiving a back-dated invoice?"

Mr Shaw said he estimated that the council had lost out on more than £500,000 due to not taking payments since July - more than the £400,000 it proposed to raise by increasing charges by 19% next year.

He said: "Surely the reason why the cost of the green bin collections isn't being covered is because you've been providing it free of charge for certain residents for a third of the year?"

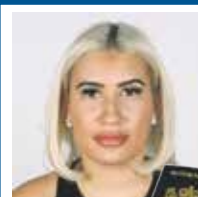
Cabinet councillor for communities Sean Rhodes said the council was "very, very concerned" about the fee collection problem.

He said: "We're working as hard as we can to get a resolution, because with the reduction in revenue, it's not something that can carry on unresolved."

Council leader Maggie Tyrrell said councillors had expressed their displeasure over the issue and would continue to work with officers to rectify it as soon as possible.

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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Council tax and charges set to rise

COUNCIL tax for South Gloucestershire residents is set to rise by 4.99% next year - the maximum allowed without a local referendum.

Green bin charges are also set to rise again, while cuts to services are also planned.

The changes are included in the council's draft annual budget, which is out for public consultation until December 21.

The council says every 1% increase in tax brings in about £1.9 million of extra funding for local services, and a smaller increase would mean having to make even more cuts than proposed.

It says it is facing "rapid increases" in costs in areas such as transporting youngsters with special education needs and

disabilities to school.

To tackle this, it intends to invest in improving facilities in mainstream schools for pupils with less complex needs, while expanding services for both pre-schoolers and post-16 students.

Garden waste collection charges could soar by 19% from April. The council is proposing a hike from £63 to £75 "to continue to cover the costs of providing the service".

It comes despite fees doubling from £30 to £60 in 2024, a rise which came with a pledge from leaders that future increases would go up only by the rate of inflation, which is currently under 4%.

The authority said: "Historically, charges for services like green waste collections

have been much lower in South Gloucestershire than in other parts of the country – and far below the costs of delivering them.

"However, with more constrained council finances, it feels unfair to continue to subsidise services like these, which the council is not required to provide, where there are alternative companies in the private sector providing a service."

Council leader Maggie Tyrrell (Lib Dem, Thornbury) says she wants to encourage everyone to take part in the budget consultation process.

She said: "We have set out how the current difficulty and uncertainty about the funding we receive, and the surging demand for some of the most expensive services that people rely on, is affecting the council.

"This consultation is a really important way for you to let us know how you're being affected, and how any changes we make in the future might affect you, too.

"Wherever we can, we want to work together, with individuals, communities and partners to find ways to reduce the impact of needing to make cuts to spending."

Council co-leader Cllr Ian Boulton (Labour, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield) said: "The choices open to us are limited, with difficult decisions to make.

"We've set out where our money comes from and where it has to be spent.

"But we want this consultation to be useful and meaningful."

Conservative group leader Sam Bromiley (Parkwall & Warmley) said it was "outrageous" that residents are being asked to pay more for services that are being cut, adding: "These plans amount to a budget of broken promises and misplaced priorities."

The consultation can be found online at www.southglos.gov.uk/budget

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Where the axe could fall

MEALS on wheels, pest control and the HandyVan household repairs service face cuts or increased charges under South Gloucestershire Council's budget plans.

The authority says that although they are highly valued by residents, council taxpayers are subsidising all three and it is not legally required to provide any of them.

The community meals service, better known as meals on wheels, is currently losing more than £125,000 per year – about £2.20 for every meal delivered.

The council said an increase in meal charges would offset losses.

The council is also considering options to stop subsidising the HandyVan, which provides services from plumbing and kitchen adaptations to decorating and even flat-pack furniture building, and offers discounted rates to over-60s and people with disabilities.

The consultation said the pest control service also does not make any money, adding: "This is not a service which the council must provide, and there are companies in the private sector who offer a good value alternative."

Other measures include cutting funding to town and parish councils for public toilets and parks, as well as flood prevention work.

The document said: "We plan to increase how often we clear drains and gulleys in the areas which are most prone to flooding, but to create capacity to do this, we need to reduce how regularly we do this in other places."



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Health provider Sirona's leaders criticised

THE health and care regulator has called on an organisation providing care for thousands of people across the region to improve.

The Care Quality Commission says there are "significant leadership challenges" at Sirona Care & Health CIC, with a "disconnect between leadership and frontline services".

The not-for-profit social enterprise provides NHS and council-funded community healthcare across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, serving a population of around 940,000 people.

The CQC announced the downgrading of Sirona's leadership rating from 'good' to 'requires improvement' in November, but said it was based on an inspection held in February.

It said the inspection was carried out "due to concerns about the quality of care across

various services and the stability of leadership following recent, unexpected changes at board level".

The CQC said: "Inspectors found the organisation was in breach of legal regulations relating to the good management of the service."

The inspectors said staff felt leaders "lacked transparency and stability" and had a culture which "discouraged speaking up and created fear of retribution".

However they also found that staff were "hard-working, dedicated and knowledgeable", and leaders worked together well in areas around the quality and improvement of care.

CQC deputy director for the South West Catherine Campbell said: "When we inspected Sirona, we found staff trying their best, but we found an organisation facing significant leadership challenges that were affecting its ability to deliver consistently good care to the communities it

serves.

"The board had been through a period of instability, with several interim appointments and departures, which meant leaders weren't working together effectively to address the serious issues the organisation faced.

"This lack of grip from the board meant staff on the ground didn't feel heard or supported.

"Many told us there was a disconnect between leadership and frontline services, and that their concerns about things like demand and capacity weren't being taken seriously or acted on quickly enough.

"When staff don't feel supported or listened to, it makes it harder for them to provide the quality of care people deserve."

Sirona has been without a permanent chief executive and chair for 18 months and had also been missing some non-executive directors and other senior leaders.

The organisation says it has

continued to have good patient satisfaction ratings despite the uncertainty at the top.

A spokesperson for Sirona said: "While it is disappointing that our well-led rating has gone down a band, this is not a reflection on the care Sirona delivers or on our dedicated and hard-working staff, but on our internal arrangements and processes as they were in February 2025.

"Since then, we have made substantial progress in our leadership, governance and culture. We have addressed and continue to address issues with recruitment.

"We are confident that, under the leadership of our new chief executive and senior team, Sirona will continue to improve significantly, becoming a stronger organisation that can better support our frontline staff as they provide vital community care to patients and their families."

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YOUR Community NEWS

Brought to
you by



**DOWNEND & BROMLEY
HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

On behalf of the Parish Council Team would like to wish all our residents a Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

"Twas the night before Christmas....
Well, not quite, but very soon! The trees are already in place, and lit, which is always exciting, especially for the youngsters!
So, Christmas will be upon us and for many of us it brings promise, with the gathering of family members and friends but, there are those who, sadly will be spending the festive season on their own, possibly without seeing anyone

on Christmas Day. Perhaps you know a neighbour who would love to have someone phone them and/or visit, such a nice gesture. Something to think about...
Our pavilion at King George V Playing Fields is well and truly open for business, following on from the event that we held in August, being snapped up for bookings for various groups.
Recently we have had Pumpkin

Carving, birthday parties, anniversary celebrations and so much more, along with all the bookings for the sports teams, who are delighted with the facilities we now have to offer.



Cllr. Janet Biggin
Chairman
D&BHC

Downend in Bloom Brightens the Pavilion



Jackie and the team from Downend In Bloom have once again worked their magic, planting up the front of the Pavilion ready for a burst of spring colour. Their hard work will soon transform

the area into a bright and welcoming space for the season ahead. A big thank you to the team, we can't wait to see what pops up!

DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCILLORS

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Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

Family history inspires Roger's thriller

AN author from Emersons Green has published a historical thriller based on the life of one of his ancestors.

Roger Lloyd's book, *Burning Secret*, tells the story of his great-great-grandfather Enoch Price, who was born into poverty in Bristol in 1844 before moving to America and making a fortune under a different name.

Roger, 75, who recently stepped down as chairman of the Frenchay Flower Show, said: "After retiring as a senior police officer, I turned my detective skills to genealogy, tracing my family history to the 16th century.

"However, after 15 years of extensive research, I couldn't track down my great-great-grandfather, Enoch Price, whose wife, Eliza, had, in living memory, helped raise my mother."

One of Roger's cousins eventually made a breakthrough via a relative in California, who looked through a box of family documents that had been unopened for 30 years and found references to her great-grandfather, Harry Mason, a wealthy hotel owner from Florida who had died in 1919.

It transpired that Harry and Enoch were in fact the same person.

Roger said: "From this single thread, the extraordinary story of Harry Mason began to unravel.

"Family stories painted Enoch as a



Roger Lloyd

respectable man, the son of a tanner, earning an honest living as a bodice stay manufacturer in London's East End during the 1870s.

"However, after dedicating fifteen years to meticulous research, I uncovered a far richer and more captivating story, one rife with unexpected twists, deceit, and brutal betrayal, bound to astonish anyone who

hears it.

"*Burning Secret* blurs the lines between fact and fiction, as it reconstructs the real life of Harry Mason, and is a story that many of us can relate to in our own families."

In the book Enoch becomes a bare-knuckle fighter amongst London's underworld before, facing ruin and imprisonment, he abandons his wife and daughters and flees to Florida, becoming Harry Mason.

He makes a fortune and gains political power but can't find happiness because of "a secret that burns deep inside".

Roger said: "I think the story operates on several levels; as a fast-paced thriller with plenty of derring-do, a morality tale of good vs greed, and how life can easily corrupt the pursuit of happiness."

Published by Matador, Roger's book is available online and via bookshops, and he also visits book clubs, gives talks and does signings.

His next projects also draw on figures from his family history: Frederick Henry Seddon, who was hanged at Pentonville Prison for murder in 1912, and Russians Peter and Veniamin Timkov, brothers who were executed by Stalin's secret police.

Roger said: "I'd like to inspire others to wonder about their family history."

Burning Secret by Local Author Roger Lloyd is Attracting Attention

Roger, a resident of Emersons Green, reveals a gripping story of deception and treachery in his novel *Burning Secret*.

★★★★★ *Burning Secret* is an engrossing historical saga of ambition, guilt, and redemption. Set against the vivid backdrop of Victorian London and early 20th-century America. **Liora Ellington Goodreads**

★★★★★ A terrific fast-paced read that propels the plot and characters. A masterful blend of fact and fiction. **Knightsinwhites Reviews**

★★★★★ A fascinating story, almost impossible to put down
Aubrey Cleeses Goodreads

★★★★★ A web of intrigue, crime, betrayal and sacrifice that keeps you on the edge of your seat. **Books Covered**

★★★★★ *Burning Secret* is a brilliant thriller and a real page turner.
Gemma Best Book Reviews

Explore the inspiring world of Roger Lloyd, a local author from Emersons Green. Enhance your event by booking Roger for your book club or signing.

For more details, visit www.rjlloydwriter.com.

Don't miss *Burning Secret* by R. J. Lloyd. You can find it at your local bookshop or library, or order it online through Amazon.



This Christmas, give a unique and exclusive gift—a personalised, signed copy only available directly at www.rjlloydwriter.com

DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS PREVIEW

BRYONY GRIFFITH & ALICE JONES

FRIDAY 19 DECEMBER 2025

DECEMBER'S Downend Folk & Roots concert is always a special one, and this year looks set to be no different!

After stealing the show and capturing the hearts of the audience during the 10th Anniversary Celebration last Summer, powerhouse Yorkshire folk duo Bryony Griffith & Alice Jones are back with their sensational seasonal tour Wesselbobs, in a concert which is certain to sell out.

Following the success of their 2023 album of the same name, Bryony and Alice present a unique collection of winter songs and tunes sourced from their beloved native county. Together they have unearthed a treasure trove of traditional gems, featuring uniquely local versions of more classic seasonal songs and showcasing the traditions, tales and winter rituals of the richly diverse musical culture in which they are immersed.

Hailing from West Yorkshire

Bryony and Alice are both long-time purveyors of English folk music, united by a fascination with local folk song and tune collections.

In 2019 they came together as a powerful new duo and have taken the folk scene by storm. Featuring fiddle, harmonium, tenor guitar, body percussion and intricate vocals in their distinctive regional accents, they combine their respect and understanding of tradition with their own contemporary style of performance, imparting their extensive knowledge of the material with wit and humour to present a unique repertoire of harmony, heritage and northern banter.

As is now traditional, the evening's music will begin with a set from Heartwood Chorus, a folk choir, based in Bristol, who sing original arrangements of songs whose murky origins stretch back centuries and centuries, songs their grannies taught them and future classics from the thriving contemporary folk scene.

Tickets for the concert, which takes place at Christ Church Downend on Friday 19 December 2025, are available online and from



Melanie's Kitchen (cash only). They are priced at £14 each in advance or £16 on the door. Doors open at 7.00pm and the music starts around 7.45pm. This event is also included in the Autumn/Winter Season Ticket, if you've bought one already.

There will be a bar, stocking cider, soft drinks, wine, hot drinks and real ale from Bristol's Hop Union Brewery, and, for this month only, mulled wine. Audience members are encouraged to bring their own glass/mug/tankard, as well as reusable bottles for water, as part of the drive to be more environmentally aware; there is

a 50p discount for those that do. There will also be sweet treats available at the bar courtesy of Radstock-based The Great Cake Company, as well as a prize draw, which helps to fund the support artists for each concert. The whole concert will be live-streamed in partnership with Live to your Living Room, so if you can't make it to South Gloucestershire, or miss out on in-person tickets, you have the option of watching from the comfort of your own sofa!

For further information, please email info@downendfolkandroots.com or find them on social media.

DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS REVIEW

THE SHACKLETON TRIO + THE ASHEN KEYS

FRIDAY 17 OCTOBER 2025

THE number three is a special thing. The Chinese consider it lucky, De La Soul thought it magic, English teachers just can't get enough of the Rule of Three. And folk trios? They're pretty amazing too.

The Shackleton Trio and The Ashen Keys effortlessly demonstrate that, while two might create a contrast, three allows for nuance, possibility and glorious intricacies.

From the opening seconds of Mandy Lynn, it is quite obvious that The Shackleton Trio are out to prove the true power of three. Georgia Shackleton's fiddle pings off of the mandolin of Nic Zuppardi, while Aaren Bennett's guitar clears a path to the dancefloor. The mandolin lends a Bluegrass edge but Shackleton's fiddle keeps things on this side of the Atlantic, the push and pull creating unbridled joy.

It's a joy that rarely lets up. The Fashionable Farmer swirls around the harmonies of Shackleton and Bennett as the fiddle and mandolin pokes gentle fun at a daft chap. Black Sluice, taken from the current album celebrating their ten-year anniversary, creeps stealthily around a tune that hints

at smoky Parisian bars before being illuminated by mandolin flashes. For a slightly depressing song it has a brilliant chorus and a great spoonful of jauntiness.

The Shackleton Trio bask in a love of nature too. There are Fenlands and brave animals everywhere you look. Two Hundred Miles tells the tale of a determined and loyal dog; it gallops along, the hard tracks of rural America scooting beneath its feet, Zuppardi's banjo pushing it forward. Lonesome George is short and sweet, the celebration of a giant tortoise, and Shackleton's voice is simply the loveliest thing. On War Pigeon, the fiddle and mandolin spill into a dizzying Bluegrass hoedown as she tackles tongue-twisting lyrics. The love for, and awe of, the animal world is palpable.

The Frost Fair harks back to ancient, chilly days but warms like an ice-bound brazier, Bennett's acoustic-Led-Zepplin trills and a fabulous chorus doing the job. Bird's Nest Bound, meanwhile, is a feather-light Blues, banjo bubbles popping at the softest of touches.

It's not often that the Downend audience gets up to have a dance (they much prefer a hearty sing) but, tonight, there's some spirited, untethered whirling. Bolton Lodge is a walking tune that spins with its arms wide, bouncing on the balls



of its feet. It has a childlike fizz that sends people up and out of their seats. The Stanford, a tune written for a pub, does it too. Mandolin and fiddle zooming around, pausing, dipping, then joining the steady thrum of the guitar.

Three instruments, gloriously intricate, full of possibility, sparking utter joy. The power of three in human form.

Most bands, having had to endure a five-and-a-half-hour drive from Kent to Bristol, might be a bit grumpy. The Ashen Keys, though, drift in on a cloud of harmonies, as gentle, as untroubled as if they'd just wandered in from next door. The Den, taken from their debut album The Name on Your Compass, is a wind-blown waltz, layers and layers of voices creating something lush, something drowning-deep. There are breathy oboe sighs from Rachel Lowrie and an Amélie

accordion from Vicky Price, paving Paris streets.

The Ellerby Hoard tells of treasure hidden under floorboards and is just as magical and unexpected; Hannah Ellerby (no relation) narrates a story that teeters on the edge of spooky as Price's French horn ghosts around it. Finally, Lowrie's acoustic strum drives the whole thing prog-folkwards. With Cassandra, The Ashen Keys mine their literary loves and unearth a blues-y slink that's full of dark corners and strange creatures. The three of them casting shadows, breathing life into myth, intoxicating with harmony. It's the harmony that does it really as Lowrie, Price and Ellerby gently twist around one another on Gathering, their voices nothing short of magical.

Words: Gavin McNamara
Photos: Barry Savell

Don't forget the reason for the season

AFTER last year's success of walking up Ben Nevis (the highest mountain in Scotland), this summer we found ourselves camping in the shadow of Scafell Pike, the highest mountain in England. Why not, we thought, let's walk this one! Unfortunately, our campsite was on the opposite side of the mountain and necessitated a 2-hour drive round the base to get to our start point. After an early start, followed by a long walk, the thought of a 2-hour return drive didn't appeal. A quick look at the map and then reprogramming the Satnav, found a quicker, shorter alternative route using B roads and farm tracks. What my map and Satnav didn't tell me was that this route took us over

'Hardknott Pass', which has the following description:

The Hardknott Pass in the Lake District is widely considered England's hardest road due to its extremely steep gradients, hairpin bends, and single-track design. It has a maximum gradient of 33% (1 in 3) and is known for being particularly challenging and treacherous for drivers.

I can testify to the accuracy of this description, as it was an extremely hard route to navigate, especially in a car designed for family holidays rather than off-roading. However, we carefully managed to navigate the route until just reaching the

summit of Hardknott Pass, when we had to stop to give way to an oncoming car. Unfortunately, in addition to the gradient, the gravel on the road meant we couldn't achieve any traction even with the family out of the car and pushing. We were stuck. The only solution was to reverse back where the gradient was less steep and the road surface more stable. The family jumped back in the car and with some acceleration we were able to conquer the summit and slowly make our way down. It was at times a challenging drive, more challenging than walking Scafell Pike!

Christmas is a busy time with many demands on our time and resources, and we



can lose focus on the reason for the season and forget the simplicity of the Christmas message. In John's gospel (John 1:14) we are told that Jesus ... 'made his dwelling among us'. This Christmas take time, reverse and spend some moments reflecting on God's gift for us all, the birth of His Son and make space for Him to 'dwell' with you.

Christmas '25

with Staple Hill Salvation Army

Sunday 30th November

10am - All Age Worship

4pm - Messy Church

Friday 5th December

7pm - Light up a Life Concert

Sunday 7th December

10am - Family Carol Service

Sunday 14th December

10am - All Age Worship

Sunday 21st December

10am - All Age Worship

5pm - Carol Service

Christmas Eve

5pm - Carols in the Square

Christmas Day

11am - Christmas Morning Worship



Love Came Down

Broad Street | Staple Hill | BS16 5LN
staplehill@salvationarmy.org.uk



The Salvation Army at Staple Hill

CHRISTMAS time is without doubt the busiest time of the year for us. We partner with South Gloucestershire Social Services, schools and other organisations to coordinate the provision of toys and presents to families who otherwise would struggle. We only give brand new boxed gifts and thousands of toys and gifts pass through our hands and are sorted into age and gender batches, so that they can be matched with potential recipients.

Staple Hill residents and those in other close by areas are incredibly generous and bring in their purchases for distribution and some give money so that we can go and fill any gaps in our stocks. Last year we helped over 600 families have a good Christmas.

We are open on Christmas day for those who would be alone, or for those who would find it difficult to cope. A full Christmas day - coffee - lunch - tea - goody bags etc are all part of the free package we offer.

Our band will be out and about playing familiar Carols. Stop and say hello and give them some encouragement. Take a look at the Christmas programme shown in our advert. Why not come and share with us at some of our events? We promise you a warm welcome!

Award for school's well-being work

A DOWNEND infant school has been presented with an award for the work it does to support pupils' mental health and well-being.

Christ Church Infant School was assessed by South Gloucestershire Council's health promotion in education settings quality assurance panel, which praised its "sustained, whole-school commitment to enhancing mental health and well-being, underpinned by a compassionate and caring ethos".

Work to hear children's voices, engage with parents and support staff was all praised.

The panel told the school: "It is abundantly clear that you don't just write on pieces of paper or



Christ Church Infant School head Anna Martin and deputy Gareth Jones with pupils and the school's award

webpages words that imply you care about how your pupils, staff, and wider community think and feel – you 'live it', bring it to life, in tangible, evidenced, and independently verified

ways that enhance staff and pupil outcomes, feelings, and experiences."

The council presented the school with its Mental Health and Wellbeing Award in October.

Head teacher Anna Martin said: "We are immensely proud to be recognised for the work we do at CCI in supporting our whole school community.

"Our commitment extends beyond the classroom – we not only nurture and guide our pupils but also provide valuable support to their families.

"We take great care of our dedicated staff team, and as a result, our school family is one that feels loved, supported, and happy.

"As our next step, we are excited to host a coffee morning for families from both our school and our partner junior school. We are delighted to welcome guest speakers from NHS Talking Therapies, Off the Record, and Love Squared – three local organisations that play a vital role in supporting the mental health of children and adults.

"We are also placing a strong emphasis on helping our children understand how to look after their own mental health and well-being, ensuring that it remains at the heart of everything we do."



Carols by Candlelight

Sunday 21st December 6.30pm

Midnight Communion

Christmas Eve 11pm

Christmas Day Celebration

Quakers Road (with Communion) 9.15am

Christ Church 10.30am



Christingle

Sunday 7th December 4pm

BUBBLE CHURCH

Sunday 14th December 4pm @Quakers Rd

Crib Service

Christmas Eve 4pm - dress up!

Christmas Day All-Age Celebration

Christmas Day 10.30am

Bounce into the New Year!

Saturday January 3rd 10-11.30am



SERVICES for children with special educational needs and disabilities in South Gloucestershire must be improved, inspectors say.

A joint team from education regulator Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission inspected the South Gloucestershire Local Area Partnership, made up of the council and the region's NHS integrated care board, in July.

In their report, published in November, the inspectors said the partnership needs to make improvements and update its strategic plan.

They said children and young people had "inconsistent experiences and outcomes".

The report said: "Younger children with SEND and their families have typically positive experiences in the early years. Strong and established relationships between early years practitioners, education inclusion officers and health visitors help to ensure that children's needs are identified and met early.

"However, despite improvements in several areas, including a reduction in

Special educational needs services need improvement

suspensions and exclusions, variability in the system is more frequent once children reach school age. Experiences and outcomes are particularly mixed for children and young people receiving SEN support and for those identified as having social, emotional or mental health needs."

The inspectors said there were "unacceptably long waiting times" for children with neurodevelopmental conditions such as autism and ADHD.

Less effective joint working meant that in some areas children had unidentified needs, which meant they could not be properly helped.

They said there were some improvements in experiences and outcomes for children, thanks to new organisational strategies, better partnership working and the support of the area's parent carer forum.

The inspectors made a series of recommendations across five areas, including improving engagement with children and young people with SEND and their families.

Responding on behalf of the partnership, a council spokesperson said: "The report recognises that a lot of the work we do with families and young people is effective and valued."

The spokesperson said: "Waiting times for key therapies and mental health services have been significantly reduced, and most children with SEND are now educated close to home.

"These improvements, driven by strong partnership working, are accelerating early identification and delivering positive experiences and outcomes, particularly for families new to the system.

"That said, we know we need to do significantly

better to improve consistency in the way that support is provided, especially for those who are waiting on the neurodevelopmental pathway and for those young people with Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

"We fully accept the report findings. The areas identified by inspectors for improvement were in our existing plans and we will redouble our efforts to drive the improvement work already under way. We are putting in place additional detail to our plans, and making sure that these are overseen at the highest level, to ensure we have the right support to make rapid progress.

"We are committed to making the experiences of all children consistently better.

"Together, we want to make a positive difference to the experiences and outcomes for all our SEND children and families."


**Christmas Blessings from all at
Badminton Road Methodist Church**

You are warmly invited to:
Sunday 7th December 4.00pm
Remembering Service
*with opportunity to light candles in
memory of loved ones*

21st December 10.30am
Christmas Carol Celebration
*This will be our main Christmas service -
there will be no service on December 25th.*





Our Alpha Course, starts 11 January
www.badmintonroadmethodist.org.uk

Badminton Road Methodist working around this busy time of the year

Christmas can be a busy time of year - stating the obvious! At Badminton Road Methodist Church we have decided to have our main Christmas celebration on Sunday 21st December at 10.30am, rather than on the 25th when many people have family commitments. If you would like to join an informal Christmas service with traditional carols, please do come along everyone is welcome!

For those who find Christmas tough as a result of bereavement, we invite you to our Remembering service on Sunday 7th December at 4.00pm. It will be a quiet half hour service with opportunity to light candles in memory of loved ones.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be running an Alpha course in the New Year. We start with a taster session on Sunday 11th January at 5.00pm. If you are curious about questions of life and faith, this is for you!

Just come along, enjoy light refreshments and get a feel for what Alpha is like. After the taster session you can decide to join the course or not - no pressure either way.



SING!

At Pendennis Good News Church we are leading up to Christmas by thinking about how the birth of Jesus Christ can lead to us experiencing real HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE in our lives. With all that happens to us personally and in the world, we can easily feel daunted, depressed and fearful. Life is often difficult, maybe you wonder what it's all about as you search for lasting happiness and true love.

For us, Christmas is ultimately not about presents but presence – the coming of God into a troubled world to be with us and to save us so that we can be with him always. God's word, the Bible, tells us that it is because of Jesus Christ that we can know real hope, peace, joy and love.

A big part of celebrating these truths is done through singing. We'll be using a good number of Christmas carols at various occasions over the advent season – and we give you a very warm invitation to join in – please see the details on our advert. These songs reflect the themes we will be considering.

HOPE.

In the carol 'O Holy Night,' we sing, 'A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.' The 'thrill' or joy

comes because this hope is certain. This is not an "I hope" wish, but a solid assurance. We, the 'weary world' can know HOPE in life and death because Jesus was born, lived, died, rose again and is returning to establish a new and perfect world.

PEACE.

In 'Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,' there is the line, 'Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled.' The most serious conflict that exists is to be enemies of God because of our rejection of him and our rebellion against him. And yet, Jesus came not in anger but in mild mercy. He came to reconcile sinners with Almighty God. He came to bring us PEACE with God.

JOY.

When we sing 'Joy to the world' we do so because 'the Lord has come!' We are all under the just condemnation of Holy God and yet he promised a Saviour. God would deal with the divide, he would provide the champion who would defeat the enemies of our sin, of evil and death. Well, he came, and JOY can be ours if we know and trust Jesus the rescuer.



LOVE.

Possibly a less well-known carol, 'Thou who was rich beyond all splendour' describes the Son of God who, 'all for loves sake became poor.' Why did God send his Son? Why was Jesus born? Because God so loved the world. God loves you enough that he sent his own Son, who loved you enough to leave heaven, become a man on earth and die on the cross for you. Jesus the God-Man offers us real HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE because he died to deal with the divide and reconcile us to God, now and forever. Now that's worth singing about! Come and join in!

FIND TRUE JOY THIS CHRISTMAS

All Age Service

SUN 14 DEC, 10.30AM

Together we will explore and celebrate the true joy of Christmas

Carol Singing in the Park

FRID 19 DEC, 6PM, PAGE PARK BANDSTAND

Hot chocolate and mince pies provided

Bring a travel mug, a torch, and a shaker for your young carollers

Carols By Candlelight

SUN 21 DEC, 6.30PM

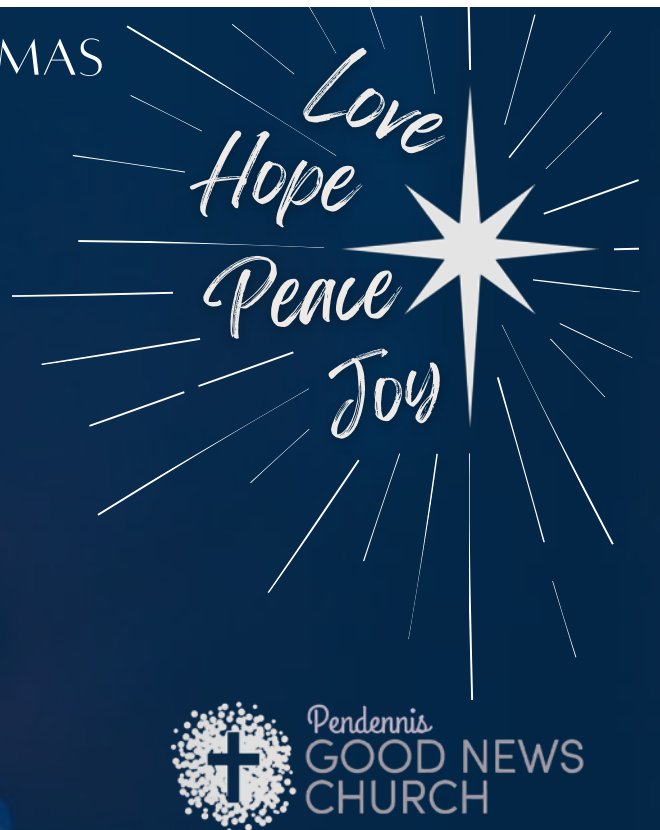
Join us for our traditional carol service

Festive refreshments provided

Christmas Day Service

THURS 25 DEC, 10.30AM

Celebrate the birth of Jesus with us



Pendennis Good News Church



hello@pendennishgoodnews.com



Good News Church BS16 5JB

Share the warmth

DECEMBER, for some, can bring a kind of magic.

Streets glow with fairy lights, cafés steam up with the warmth of people clutching hot chocolate, and suddenly everyday places feel softer, gentler.

But while we're wrapping gifts or planning dinners, there are thousands of people for whom December doesn't bring magic, but sharp reminders of what they don't have: warmth, stability, safety, a sense of belonging.

They are the people we walk past on wet, cold pavements. The ones being released from prison into a world that feels like it's moved on without them.

There's a certain unfairness in how homelessness looks during winter. The colder it gets, the easier it is to forget that behind every figure curled up in a doorway is a whole story, a life that existed long before the street became their home.

Imagine waking up on a freezing morning with no kettle to boil, no soft jumper to pull on, no place to thaw out. Imagine watching people rush home with shopping bags, while you're wondering where you'll sleep.

And still, so many people experiencing homelessness talk about hope. About wanting a chance to rebuild. About remembering Christmases from years ago, filled with family, laughter, and warmth.

Christmas is, at its heart, a story rooted in struggle, simplicity, and unexpected hope: a young couple with nowhere to stay; a birth in a place that wasn't meant for people; a world that barely noticed. Yet through that humble moment came a message powerful enough to comfort the lonely, lift the broken, and give meaning to those who feel forgotten.

We have the power show compassion: a warm drink offered without judgement; a conversation that acknowledges someone's humanity; a donation to a shelter when the temperature drops below freezing.

These aren't solutions on their own, but they can be the beginning of a shift in how we see people who often feel invisible.

The warmest light in December is the one we share.

Mark Tanner, Christ Church

What does December 25 really mean?

December 25th is packed with layers of meaning. For some, it's sacred. For others, it's cultural. For many, simply a moment to breathe at the end of a long year. But what if we broadened our perspective even more—beyond nations, beyond traditions, beyond even our own species?

What if we asked a turkey?

If a turkey could speak, December 25th might feel complicated! On one wing, Christmas gives their species purpose, a starring role on dinner tables across the world. Without the Christmas season, many turkeys may not exist at all. Their entire life cycle is bound up in a tradition that pre-dates them by centuries. On the other wing... well, the ending for them is not exactly ideal. (apologies to any vegan or vegetarian readers, and to note that other delicacies are available!!)

So, a thoughtful turkey might look at December with mixed feelings: but perhaps, in some faintly philosophical way, our turkey might wonder whether being part of a larger story—even one it doesn't fully understand—gives its life some strange significance.

The agnostic observer might sympathise with that turkey.

Christmas can be confusing from a human vantage point too. The music, the lights, the generosity, the pressure, the nostalgia, the commercial swirl—it can be hard to sort out what's truly meaningful.

Yet even for those who hold no firm beliefs, Christmas still speaks a universal language:

- The longing for warmth in a cold season
- The desire for connection
- The hope that goodness is still possible
- The sense that light matters most when it's dark

You don't need absolute certainty to find value in those ideas. They're simply good human impulses.

Light enters the darkness

At the heart of December 25th lies a story that claims something extraordinary: that God stepped into human life, not with power or spectacle, but in fragility. A baby. A manger. A small beginning.

Even if one views this from a distance—curious but unconvinced—there is something compelling about the claim that light enters the world quietly, that hope is born in unlikely places, and that love chooses humility over force.

Christians believe Christmas is the moment heaven leans close.

Agnostics might simply see a story that has shaped cultures and continues to resonate with timeless themes.

Even our hypothetical turkey might acknowledge that Christmas, for better or worse, shapes destinies.

An invitation to explore

Wherever you stand—firm in faith, gently questioning, decidedly agnostic, or simply appreciative of the season's atmosphere—Christmas is a moment worth exploring.

Local churches everywhere reflect on these themes throughout December:

You're warmly invited to visit a church near you.

Not to sign up for anything. Not to have all the answers. Simply to explore, to wonder, and maybe to discover a deeper meaning behind December 25th.

(And don't worry—turkeys are not required to attend.)

Stephen Newell Companion Minister for Mangotsfield and Castle Green URC

(A small church with a big heart for Welcome, Unity and Service.)



New school nursery welcomes young learners

A NURSERY at a primary school in Staple Hill is up and running after being funded under a government scheme to provide new childcare places.

Little Adventurers Nursery at the Tynings Primary School in Eastleigh Close welcomed its first arrivals in October.

Already 11 children are on the roll for the nursery class, which has a maximum capacity of 23 places each session for children aged from two to four.

It has two full-time and one part-time member of staff.

The Tynings was one of two schools in the Bristol North East constituency, and 300 across the country, awarded funding earlier this year in the first wave of a scheme to set up 3,000 school-based nurseries over the next five years.

The nursery class building was converted over the summer and an outdoor area created over the half-term holidays.

The classroom has different areas for playing, drawing and painting and sitting for stories,



Staff and children at the Tynings nursery with head teacher Lois Haydon, MP Damien Egan and Councillor Ian Boulton

as well as a big screen, sink, toilets and even an indoor sandpit in a suitcase. There is a separate waiting area for parents.

The outdoor area has places to sit, climb and play, and will also have a canopy to allow children to play outside in all weathers.

Head teacher Lois Haydon said: "We're really pleased with how well the children have settled in.

"It's really nice to have younger children on site - the older children like to see what they've been up to and are really curious about how the younger ones come in and learn.

"It's a beautiful space that's been created. We're really proud of it."

Working parents have been entitled to 30 government-funded hours of childcare a week for children aged between nine

months and school age since September.

But many areas are known as "childcare deserts" because they don't have enough places to go around, and the school nurseries are a key part of plans to provide the extra places needed.

The first nursery, at Avanti Gardens School in Fishponds, opened in September.

In November MP Damien Egan, whose Bristol North East constituency includes both schools, visited the Tynings with South Gloucestershire Council cabinet member for education and Staple Hill & Mangotsfield councillor Ian Boulton.

Mr Egan said: "The school have done a great job getting everything ready over the summer and the nursery looks fantastic.

"The children love it, and they're surrounded by green space.

"Best of all, it's free, and saves families hundreds of pounds a month."

This Christmas at Downend Baptist Church

All age services - everyone welcome

Saturday 13th December - 11am
Memorial Service - Remembering loved ones

Sunday 14th December - 10:30am
Nativity Service

Sunday 21st December - 10:30am
Carol Service

Thursday 25th December - 10:30am
Christmas Day Service



Downend Baptist Church
Salisbury Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 5RA
www.downendbaptist.co.uk

CHRISTMAS MEMORIAL SERVICE

Christmas is a special time of year to remember those that we have lost. Co-op Funeralcare and Downend Baptist Church would love you to join us to light a candle and honour all of our loved ones who are no longer here to share Christmas with us. Light refreshments will be served.

*Saturday 13th December, 11am @
Downend Baptist Church, Salisbury
Road, BS16 5RA*



Friends of Hill House Park



Volunteers at Hill House Park

OUR group has had an incredibly productive autumn, despite ongoing restrictions on the work we can undertake while the park's lease remains unsigned.

We've been able to begin a comprehensive hedge repair project, and volunteers have come together to transform one of our most cherished green

spaces.

Phase One took place on November 15, and the turnout was outstanding.

Despite typical November weather, dozens of volunteers of all ages came together armed with tools, enthusiasm, and a shared commitment to improving our community space.

The work accomplished in just one morning was remarkable.

Volunteers removed dead privet hedging along Hill House Road ready for new plants currently on order. Old school railings were righted and secured, preserving this piece of the park's heritage. Spring bulbs were planted throughout, promising colourful displays come springtime, whilst pathways were cut to improve accessibility.

The team also relocated whips to better positions within the hedge line, and tended to trees planted last spring by removing grass and mulching the ground.

What struck me most was the incredible community spirit on display – experienced gardeners working alongside beginners, teenagers learning from older

volunteers, and helpers of all ages pitching in together.

Phase Two is provisionally scheduled for December 13 at 10am, subject to tree delivery confirmation. Our replacement hedging trees are due to arrive on the 11th, and we'll need volunteers to help plant them.

I know December Saturdays are precious, but if you can spare just a couple of hours, you'll make a lasting contribution to Hill House Park.

Beyond the project work, the lease for Hill House Park is now likely to be signed in February – a significant milestone, providing greater security for long-term planning.

We are still hoping to secure the whole field, which would be transformative for our community.

Our Annual General Meeting will be held on January 22, from 7-9pm, in the hall behind Aspirations Support, 26 South View, Staple Hill.

We're particularly seeking someone to take on the Chair role.

If you're passionate about green spaces and community engagement, please consider

putting yourself forward.

For more information, contact katie.cooper@southglos.gov.uk or friendsofhillhousepark@gmail.com.

Together, we're not just repairing hedges – we're nurturing a space that will serve our community for generations to come.

Katie Cooper

Friends of Page Park

SADLY the park's cleansing team are reporting on-going issues with the toilets at Page Park being vandalised almost every night.

Toilet roll holders have been ripped off and the bin liners are emptied all over the floor regularly in the accessible toilet.

Locks have been damaged or broken on doors and unfortunately the baby changing toilet has continually had items pushed down the toilet, which blocks it.

Water then overflows over the floor.

A plumber and locksmith

Messy Christmas

FUN-FILLED GAMES, CRAFT AND THE CHRISTMAS STORY FOR KIDS AGE 4-11

SAT 13TH DEC 2:30-4PM

AT STANBRIDGE SCHOOL DOWNEND

EVERY CHILD GETS A GIFT FROM FATHER CHRISTMAS!

grace church

grace church

Christmas Carol Service

TRADITIONAL FAMILY-FRIENDLY ALL AGES WELCOME

6PM - 7PM | 21 | DECEMBER

Stanbridge School, Downend

www.gracechurchbristol.org



Vandals have flooded the toilets at Page Park

had to be called to resolve the problem, which is costly.

The council's cleansing manager has instructed Property Services to change the locking time for the toilets 3pm, before it gets dark, to attempt to break the cycle of vandalism.

This will then be reviewed.

Finding the accessible toilet blocked is not a pleasant experience if you are a disabled person who needs it.

We have been so proud to have

these toilet facilities in the park for our visitors, it is a great shame that others feel it is acceptable to behave like this.

The Friends donated £20,000 towards the new toilet block: money raised by the sale of our calendars; money given by our community.

Our volunteers have spent many hours standing out in all weathers at our calendar sales, so it's soul destroying to see this.

I'm angry that somebody could

do this and spoil other people's visits to the park.

Please let your family, friends and social media contacts know about this, because somebody out there knows who's responsible for this.

Most of us volunteers are in our 70s or older and we're struggling to get new recruits.

People say how lovely it is in Page Park but it doesn't just happen - we need the support of the community, and people have got to step up and support us.

We are selling our fundraising calendars at Christmas on the Hill in Staple Hill on November 29, the Page Park artisan market on December 13 and Downend food market on December 14 - please come and buy one, and ask about how you can get involved.

Steph Purser

Friends of King George V Park

IT'S been a busy month at King George, with the fantastic Round

Table firework display enjoyed by thousands.

Despite all the activity, the fields have held up well and are already beginning to recover.

It was also a pleasure to support the pumpkin carving event at the Pavilion, organised by manager Chrisy.

It was wonderful to see the children having fun and proudly showing off their creations.

Behind the scenes, we're working hard on some exciting plans for 2026 and look forward to sharing more news as soon as we can.

In the meantime, please do come and say hello at the Age UK Christmas Fair on Saturday December 6, from 1-4pm at the Pavilion.

We'll also be at the Downend Food Market on December 14, from 11am-3pm.

If you'd like to get involved, we'd love to hear from you.

You can reach us at kgvdownend@gmail.com or via our Facebook page, Friends of King George V & Badminton Road Playing Fields.

Fiona Konteh



CHRISTMAS

AT STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH



COFFEE AND CAROLS

SATURDAY 20TH DECEMBER
10 AM - 12 PM

Coffee morning with mince pies and carol singing on the front steps of the Church.

In aid of Action for Children.

Carol singing from 11 am.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

SUNDAY 21ST DECEMBER
6 PM

Join us for our annual candle lit carol service led by the Church choir.

Coffee and mince pies served afterwards.

CHRISTMAS DAY

THURSDAY 25TH DECEMBER
10 AM

All are welcome to celebrate the birth of Jesus with us.



www.staplehillmethodist.co.uk

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Sunday 11th January

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- Brunch/lunch at Good Lyfe café

£40



Personal Training Experience

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- Brunch/lunch at Good Lyfe café

£60



Pilates Experience + Massage

- 1 hour Reformer Pilates class
- 1 hour massage
- Brunch/lunch at Good Lyfe café

£80



SCAN THE QR CODE OR BOOK ONLINE: <https://www.lyfehealth.co.uk>

t 2026

SECTION



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Good Lyfe
Kickstart Menu



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ss event to help kickstart your year.
our team



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- 30 minute nutrition consultation
- Brunch/lunch at Good Lyfe café

£80



Total Reboot

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- Personalised written report
- 30 minutes to talk through your results
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- 1 hour massage
- Brunch/lunch at Good Lyfe café

£160



Total Reboot + Nutrition

- 1 hour Lyfe Check-Up (50+ assessments)
- Personalised written report
- 30 minutes to talk through your results
- 1 hour Reformer Pilates class
- 1 hour massage
- Brunch/lunch at Good Lyfe café
- 30-minute nutrition consultation

£199



[s://downend.lyfehealth.co.uk/lyfe-kickstarter](https://downend.lyfehealth.co.uk/lyfe-kickstarter)

New rights for renters

I HOPE you're enjoying the fantastic community events we have at this time of year, from fireworks nights to Christmas events - it makes for a truly lovely end to the year.

It was a privilege to speak at a memorial unveiling at Aerospace Bristol, remembering those who died during test flights with the Bristol Aeroplane Company between 1910 and 1960.

Thank you to all who volunteered or gave to the Poppy Appeal. I attended powerful Remembrance events in Downend, Filton, Stoke Gifford, Patchway and at MOD Abbey Wood.

I was also proud to lay a cross on our community's behalf in Parliament.

With family members who served, this has always felt such an important time of year to me.

It's also important to support those who are serving now, and the new Defence Housing Strategy includes £9 billion over the next decade to upgrade and modernise 9 in 10 of the military homes housing Armed Forces families, including 201 across the Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency.

In the past month, my small team and I have worked on 704 new cases supporting fellow residents.

I've held an advice surgery in Charlton

Hayes and informal 'Coffee with Claire' event in Stoke Park.

At a time where, unfortunately, some seek to divide, I believe that coming together, listening (whether we agree or not) and making positive change happen together matters. This will always be my approach as your MP.

Locally, I've been advocating for residents by meeting with FirstPort to raise concerns about leaseholders' issues.

This comes as the new Renters' Rights Act becomes law. Having played a key role on the committee that scrutinised the bill line-by-line, I was pleased to see it receive Royal Assent.

It will help ensure the 8,596 households renting locally have the same chance of a decent home in what has been a lottery until now.

Ending 'no fault' evictions and introducing the right to request a pet are among the living standards boosts.

I also met with members of our Hong Kong community to hear a range of experiences, and have raised concerns they shared with the Home Office.

I welcomed Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander to Airbus in Filton, where she saw more of the important work here shaping the future of flight, and in Parliament I welcomed



the UK-Türkiye Typhoon fighter jet deal, supporting jobs at Rolls-Royce in Filton and SMEs.

I've also visited JobCentre Plus in Horfield and the new St Peter's Hospice Superstore to Filton.

UK Parliament Week saw schools and community groups explore how democracy works. It was super to visit Callicroft Primary Academy and SGS College Filton to hear and answer questions from young people.

I co-hosted an event in Parliament to showcase the impact of universities in our part of the world, and welcomed Tom El-Shawk from Future Space - a thriving hub for start-ups at UWE - to 11 Downing Street for a reception with the Chancellor.

Thanks to all who have given so much to our community in 2025. I wish you a joyful Christmas, and all the best for 2026.

You can get in touch anytime at claire.hazelgrove.mp@parliament.uk.

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The otter
chases after
the fox

Otter and fox on camera

A FRENCHAY resident caught a fox and an otter chasing each other in his garden - then found his pond had been emptied of fish.

Geoff Haskett shared footage of the late-night encounter in his garden with fellow members of the BS16 Wildlife Group on Facebook, weeks before similar footage of another fox and otter caught on CCTV in Lincoln made national headlines.

Geoff said: "I watched an altercation between a fox and an otter.

"The next morning I checked my pond and, sure enough, all the fish had disappeared.

"That creature must have travelled over 500m from the Frome for its weekend takeaway."

Geoff lives close to Beckspool, a large pond the otter may have been visiting from the river.

He said the night the fish disappeared was the first visit from an otter since he put up a security camera, and a neighbour had also recorded a pair of them in his garden.

Two years ago Mangotsfield resident Jill Barnes captured an otter on a night-vision CCTV camera after starting to lose fish from her home, which is close to a waterway that eventually runs into Leap Valley.

Otters have a territory of up to 40km and are known to range far from rivers to search for food.

Police recruited criminals

AVON & Somerset Police recruited officers who had criminal records or cautions without properly considering the risks when vetting them, government inspectors found.

A report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services said the force needs to improve vetting procedures, professional standards and counter-corruption arrangements.

The government inspectors said that of 37 cases investigated on vetting new recruits over the last three years, the force did not "consider identified risks or relevant risk mitigations" for 10 of them.

One of these recruits posed "several significant corruption risks" and was initially refused clearance by the vetting unit, which "correctly highlighted the relevant corruption risks". But this decision was overturned by senior officers and the person was employed, and only years later - immediately before HMICFRS's inspection - were they granted clearance, without the correct procedures being followed.

The report, published on October 29, said: "Given the corruption risk posed, this isn't acceptable. We brought this case to the personal attention of the chief constable."

The regulator concluded that the force needed to improve the way it made vetting decisions, handled complaints and allegations of misconduct, and monitored its IT to identify potential misuse.

A police spokesperson said the force had "invested significant resources - money, technology, and some of our best people" into its Professional Standards Department, Counter Corruption Unit (CCU), and vetting. The force said it accepted the inspectors' findings with "humility and determination" and had already taken action in response to the recommendations.

Deputy Chief Constable Jon Reilly said: "We are committed to continuous improvement and welcome ongoing scrutiny. The vast majority of officers and staff dedicate their lives to keeping the public safe. There is no place in policing for those who don't share our values."

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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Snuff boxes

DOWNEND resident Jenny Alcock has shared her collection of local snuff tins from the early 20th century, which she believes belonged to miners.

Snuff was made from finely-ground tobacco leaves.

Miners couldn't smoke cigarettes or pipes when working underground, because the mines were full of gas and rock dust, which would ignite and explode if there was any spark or fire.

Instead, they took 'twist' tobacco, the cheapest tobacco available, which was twisted or spun into long lengths. A cheap form of hot, peppery snuff was made in this area.

Chewing the tobacco was a socially-encouraged habit, but it also helped to stop the miners' mouths drying out from breathing in the dust-laden air.

Of course, we now know the health risks of chewing tobacco, like cancer, heart attacks and strokes, but mining was an incredibly dangerous job, with regular accidents and deaths at work, so that was the last of their worries.

Moreover, average life expectancy for everyone, not just those in dangerous jobs, was only 44 for men and 48 for women in 1900.

In fact, people today live almost twice as long as they did in 1841. Imagine if that trend continues, and people a few generations on are living twice as long as us now, to the age of 160!

As well as snuff tins, miners also took 'snap'

tins down into the pits.

These were larger metal containers which they would carry their snap, or food in. What was eaten varied in different regions, from sandwiches in Yorkshire to pasties in Cornwall, but it needed to be carried in airtight tins to keep the coal dust and grit off them.

Jenny's beautiful snuff tins are embossed with the owners' names, dates and locations: Charles Hibbard, 1903, Frenchay; Fred Garland, 1901, Staple Hill; Albert Coates, 1913, Downend.

They are 7.5cm x 5cm (about 3in by 2in) in size, made of tin and polished to a shine.



■ Snuff box once belonging to Albert Coates

Downend Community History and Art Project (CHAP) is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation that aims to create a coherent identity for Downend and Emersons Green, built around interesting or significant places, people and events from the past.

For more information, visit CHAP's website at www.downendchap.org.

You can also contact CHAP by email at big.gin@yahoo.com or write to CHAP, 49 Overhill Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 5DS.

Helen Rana

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Can you help us find a new home?

DOWNEND Men in Sheds (DMiS) is facing one of the biggest challenges since its inception in 2017.

After many successful years based at the pavilion on Bromley Heath playing fields, a safety inspection found that there were serious problems with the building.

The problems were such that we were forced to decant into the two shipping containers that housed some of the bigger pieces of woodworking machinery.

Whilst Downend and Bromley Heath Parish Council have begun exploring possible ways through the issues, this is a slow process, and we have to try to continue in somewhat cramped conditions that are not really conducive to the aims of DMiS and the community work that we have been doing for many years.

As a result we have had to downscale the size of the jobs that we might otherwise do.

For those who don't know or are only vaguely familiar our place within the local community, it's only fair to reprise the breadth of work that we undertake.

We are part of a global organisation whose aims include bringing people together, encouraging connection, conversation and creation; we make, repair and repurpose, alongside supporting projects in the local communities.

Underpinning this is an aim to improve well-being, reduce loneliness and combat social isolation. We have contributed to a wide variety of community activities, and many of our members have openly stated that they have regained a sense of purpose, they feel more connected, and that being part of the group



Men in sheds members at Lyde Green Primary School

has addressed issues of loneliness borne out of loss or retirement.

We've carried out work across a range of different settings in the wider community, including:

- Building mud kitchens, pergolas and other facilities for local schools Lyde Green, Christ Church, Bromley Heath and St Augustine's school
- Brain Injury Therapy Unit at Frenchay
- Christ Church and St John's Church, Frenchay.
- Local scout and guide groups.
- Downend Library
- Lawrence Hill Community Welfare Centre
- Bromford Housing Association
- Frenchay Flower Show, Lincombe Barn Christmas Fayre and other festivals

*Installing memorial benches

The quality of the work that we undertake has never been questioned, as evidenced by the fact that we are often asked to replicate some of the successful projects that we have completed or to take on new projects.

threat into opportunity.

There is no doubt that the threat element of being forced to move out of the pavilion looms large at the moment.

However, there is also an opportunity: it may be possible that we can return to the pavilion after a refurb; it's possible we might get permission for extra containers to provide suitable space; it's possible that there is a space out there that might be waiting for us - a shop that is no longer in use, an unused barn, or a warehouse space big enough for us to accommodate both our social/well-being aims and the community-oriented projects that we undertake.

It's possible that someone reading this might be aware of such a venue. You never know! If so, we'd love to hear from you.

We would be more than happy to discuss possibilities - call me on 07968 376694 or email downendmensshed@gmail.com.

John Lockwood (chairman)

Party time

A COMMUNITY carol service and free party is being held to help Downend residents get into the Christmas spirit.

The free event on December 19, at St Augustine of Canterbury Church in Boscombe Crescent, is being organised by the team behind the community cafe that meets at the church hall every Friday. It is being sponsored by Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council.

The event starts with a service in the church at 6.30pm, with carols led by the Staple Hill Salvation Army band and a performance from 9-5 Ladies Barbershop harmony chorus.

After that there will be refreshments in the hall, accompanied by Emily Bragg duet singers.

All are welcome to the event, and to the community cafe at the church hall, which was set up three years ago and runs every Friday from 1.30-3.30pm.

The cafe is open to people of all ages for free tea, coffee, biscuits and cake, activities and company.

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A year of improvements for our village

WELL, here we are, with Christmas and the end of 2025 almost upon us.

We of the residents' association have achieved quite a bit again this year, including the new flag pole at the memorial, where we raised the Union flag as we celebrated 80 years of Victory in Europe with a short service, in conjunction with St James Church and the local Royal British Legion.

We also had a short service at St James Church with the Royal British Legion to celebrate VJ Day and, of course, we had our annual Remembrance service at the memorial, which you will have seen elsewhere in the Voice.

It took a while to gain funding and permission for our own flag but we got there in the end! The flag will fly at full mast always.

We repositioned two of our planters down to Mangotsfield Common, plus an additional one there. Thank you to all who have volunteered to look after them.

We also did a mass de-weeding around the village and several tidy-ups, to keep our village clean



Last year's Dame School carol service

and tidy.

Of course much more has been done by our group of volunteers in our Hour A Month (HAM) sessions, including the great ladies' gardening team at the Dame School.

We have recently had quite a few new volunteers, but please come and join us. We post upcoming HAM's on the Mangotsfield Matters Facebook page, so just keep your eye out.

We do have other plans in the pipe line for next year, to keep our

village looking nice and a better place to live.

Thank you to all who gave to our crowd funding request to help with our running costs, including insurance.

It is still running, so if you can help us, please visit tinyurl.com/yswsf7d9.

Our very popular Dame School Nativity scene will be in place again this year. We do try to improve it for you every year, as we do the tree lights at the Church.

Our annual Dame School

Carol service, in conjunction with St James Church, is on Thursday December 11 at 6.30pm, complete with brass band - please come and join us again this year, and bring your singing voices! The Church will be open for tea and coffee afterwards.

Our last MRA/Red Lion Coffee morning of the year will be on Wednesday December 3 at 10am.

It is becoming more and more popular; all are welcome, so please come and join us there.

If you are interested in joining us or want more information please get in touch by email at MangotsfieldRA@gmail.com, or via the ever popular Mangotsfield Matters Facebook page.

You can also phone our secretary Chris Amos on 07918 701881 or me on 07507 168700.

All of us at the Mangotsfield Residents Association wish you a very merry and safe Christmas and a Happy New Year - please don't forget to please look out for those who may be alone and vulnerable at this time of good will!

Clive Heath, chair

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GOODNESS, I cannot believe how the time is disappearing!

At the beginning of November we had our family Christmas weekend away - a bit bizarre, I know, but we wore our Christmas jumpers, did Christmas quizzes and had a huge turkey lunch!

I am now totally in Christmas mode and can't wait to get the dekkies up, as December 1st rapidly approaches.

At the In Bloom container site this week we have had great Christmas fun. We had the Christmas music playing and the guys from the school that are working with us this term were putting the finishing touches to the Christmas wreaths they have been making.

They did a cracking job, and were very pleased with their outcomes. They have also put the first coat of their finished colour onto their robin boxes - one more to go and they will be ready for outside use. Let's hope the robins like them!

I hope you will all be supporting the Downend Festive Food Market this year on Sunday, December 14, between 11am and 3pm.

Apparently there will be lots of

Getting busy for Christmas



**In Bloom
Santas ready
to go to
market**

yummy food with a festive twist, local artists and makers, live music and free family-friendly activities.

This year In Bloom's crew have been making Christmas items to sell. I know some of you have missed our stall that we used to have at Cleeve Wood but unfortunately, over the last few years, we have been unable to make things as we transitioned our

site. However, we now have great facilities and can work inside in this cold weather, so it is all systems go.

One of our best sellers has always been our wooden Christmas trees, which come in various guises. The other item that people loved were the trio of Father Christmases, and they will be popping up again!

Just to note, all of our items are

made using mainly recycled or off-cuts of materials, so great for the environment.

Every penny of the profit we make goes to providing the floral displays in the Downend area that everyone loves so much. A great project to support.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page for more details, or message me on 0750 424 4361.

We have been really saddened by the vandalism that has happened to our Remembrance Day displays over the past weeks.

We have been putting up these displays for many years now, and this year we have had all the flags broken off and one of the soldiers damaged.

This day is dedicated to honouring the sacrifices made by members of the armed forces and civilians who died in World Wars and other conflicts.

We find the actions of these vandals totally unacceptable and very disrespectful, a great sadness to the whole community, I am sure.

Jackie Baker



Starting school in September 2026? Come and see what we have to offer on Team Mango.

Headteacher talk and tour: Friday 9th January at 9:30am.

Please **scan the QR code** or email: **admin@mangoschool.org** to book your place or call: **01454 867400** if you would like to arrange a visit on another date.



"I love our brave values and how we all show belonging." Learner comment, 2025

"Pupils flourish at this exceptional school. The school's 'BRAVE' values enable pupils to be 'movers and shapers' in their school community." OFSTED, 2025

www.mangotsfieldprimary.org



Communities gather to remember



Crowds watched the parade in Broad Street

HUNDREDS of people stopped to remember those who gave their lives in conflict in services across the area.

On Remembrance Sunday, November 9, crowds gathered on Staple Hill High Street and Broad Street to watch a parade of veterans, uniformed organisations and civic leaders before an open air service around the war memorial in Page Park.

Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council worked with the Staple Hill & District branch of the Royal British Legion, the Salvation Army and other groups to organise the event.

In the afternoon the focus was on Mangotsfield's war memorial at Alec Large Park, for a service organised by Mangotsfield Residents Association, St James church and the RBL.

RBL branch chair Ian Campbell said: "This year's Remembrance events were some of the most moving we've seen and among the best attended in recent years, reflecting the strong local commitment to remembrance.

"Behind the scenes, months of careful planning, coordination and volunteer dedication ensured everything ran safely, smoothly and with the dignity these occasions deserve.

"Watching the oldest veteran, Graham Hitchings, walk side by side with the youngest child taking part was a beautiful symbol of how Remembrance is passed through generations.

"Thank you to the communities of Staple Hill and Mangotsfield for turning out to support us once again."

MRA chair and community pastor Clive Heath, who led the Mangotsfield service with Rev James Cannan, also held a service at the Red Lion in Mangotsfield.

Thanking those who made both events possible, he said: "It was a great attendance, with many new faces, and great to see so many youngsters in their various uniforms, all looking so smart and proud.

"To those whose duty it was to serve in both world wars, it is our duty to remember and honour them every year."

On Armistice Day, November 11, there were further events across the area at 11am.

At Mangotsfield School, a service was led by head teacher Hetty Blackmore, with student leaders Noelle Hui and Sarah Morgan reading 'Remember Me', by fallen soldier Harry Riley.

Mrs Blackmore said: "The whole school stood and observed a two minute silence after the Last Post was played as a community on the playground.

"Wreaths were also laid during the service by representatives of each of the four school houses, and some students who belong to local scouting and cadet units also wore their uniform.

"We want to acknowledge how well the students conducted themselves, showing our values of respect and community."



Cadets march in the Staple Hill parade



Beavers and cubs on parade in Staple Hill



Rainbows lay a wreath at Mangotsfield war memorial



Mangotsfield School students gathered on Armistice Day



Standard bearers from scout and guide groups in Mangotsfield



Veteran Graham Hitchings, 93, joins a young wreath-layer in Page Park. Picture: Herbie Hocking

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November 28

■ **DOWNEND CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON**, outside the Horseshoe from 5.30pm. Carols from Salvation Army Band, switch-on ceremony at 6pm.

November 28

■ **JAKE SKINNER CHRISTMAS LIGHTS SWITCH-ON**, Sutherland Avenue, Downend, 6pm. Hot chocolate from 5pm.

November 29

■ **CHRISTMAS ON THE HILL**, from High Street to Fountain Square, Staple Hill, 10am-4pm. Stalls, fairground rides, music, petting animals, magician, visit from Father Christmas. Carols around the tree at 4pm in the square.

Until December 3

■ **LEAGUE OF FRIENDS** of Cosham Hospital Christmas Sale, daily between these dates in the café from 10am-2.30pm.

December 3

■ **WESTERLEIGH CEMETERY & CREMATORIUM** Christmas carol and memorial services, 3pm and 6.30pm. All welcome.

December 4

■ **FINAL SPEAKER MORNING** at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road, Downend, with Ben and his group of ukuleles. Doors open at 10.15am for coffee and tea, performance 10.45-11.45am. Admission £3.50. All welcome - thanks to those who have supported past events.

December 6

■ **CHRISTMAS FAYRE** - Raising funds For Age UK SOUTH GLOS Saturday 6th December 1pm-4pm King George V Playing field Pavillion BS16 6QW Gifts, Crafts, Sweets, Games, Jewellery, cosmetics & Santa Grotto.

December 6

■ **EARLY YEARS PANTO LITTLE STAR**, at the Bean Tree cafe, Page Park. Six performances between 10.30am and 4pm. For ticket availability visit hdfst.uk/e140164.

December 7

■ **INTERACTIVE CHRISTINGLE SERVICE** for families, Christ Church Downend, 4pm. Raising money for

The Children's Society.

December 7

■ **"LIGHT THE WAY THIS CHRISTMAS"** workshop. Sunday 7th December at Emersons Green Village Hall. Make a wonderful lantern floral arrangement, all materials, beverage and snacks £40 per person. Booking essential. More information Downendflowers@gmail.com

December 8

■ **DOWNEND SENIOR FILM CLUB** Monday 8th December at 2.00pm Film Club Christmas Party Live musical entertainment from a The Fab Twins, performing a range of well-known and loved hits and Christmas classics. With festive refreshments and plenty of opportunities to dance and sing along! Booking required. Carers welcome, easy access Refreshments £4 Christ Church Hall, 57 North Street, Downend BS16 5SG For more information, please call 0117 435 0063.

December 9

■ **BEREAVEMENT GROUP**, Christ Church Downend, 2pm. Friendship, refreshments and a chance to reflect together with others who have lost a loved one.

December 11-14

■ **ST JAMES CHURCH, MANGOTSFIELD** Christmas Tree Festival at St James Church, with wide variety of trees on display. Thursday open 10am-8pm; Friday 10am-5pm; Saturday 10am Breakfast with Santa, 11am children's Christmas craft and story time, noon light lunch, 1-4pm musical entertainment including the Great Day Choir and Winterbourne St Michael's hand bell ringers; Sunday 12.30-4pm. Refreshments available on all days.

December 11

■ **FREE AUTUMN BUDGET** one-to-one information sessions at Downend Cricket Club with Southgate Wealth Management, noon-4pm. Learn more about key themes from the Budget, ask questions and discuss financial topics. Mince pies and mulled

wine. Booking is recommended by calling 07863 164159 or visiting bit.ly/11-December-drop-in.

December 11

■ **ANNUAL MANGOTSFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION AND ST JAMES CHURCH** outdoor carol service at the Dame School, St James Street, Mangotsfield, 6.30pm. Brass band, tea and coffee afterwards in church.

December 12

■ **CONCERT** at St Mary's Church, Manor Road, Fishponds, 1-2pm with refreshments available from 12.30-1pm. Performance from the Bristol Veterans' Brass Band. Free entry, with retiring collection. Christmas jumpers optional.

December 13

■ **CLEEVE SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT**, Songs of Light & Wonder, at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road, Downend, 2-4pm. Guest artists, talk and collection for Children's Hospice South West. Tickets £6 from Melanie's Kitchen, Lincombe Barn, on the door or by email at cleevesingers@gmail.com.

December 14

■ **DOWNEND FESTIVE FOOD MARKET**, Badminton Road/high street, 11am-3pm. Food, artists and makers, live music performances and free family-friendly activities.

December 14

■ **BUBBLE CHURCH CHRISTMAS FUN** interactive short service for families with young children, 4pm, followed by children's tea at the Church Centre, Quakers Road.

December 18

■ **DEMENTIA CAFE** at Warm Spaces, Christ Church Downend, 11am-1.30pm. Hot meal, activities for guests and carers. Free.

December 19

■ **COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE** at St Augustine's Church, Boscombe Crescent, Downend, 6.30pm, followed by free refreshments in the church hall. Entertainment from Salvation Army band, Nine-five ladies choir and Emily Bragg Duet. All welcome.

December 21

■ **MUD PIE EXPLORERS CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY EVENT** at Lincombe Barn Woods, 1-2.30pm. Includes decoration making, festive mud kitchen, hot chocolate and visit from Santa. Free event - no booking required.

December 21

■ **CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT** at 6.30pm, Christ Church Downend. Traditional carols and readings for Christmas.

December 24

■ **CRIB SERVICE** at Christ Church Downend, 4pm. Interactive family re-telling of the Christmas story with carols. Nativity dressing up.

Then midnight communion, 11pm - traditional style service with carols and readings.

December 25

■ **CHRISTMAS COMMUNION**. Traditional style service to celebrate Christmas at Church Centre, Quakers Road, Downend, 9.15am.

December 25

■ **ALL-AGE CHRISTMAS** modern-style Christmas celebration for all ages at Christ Church Downend, 10.30am.

REGULAR EVENTS

■ **BRISTOL U3A**: Have you reached a point in your life where you have fewer responsibilities and more time for yourself? Would you like to take part in activities where you can share skills, abilities or hobbies whilst having fun and making new friends? Go to www.bristolu3a.org.uk for details.

Monday

■ **SINGALONG 4 ALL** - Mondays 10.30/11.30, Grace court, Dial Lane, Downend BS16 5UP. £4 ...£1 tea n bikkies Tel: Barbara 07816839141.

■ **PUCKLECHURCH SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB** are looking for new players. We meet every Monday evening (7.15-9.30) and Sunday & Wednesday afternoons 3.15pm-6pm at Pucklechurch Community Centre. Refreshments available. For more information contact John 07926541933.

■ **SILK PAINTING** at Downend Baptist Church. Come along to an enjoyable afternoon, every alternate Monday 2pm-4pm. Make cards, tuition given, tea and biscuits provided, cost includes all materials. One large card £2 or 3 for £5, small cards £1 each. Please contact 0117 9608935 for more details.

■ **LUNCH CLUB AT STAPLE HILL COMMUNITY HUB**, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Monday, 12.15pm. More details from the hub on 01454 868374.

■ **KINGSWOOD LACE MAKERS** - meet at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road on Monday afternoons from 2-4pm, evenings 7.15-9.15pm every third Monday. New members welcome, first meeting free. For more information contact Beverly on walkingwithlace@yahoo.co.uk.

■ **JOB SEARCHERS SUPPORT** Staple Hill Community Hub, 2-4pm. Benefits advisor available second Monday of each month.

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** 'Wild, Wise Curious' Discussion Group with coffee and cake 12.30 weekly For more info or to go on weekly email contact peter.a.bruce@gmail.com 07527-118586

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** Mindful Pilates weekly - Contact Debbie 07771 544549

■ **ADULT TAP DANCING**

Whats On at Downend Library

Downend Library Christmas Quiz

Friday December 12th 10:30 - 12:00pm

Come along, test your trivia, and enjoy some seasonal refreshments! Free event, donations to Macmillan Cancer Support

Free Children's Event

Stories round the Tree

Monday 15th December

5:30 - 6.15pm at Downend Library

Bring your favourite teddy and wear your Christmas pyjamas for a festive, fun filled evening! Booking essential, please ask staff for details Suitable for ages 4+ All children must be accompanied by an adult

CLASSES, Frenchay Village Hall, Monday mornings, 10.30-11.30am. Term ends July 21. New term starts September 15. Fun class with lots of laughs. £8 a session. Call Suzanne on 07787 396718

■ **MONDAY ART GROUP** Spaces available Meets Monday 10-12.30 Badminton Road Methodist Church BS16 6NU Come along to see if you like it. Just doing your own art work with a sociable group.

Tuesday

■ **DOWNEND GARDENING IN RETIREMENT CLUB** Third Tuesday of every month at 10.15am Varied Topics Non Members welcome at £3 including Tea / Coffee. Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road. Easily reached by any bus into Downend

■ **BOARD GAMES NIGHT** every Tuesday from 7pm. All Welcome The Wooden Walls Micropub, 30 Broad Street, Staple Hill, BS16 5NU

■ **LINCOMBE BARN CAMERA CLUB** meets every second, fourth and fifth Tuesday of the month at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road. New members always welcome. For information see website at www.lincombebarncameraclub.co.uk or email lincombe.barn@gmail.com.

■ **BROMLEY HEATH GARDENING CLUB** Meets at Christ Church Centre, Quakers Road, every third Tuesday of the month at 2.30pm. Talks, day trips and short holidays - everyone welcome. Call May on 0117 957 3695 for details.

■ **PUCKLECHURCH FOLK DANCING CLUB** Pucklechurch Community Hall, Abson Road every other Tuesday from 7.30 to 10.15pm All welcome either with a partner or solo. Enjoy an evening with us. Call Sue on 07742114566 or Linda on 07843240414.

■ **MESSY SPACE**, Badminton Road Methodist Church Downend. Term-time group for toddlers and their carers, 10-11.45am. Toys, books, play dough, paint & craft, singing and refreshments. First visit free, then £3 per child or £5 per family. More information at www.badmintonroadmethodist.org.uk or 0117 956 1106.

■ **FRIENDSHIP & EXERCISE GROUP**, Salvation Army, Broad Street, Staple Hill, every Tuesday 10-11.30am.

■ **POWER PILATES** 09:20 – 10:20 at Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend. First class free. For further info and full class timetable contact Kerry 07919 051019 or email kerry@yogaandpilatesforlife.com

■ **MOVE-IT CLUB** for children

aged 7-11, Staple Hill Community Hub, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Tuesday 3.30pm. More details from hub on 01454 868374.

■ **TEA AND TOAST** after school drop-in for primary aged children and families, Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend, term-time Tuesdays, 3.15-4.30pm. All welcome for tea, squash, toast, board games, colouring and play in a friendly atmosphere.

■ **DOWNEND WI** meets at Christ Church Hall, North Street, Downend on the last Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. For details email downendwi@yahoo.co.uk.

■ **RIDGEWAY BADMINTON CLUB** meets every Tuesday evening from 8-10pm at Downend Sports Centre for informal badminton doubles/singles matches between adults of all ages. First visit free. For more information contact Graham on 07968 050 320

■ **SINGING FOR THE BRAIN**, free music club for people living with dementia and Alzheimer's, Staple Hill Hub, every Tuesday 2-3pm. Call 01454 868374 for more information.

■ **COFFEE AFTERNOON** with free coffee & cake, friendly conversation and a 'thought for the day'. First Tuesday of the month, 2pm at the Pendennis Good News Centre, Pendennis Road, Staple Hill. All welcome.

■ **KARATE FOR MUMS AND DADS**, 7pm, Page Community Association Staple Hill. More info from www.zenkarate.club.

■ **MEDITATION** at Frenchay Chapel, 7pm. Kundalini Osho movement meditation on 1st Tuesday, person-centred meditation on 3rd Tuesday.

■ **DOWNEND BAPTIST CHURCH COFFEE TIME**, first Tuesday of the month, 10.30am-12.30pm. Join us for tea, coffee, cakes. Relax together. Quiet area. All ages welcome. Starts July 1. www.downendbaptist.co.uk

■ **WALKING NETBALL** every Tuesday at Mangotsfield Secondary School 7pm -8pm, £5 per session, ex players or new to netball welcome, for more info please email lindab2023@gmail.com

■ **GREENBANK BOWLS CLUB** Gordon Road, Whitehall, BS5 7DP (What three words: same. zone.frozen) Every Tuesday 5pm until dusk. All equipment provided Please wear flat soled shoes, eg. trainers. No need to book Car Parking Licensed Bar greenbankbowls@gmail.com

Wednesday

■ **DOWNEND BRIDGE CLUB - NEW MEMBERS ARE WANTED** Come and join us and play

duplicate Bridge at Lincombe Barn Downend on Wednesday afternoons 2pm. All levels welcome. Please contact eveforbes77@gmail.com or 0117 9836886 or Yvonne Scoulding rscoulding@googlemail.com or 0117 9568944

■ **CLEEVE SINGERS OF DOWNEND** This four part choir meet at Lincombe Barn, 7.30 p.m. from September until July. For more information contact the Secretary on 0117 9561881.

■ **DOWNEND SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB** Musical entertainment from 2-4pm every 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month at North Street Church Hall. All are welcome.

■ **ROYAL BRITISH LEGION WOMEN'S SECTION** meets on the first Wednesday of the month, 1-3pm at the YOU Foundation, Page Road, Staple Hill (by the long-stay car park). New members welcome. More details from Diane Roberts on 0117 956 3407.

■ **DOWNEND TANG SOO DO** meets at Christchurch Parish Hall, North Street on Wednesday evenings from 7.30-9pm. Suitable for beginners and ages 10+. First class free. More details from Ian on 07817 744689 or at the Downend Tang Soo Do Facebook page.

■ **FRENCHAY PROBUS CLUB** We meet at Frenchay Village Hall on the first Wednesday of each month between 10.00 and 12.00 hrs. For further details contact: davidhjryan@gmail.com.

■ **WARMLEY JAZZ CLUB**, Every Wednesday except first one of the month, 7.30pm, Cadbury Heath Social Club, £7 on the door. More details at warmleyjazz.co.uk.

■ **BRISTOL SCRABBLE CLUB** meets every Wednesday evening at 7pm until 10pm at Filton Community Centre, Elm Park, Filton BS34 7PS. New members welcome-first visit free so come along and give us a try. Information: Jo Hunter by email atpurplewellies@live.co.uk

■ **CROSS STITCH** Like to learn this absorbing relaxing hobby and have fun at the same time? Why not join the Club at Lincombe Barn. Beginners and those with all abilities welcome. New term commences beginning of September on Wednesday mornings 10.00 am until noon. Contact Lincombe Barn 9562367.

■ **THE FRENCHAY FOLK DANCE CLUB** meet fortnightly at Frenchay Village Hall from 7:45 until 10:15pm. All standards of dancer are welcome to enjoy live Bands and experienced Callers. Visit frenchayfdc.co.uk or call 0117 3021543 for more information.

■ **FRIENDLY VOICES** dementia-friendly singing group, Mangotsfield & Castle Green URC, Cosham Street, second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, 10.30am to noon. No charge, carers welcome. Sessions led by music therapist. More details from June Watts on 0117 956 6625.

■ **WEDNESDAY CAFE FOR SENIORS**, at Badminton Road Methodist Church (BS16 6NU) every Wednesday 10am to 12 noon. All Welcome – just come along – make new friends over a cuppa and cake. Information: 0117 239 5984

■ **DOWNEND FLOWER ARRANGING CLUB** We are a friendly group, we meet at 7.30pm on 1st & 3rd Wednesday each month from September to June at Emersons Green Village Hall, Emersons Way, Emersons Green, BS16 7AP Ring Genise on 0777 2451217 for more information.

■ **LADIES ENTERPRISE CLUB** every 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoon at the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, Downend, 2.30pm-4pm. If you would like to belong to a warm, friendly group we would love to see you. Contact Ruth on 07733413823 for more details

■ **MOTHERS UNION** - worship, friendship, supporting charities, refreshments: First Wednesday of the month, 2.15pm at Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street. Non-members welcome. More details from 0117 908 9867.

■ **FRENCHAY & HAMBROOK HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** meets at Friends Meeting House, Frenchay, 7.30pm first Wednesday of the month from September to March. Talks on garden-related topics, meet other gardeners, trips in April & May. Phone 0117 967 2390 for more information.

■ **COFFEE MORNING**, Staple Hill Community Hub, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Wednesday 9.30-10.30am. More details from the hub on 01454 868374.

■ **KEEP FIT**, God's House International Centre, The Sanctuary, 55 High Street, Staple Hill, every Wednesday 10-11am, followed by cup of tea and a chat. For adults 50+. More information from Lin on 0770 707 6281 or email Lincolnish@hotmail.co.uk.

■ **SPROUTS**, free gardening and nature club for children aged 7-11, Staple Hill Hub every Wednesday, 4-6pm. Call 01454 868374 for further information. Thursday

■ **HOLY COMMUNION** at St James Church, Mangotsfield, from

Continued on next page

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

noon.

■ **QUIZ NIGHT** at St James Church, Mangotsfield, 8pm.

■ **BEECHWOOD READING GROUP** Meets at the Beechwood Club, Fishponds. Third Wed of the month 1.45pm to 3.15pm. New members welcome. Contact Carolyn at 07527 841443

■ **LADIES-ONLY KARATE GROUP**, 7pm Page Community Association Staple Hill. More information from www.zenkarate.club.

■ **HANHAM BRIDGE CLUB** Every Weds 7-10pm at Hanham Community Centre, new members welcome. See www.hanhambridgeclub.co.uk or call Graham 07790 491564

Thursday

■ **BARN BELLS** handbell ringers meet at Lincombe Barn, Downend, from 2-4pm weekly. Anyone who can read music is welcome to join.

■ **YOGA** 10:00 – 11:00 and **NEW PILATES CLASS** at 11:10 – 12:10 both at Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend. First class free. For further info

and full class timetable contact Kerry 07919 051019 or email kerry@yogaandpilatesforlife.com

■ **DEWDROP INN CAFE**, Resound church, Blackhorse Road, Mangotsfield. Every fourth Thursday of the month, 2-4pm. A place for the community to relax and unwind with old & new friends. Tea, coffee, cakes and biscuits £2.

■ **ROOTED YOUTH GROUP** at Christ Church Downend - age 11-18 7pm-8.30pm Every Thursday in term time. Games, crafts, reflections Contact Paul on 07939 125375 for more details.

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** regular coffee mornings, held on the first Thursday of the month, 10.30am-noon

■ **SCRABBLE** Downend Folk House Thursdays 10-12noon Info: 07789772538 Jonathan Seegrove.

■ **WARM SPACE CAFE** at Christ Church, Downend, free every Thursday 11-2pm. Soup and roll lunch from noon. Live music, including Music Train on 2nd and

4th Thursdays. Dementia-friendly cafe on 3rd Thursday of the month, 11am-1.30pm.

■ **HAMBROOK MEN'S PROBUS CLUB** meets on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month, 10am-noon at Whiteshill Chapel, Hambrook, with a speaker at each meeting. Friendly group, new members welcome. For details call the secretary on 07788 882386.

■ **BROMLEY HEATH PROBUS CLUB**, holds fortnightly meetings with Speakers for ladies and gentlemen on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month from 10:00 am till 12:00. We also enjoy lunches/outings together. Please join us at the Assembly Hall, Downend. More details on 0117 9574583 or see our website.

■ **FRIENDSHIP AND EXERCISE GROUP**, Staple Hill Methodist Church, High Street, Staple Hill, every Thursday - first session 9.30am, second session 11am.

■ **BROMLEY HEATH WI** meets at Bromley Heath Junior School Hall on the second Thursday of each month (except August) at 7.30pm. Email bromleyheathwi@gmail.com for more information.

■ **FAMILY DROP-IN** with free after-school refreshments and activities for families. Every Thursday, 3.15-4.45pm during term time, at Pendennis Good News Centre, Pendennis Road, Staple Hill.

■ **DOWNEND HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY** meets every second Thursday of the month at Downend Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, at 7.30pm. New members welcome. More details from downendhortsoc@gmail.com.

■ **COFFEE, CAKE, AND COMMUNITY MORNING** at Emersons Green Village Hall. Free Tea, Coffee, and Cake served 10am to 12pm, with extra time to relax and finish your drinks until 1pm. Everyone is welcome! Donations to Emersons Green Village Hall welcome. Supported by Emersons

Green Town Council.

Friday

■ **TAI CHI FOR PARKINSON'S**. Weekly beginners Tai Chi & Qi Gong class for people with Parkinson's disease, their families and carers. Lincombe Barn. (term times)

10.15 – 12.15 including tea / coffee break. Contact: Claire - Claire@Taichibodyandmind.co.uk (07769 857672) or Sarah - buqiworks@gmail.com (07815 662844)

■ **PAGE PARK UKULELE CLUB**, Bean Tree café, Fridays at 1pm. All abilities welcomed. Places £4 each. For further details call or text 'Ukulele' to Ben on 07910 668258.

■ **JIGSAW TODDLER GROUP**, Fridays in term time at Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, from 9.45-11.15am.

■ **LATER LIVE MUSIC**, Resound church, Blackhorse Road, Mangotsfield. Every second Friday monthly, except August & December, 8-10pm, £2.50. facebook.com/lateratresound.

■ **ARTWINGS**, Resound church, Blackhorse Road, Mangotsfield. Every fourth Friday, except August & December, 7.30pm. Explore new ways of creating and making, natter over refreshments. £5, includes materials.

■ **RAINBOW TOTS PARENT AND TODDLER GROUP** meets at Emersons Green Village Hall every Friday morning in term time, from 10-11.30am. For more info email church.egbc@outlook.com

■ **IN-THE-PINK** Exercise to music 9-10am followed by chat & coffee time. Pay session-by-session basis. Get yourself fit & make new friends at Hillfields Park Baptist Church, Thicket Avenue. For details call Julie 07903123793.

■ **TUTTI FLUTTI**, an inclusive ensemble welcoming flautists of all ages from Grade 3 up, rehearses at Lincombe Barn in term time, from 6.30-7.30pm. New members always welcome. Details from Fiona on 07817 629 691.

COMMUNITY CAFE

New community café brings local residents together

VISITORS to the King George V Playing Fields Pavilion between 10 and 12 on a Thursday morning will now see purple signs directing them to a new community café.

The café is described by volunteer Liz as "a warm and comfortable space where people of all ages can get together and share drinks and cake, which are free — a place where people can benefit from seeing one another and being together."

In a time when social isolation seems ever increasing, the café offers an inclusive space for all ages to counteract that trend. The drinks and cake are an added bonus.

Locals will know the Pavilion itself is a relatively new addition to the area. It has free parking and a wheelchair-accessible entrance and facilities.

Inside the Pavilion's main hall, tables and chairs are set out around the room. Volunteers from Grace Church run the café and can be identified by their purple aprons. Greeting guests from the kitchen hatch, they offer tea or coffee and a variety of homemade bakes that vary from week to week. All health and safety guidelines are carefully followed.

Once refreshments are collected, visitors can use their time in the café as they choose. The clean and bright room overlooks the playing fields, so some may prefer to enjoy their drink and cake while gazing out at the view.

Local dog walkers passing by are welcome to pick up takeaway refreshments, which can be enjoyed on the benches outside.

For families, there is a corner with books and toys for children. Those working remotely will find free Wi-Fi and power sockets for laptops.

Some visitors come simply to meet new people or chat with friends, and the café has proved an easy place for conversation to start. The air soon fills with the buzz of voices and the kind of energy that comes when people meet to enjoy one another's company.

Still in its early weeks, the community café appears to be finding its place. It offers a little something for everyone — and a notably warm welcome from those inside.

— Naomi Bowen

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WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

■ **LUNCH CLUB**, Staple Hill Community Hub, Berkeley House, Berkeley Road, every Friday from 12.15pm. For details 01454 868374.

■ **AFTER SCHOOL DROP-OFF KARATE GROUP** for mums and dads, 9am, Page Community Association Staple Hill. www.zenkarate.club.

Saturday

■ **BRISTOL SUGARCRAFT GUILD** We are a small friendly group who meet every third Saturday of the month 2pm to 4pm at St Andrews Hall, Elm Park, Filton. If you would like to make sugar flowers and models we hold workshops with instruction. Beginners very welcome. call Jean Kingston on 01454 314178.

■ YOGA & PILATES FUSION

09:20 – 10:20 at Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend. First class free. For further info and full class timetable contact Kerry 07919 051019 or email kerry@yogaandpilatesforlife.com

■ **STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH** Coffee mornings in our beautiful building every Saturday 10.00-12.00 in aid of church funds or charities. Enjoy Fairtrade coffee, tea and cake, and stalls.

■ **REPAIR CAFE AT STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH**, 3rd Saturday of the month, 10am until 12pm. Free repairs – owner pays for spare parts. Donation to church appreciated. Drop in for a chat and advice.

■ **BALLET CLASSES** at Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, Downend. Baby ballet (aged 2 1/2 to 4) at 3pm; Royal Academy of Dance pre-primary ballet (4-6 year-olds) 3.45-4.25pm followed by introduction to tap, 4.25-4.45pm). Contact Rosie on 07534 119467. Starting April 26.

Sunday

■ **EMERSONS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH** services are held every Sunday morning from 10.30am-11.30am at Emersons Green Village Hall, Emersons Green. Contact Simon on 07765 201435, e-mail church.egbc@outlook.com or visit www.emersonsgreenchurch.org

■ **BADMINTON ROAD METHODIST CHURCH BS16 6NU**. Sunday worship 10.30am. Service of Holy Communion usually fourth Sunday of the month. More information from www.badmintonroadmethodist.org.uk

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** hold regular weekly Sunday morning worship at Coss-ham Street. Services start at 10.30

a.m.with different speakers each week. New members welcome. For details contact Peter Redding (Ch. Sec.) on 0117 9657075.

■ **STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH**, High Street BS16 5HQ Sunday services 10.30am + Sunday Club for ages 5-17. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday of the month – all invited. Taizé worship 6.00pm 3rd Sunday of the month. Contact Rev Dr Aboseh Ngwana 07482 550888, Philippa Church Liaison at staplehillmethodist@hotmail.co.uk or www.staplehillmethodist.com

■ **COMMUNITY GARDEN WORKING PARTY**, Percy Walker Court, Lincombe Road, Downend, every Sunday 10am-noon.

■ **KARATE FOR MUMS AND DADS**, 7pm, Page Community Association, Staple Hill. More information www.zenkarate.club.

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** Beckspool Road. Sunday services, weekly at 10.30am. All welcome. More details from peter.a.bruce@gmail.com.

■ **FRIENDS OF LINCOMBE BARN AND WOODS** litter picking and woodland management, first Sunday of month, 10-11am (weather permitting).

■ **SERVICES AT ST JAMES CHURCH**, Mangotsfield. Holy Communion at 8am every Sunday. 10.30am services: 1st Sunday Holy Communion, 2nd all-age service, 3rd Holy Communion, 4th morning worship, 5th morning worship with healing.

■ **FRENCHAY CHAPEL** Beckspool Road. Community Arts for all, Frenchay Chapel, Beckspool Road. 1st Sunday of the month, 12.30pm.

■ **GREENBANK BOWLS CLUB** Gordon Road, Whitehall, BS5 7DP (What three words: same. zone.frozen) Every Sunday 10am to Noon All equipment provided Please wear flat soled shoes, eg. trainers No need to book Car Parking Licensed Bar greenbankbowls@gmail.com

■ **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**, Frenchay Chapel, Beckspool Road, 6pm weekly.

■ **CHRIST CHURCH DOWNEND**: 9.15 am Traditional morning worship (Holy Communion on 2nd & 4th Sundays) at Church Centre, Quakers Road BS16 6NH. 10.30 Morning worship with youth and children's groups at Christ Church Downend, Downend Rd BS16 5UF

■ **RESTORATIVE SEASONAL YOGA** 1st Sunday each month 18:00-19:30. Frenchay Village Hall (Jubilee Room). Only 8 spaces - booking necessary. www.SarahBtheOT.com

NEWS



Artists and Bristol's Lord Mayor at the exhibition opening November

Exhibition brings joy

A NEW exhibition celebrating the things that make life brighter has opened at a museum near Downend.

'What Brings Me Joy' features work from 25 artists who responded to a request to explore the theme of joy - what brings it, how it feels, and where it can be found - at Glenside Hospital Museum in Fishponds.

It includes artworks in oils, watercolour, pencil, textiles, collage, and sculpture, spread through the galleries of the museum, which is in the former hospital's chapel.

The museum examines the history of mental health treatment at Glenside and other local hospitals.

Museum director Stella Man said: "One aspect of staying mentally well is doing things that bring us joy."

"The value of creative and purposeful activity as part of recovery was recognised by the Victorian hospital and we are highlighting its continued relevance today."

"By showcasing a wide range of artistic responses to joy, we hope to offer visitors not only an inspiring and uplifting experience, but also a moment to think about what brings them joy."

The exhibition is now open and runs until next April at Glenside Hospital Museum, which is on UWE's Glenside Campus, on Blackberry Hill.

It is open on Wednesdays from 10am-1pm and Saturdays from 10am-4pm.

For more details visit glensidemuseum.org.uk.



ANNA-MARIE TEL 07854 177308

Group - St Augustines Church Hall, Boscombe Crescent, Bristol, BS16 6QR
Group times - Tuesday 9:30 am and 11:00am

ANNA-MARIE TEL 07854 177308

Group - The Salvation Army 21, Broad Street, Staple Hill Bristol. BS16 5LN
Group Times- Friday 7:30am, 9:00 am and 10:30 am

CLAIRE TEL 07886 443709

Group - St Augustines Church Hall, Boscombe Crescent, Bristol, BS16 6QR
Group Times - Tuesday 5:30pm and 7:00pm

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Lawyer Karl wins equality award

A DOWNEND lawyer has won an award for his dedication to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

Karl Brown was announced as this year's recipient of the Sir Alexander Bustamante Award by the Association of Jamaican Nationals UK, at their annual awards celebration in October.

The award, named in honour of Sir Alexander Bustamante, Jamaica's first Prime Minister, recognises individuals of Caribbean heritage who have made exceptional contributions to their communities.

Karl, a commercial property partner at Clarke Willmott LLP, has been recognised for his leadership and long-standing commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion within the legal profession and beyond.

He is the founder of the Bristol Property Inclusion Charter, an initiative aimed at increasing diversity across the property industry, and is a social mobility ambassador for the Law Society of England and Wales,

working to support individuals from under-represented backgrounds in the profession to pursue careers in law.

Karl also chairs Clarke Willmott's equality, diversity and inclusion committee, which aims to help the legal firm develop a "truly inclusive culture", with "meaningful outreach across the communities it serves".

Karl said: "It is an incredible honour to receive an award that bears the name of Sir Alexander Bustamante, a man who dedicated his life to justice, equality, and opportunity for all.

"I am deeply grateful to the Association of Jamaican Nationals for this recognition, and I share this award with everyone who is working to make our professions and communities more inclusive.

Karl grew up in Downend and went to Bromley Heath Junior School and Downend School.

His parents were part of the Windrush generation, who came to the UK from Jamaica in the 1960s.

Clarke Willmott chief executive Peter Swinburn said: "Karl's passion and commitment to equality and inclusion is inspiring.

"Karl's work, both internally at Clarke Willmott and externally in the wider market, continues to make an incredible difference.

"We are delighted to see Karl's achievements recognised with this well-deserved honour."



The Association of Jamaican Nationals (Birmingham) UK, is a charity organisation serving Jamaican communities with fundraising, community events and educational programmes.

The event took place at the Aston Villa Banqueting Suite in Birmingham.

Last year Karl was given an award by the Bristol Property Agents Association in recognition of his work to boost diversity via the Bristol Property Inclusion Charter, which he founded six years ago to help young people and those from less privileged backgrounds access opportunities for a career in the property industry.

HATE crime based on race or religion has seen a "significant" rise in the last 12 months, says Avon & Somerset's chief constable.

Community leaders have voiced concerns that many people are starting to change how they live their lives because of fear of being harassed in the street amid a growing sense of "anxiety".

Recent months have seen unrest between mass immigration protesters and anti-racism counter-demonstrators in Bristol and controversy over the hanging of flags on lampposts in streets across the region.

Increase in hate crime

The issue was the focus of Avon & Somerset police and crime commissioner Clare Moody's October Police Question Time session with Chief Constable Sarah Crew, which also included Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI) chief executive Alex Raikes and Dan Green of Bristol-based group Bridges for Communities.

Ms Crew said: "Hate crime can have a hugely traumatic and corrosive effect not just on the individual but on the community and how society operates.

"We've been seeing lots of protests, fuelled very often by lots of feeling. There are heightened community fears and they are borne out with hate crimes that we've seen."

Ms Crew said police have a daily monitoring operation looking at every reported hate incident, and information from social media and teams, to ensure a "robust" response.

She said there had been a "steady but consistent rise" in hate crime over the last five years in Avon & Somerset.

In the year to the end of September, all types of hate crime were up 3.1% and race- or religion-based hate crime was up 4.9%, with a bigger 6.3% rise in Bristol, increases the chief constable said were "significant".

Ms Moody said: "We are all having conversations with people who are feeling more exposed, more vulnerable, and they're feeling more fear. But it is a tiny minority driving this. The overwhelming instinct of human beings is kindness, community, and we should be amplifying and celebrating that – that is the best of us."



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School's library is best in the UK

A PRIMARY school in Emersons Green has won a national award for its "inspirational" library.

Mangotsfield C of E Primary School won the annual Peter Usborne Primary School Library of the Year Award after judges praised the work of librarian Verity Robinson and the school's senior leadership team for transforming the school's reading culture.

The awards, organised by the School Library Association, were presented at an evening ceremony hosted by author and screenwriter, Anthony Horowitz, at the British Library in London on November 6.

The School Library Association said: "Since a recent renovation, the library has transformed the school's reading culture, engaging everyone from avid readers to those who previously found reading difficult due to dyslexia, language barriers, or simply not yet finding the right book."

"Librarian Verity Robinson is passionate about providing a diverse, inclusive collection, ensuring every child can see themselves reflected in the stories they read."

"She takes the time to understand each child as a reader, tailoring book recommendations to spark their interest and boost confidence."

The judges said: "The library and librarian at Mangotsfield truly demonstrate what a primary school can achieve when enabled by the senior leadership team and whole school community."

"By employing a dedicated, and experienced librarian, the school has elevated reading for pleasure across the pupil experience as well as the staff body, contributing to everyone's confidence around books."



Year 4 children in the school library

"The school's journey of taking the library from a disused space to being an integral part of daily life is inspirational, and everyone can take something from it."

"The library at Mangotsfield is the heart of the school's reading community, helping every child see themselves as readers and laying the foundation for lifelong library use."

Accepting the award for the school, Mrs Robinson said: "We all know the impact that the school library makes."

"I was one of the lucky children; I grew up in a home full of stories, and my parents took me to the library, but we know that isn't always the case."

"Thank you to all the children at my school – for their curiosity, and for their enthusiasm. From the quietest children who don't yet know they are readers, to the keenest of my student librarians, who are going to be so excited!"

School curriculum lead Megan Lawrence paid tribute to "passionate and dedicated" librarian Mrs Robinson.

She said: "Her leadership and vision have transformed the school's library into an inspiring, inclusive, and much-loved space for all pupils."

"Under Mrs Robinson's guidance, the library has become the beating heart of Mangotsfield C of E Primary School – a place where every child can find stories that reflect their own lives and discover new worlds through reading."

"Her commitment to diverse and representative books ensures that every learner feels seen and valued."

"Since the library's reopening in 2023, the pupils at the school have been actively encouraged to share their ideas about what they wanted from their library space – from the books to the display and even the different events and competitions which are hosted throughout the year."

Miss Lawrence said there had been reports of children's reading for pleasure being at an all-time low nationally, but this was "certainly not the case" at Mangotsfield. She said: "This



Librarian Verity Robinson with the Library of the Year award

national recognition celebrates what's possible when a school invests in high-quality, inclusive texts and an experienced, dedicated librarian to make the library a place where every child feels welcome and has the opportunity to fall in love with reading."

SLA chief executive Victoria

Dilly said: "Through these awards we can show exactly why and how a school library and hard-working librarian is such an integral part of every young person's education – and that investment in both should be an immovable item in the budget line and a point of pride for every school community."

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Last year's Christmas postbox topper at Downend post office

Solar panels could end our toppers

I AM one of thousands of people who work so hard to make postbox toppers to celebrate special occasions and bring a touch of colour to our communities.

Sadly these might be a thing of the past, as postboxes are being changed to solar-powered digital boxes (with a powered drawer for depositing parcels).

Can anyone suggest another way that we can display them?

Although some people might not like them, we have always had good comments from passers by.

Often people come to Downend to see the toppers that they have seen in the *Voice*.

We make these at our own expense and raise a lot of money for local charities.

Hopefully we will be able to display our Christmas topper before the post box is replaced.

Ann Wilde
Downend Yarn Busters

Origin of fireworks display

I READ with interest the article on the fireworks display (*Voice*, November) and thought it might be of interest to know the background to this annual event, which attracts so many to King George V Park.

It was in December 1970 that my family moved to Bristol, my having been appointed youth Leader at Badminton Road Methodist Church, the largest youth centre in Gloucestershire.

The opportunity came within a couple of weeks to purchase an old farmhouse at Llangattock, above Crickhowell in the Brecon Beacons.

We had to raise some £7,000 very quickly to create a residential

centre for local teenagers to learn rock climbing, caving, canoeing and such adventurous activities.

So I visited Mervin Dann, who was then the President of Downend Round Table, and together we planned a special firework, bonfire display for November 1971, and the proceeds went to our Fedw Farm Appeal.

Alongside many other events and charitable donations, we raised over £10,000, which enabled the purchase, building adaptations and purchase of equipment.

The centre opened in 1972, after much voluntary work from staff and members of the Club. Thousands used it until it was sold in about 1998.

Thank you to Downend Round Table for helping in those early days, and for continuing your charitable work.

Bob Wood

Understanding the Budget



Jonathan Southgate

LOCAL financial adviser and Downend Cricket Club sponsor Southgate Wealth Management will be hosting free, one-to-one information sessions at the cricket club on December 11.

The sessions offer the chance to learn more about key themes from the recent Autumn Budget, ask general questions and discuss financial topics you may want to explore further, such as pensions,

investments, retirement or inheritance tax planning.

To add some seasonal cheer, mince pies and mulled wine will be available, adding to the relaxed, no-pressure environment for anyone interested in improving their financial awareness.

The 30-minute sessions run from noon to 4pm and are free to attend, although booking is recommended.

Places can be reserved by calling me on 07863 164159 or booking online via bit.ly/11-December-drop-in.

Please note that these sessions do not constitute personal financial advice.

Jonathan Southgate
Southgate Wealth Management

Nominate a community hero

DO you know someone who gives their time freely to help others? Someone who is making a real difference in South Gloucestershire?

Now is your chance to recognize their amazing contribution. The chair of South Gloucestershire Council is calling on residents to say thank you to the unsung heroes who make our communities special by nominating them for the Chair's Community Awards 2026.

We're looking for individuals or groups of unpaid volunteers whose efforts reflect our vision of a fairer, greener future for South Gloucestershire.

Categories are: Climate and Nature Champions; Reducing Inequalities; Supporting Children and Young People; Well-being and Independence; Building Better Communities.

For more information on how to nominate visit tinyurl.com/3e2n7jep.

Nominations close on December 5, with an awards ceremony in January.

Marian Mussah
South Gloucestershire Council

Don't give flu at Christmas

THE NHS is encouraging all eligible people to get their winter flu vaccine in the lead up to the Christmas period.

It can take up to two weeks after you receive your flu vaccination to fully benefit from it.

This is why we are advising all those who are eligible to get their flu vaccine sooner rather than later, to ensure the best protection before the festive season.

December is often the time of year where many of us begin to have gatherings with family and friends, and the weather can drive us indoors, increasing the risk of spreading viruses such as flu. By getting your flu vaccination, you're not only protecting yourself, but those around you as well.

Those eligible include people aged 65 and over, those in clinical risk groups and close contacts of those who are immunosuppressed, pregnant women and children, care home residents and carers, frontline social care workers, and health and social care staff.

Eligible adults can book their flu vaccine appointment now via the NHS App, their GP practice, online at www.nhs.uk/bookflu or by calling 119.

Parents are being reminded to complete their child's school vaccination consent forms or book an appointment for two to three year olds, to ensure their child's protection ahead of the Christmas break.

Dr Trevor Smith,
Regional Medical Director
NHS England South West

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Travel broadens minds for students

CHILDREN at two secondary schools have been broadening their horizons.

A group of 43 Year 10 students from Downend School flew to Berlin for a visit in October.

Brunel House head and languages teacher Tony Rolle said: "Once clearing security in Berlin and finding our coach driver, we headed to our hostel to drop off luggage before making a beeline to Alexanderplatz for some well-earned refreshments.

"Our students were happy to take full advantage of seeing Berlin on foot and we made our way to the Reichstag building to start their quest of visiting famous sights.

"As a teacher, part of the attraction of taking students on a trip such as this is watching and hearing their reactions to a wide variety of experiences, often outside of their comfort zone.

"Our students were inquisitive and respectful of local customs, particularly following the instructions of the Ampelmann (the iconic traffic-light man).

"Travelling on both underground and double-decker trains with a large group of students is always a challenge, but thankfully not a single student (or staff member!) was left stranded at any point.

"The students will have their own highlights - possibly having a personalised chocolate bar made in the Ritter Sport shop - and will equally take some time to process experiences at Sachsenhausen concentration camp, but for me, a distinct moment of pride was watching a group of students collect



Downend School students at the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin

unwanted packed lunches from our group and hand them (carefully bagged) to a homeless person we had passed earlier in the trip.

"I'm that everyone will have some unforgettable memories."

Year 9 students from Mangotsfield School took an "inspiring cultural journey" to the National Gallery and the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Head teacher Hetty Blackmore said: "The trip offered a rich opportunity to explore artistic masterpieces and delve into the stories behind some of Britain's most iconic figures.

"At the National Gallery, students were captivated by works spanning centuries—from the luminous landscapes of Turner to the bold brushwork of Van Gogh.

"The National Portrait Gallery provided a contrasting experience, focusing on identity, representation, and the power of portraiture.

"Students explored how

artists capture personality and status, from Tudor monarchs to contemporary icons. Interactive exhibits and sketching activities allowed students to reflect on how portraits can tell complex stories about individuals and society.

"Beyond the galleries, the day fostered curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking.

Teachers praised students for their thoughtful questions and respectful engagement, noting how the visit enriched their understanding of both art and history.

"This memorable trip not only brought classroom learning to life, it also sparked fresh inspiration for students' own creative projects back at school."



Downend School students at Berlin's Alexanderplatz

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WARDS
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A heartfelt farewell, and thanks

AFTER 11 years of extraordinary service, assistant manager Diane Roberts will be retiring from Staple Hill Community Hub this Christmas, marking the end of an era for the much-loved local charity.

Known affectionately to everyone as Di, she has been a cornerstone of the Hub since she first joined over a decade ago.

Her warmth, dedication, and genuine care have touched the lives of countless local residents who have walked through the Hub's doors.

Throughout her tenure, Di has embodied the very spirit of community service that makes the Hub special.

Whether lending a helping hand at the popular Lunch Club, supporting families accessing

emergency food parcels, or simply sharing a kind word and smile with visitors, her tireless efforts and cheerful personality have made a lasting impression on everyone she's encountered.

Di has gone above and beyond in everything she does - she's given freely of her time and energy to support colleagues, visitors, and the wider community.

Her compassion and commitment have been truly remarkable.

Di's contribution to the Hub has been invaluable during a period of significant growth for the charity.

Over her 11 years of service, she's witnessed the Hub expand from a small community initiative to a vital resource.

The Hub now supports over 4,500 local residents annually, through diverse programmes including after-school clubs, friendship groups, job search support, and much more.

As she looks forward to a well-deserved retirement, Di says she'll miss the people most of all. However, it's certain that it's she who will be most missed by the staff, volunteers, and community members whose lives she's enriched.



Diane Roberts

Everyone at the Hub wishes Di every happiness for this next chapter. Thank you, Di, for leaving a legacy that will not be forgotten.

For more information about

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Julie Snelling

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We need to lift children out of poverty

SIX months have now passed since my election as Mayor of the West of England.

I'm proud to be doing things differently, and have taken the time to reflect on what we have already achieved together in this new chapter for our region.

Kids Go Free this summer saw more than 910,000 free journeys for children and young people across our region, putting almost £1 million back into the pockets of parents or carers.

We've already secured the best part of £1 billion for our region – including £752 million for better buses, more trains, and mass transit plans.

On top of that, the government is investing £40 million into Twerton and Hartcliffe, devolving £25 million for us to grow our creative industries, and funding solar panels for two dozen schools.

Working with council leaders and partners, we're investing in new and existing train stations, rolling out green electric buses, and launching new routes.

Regional funding is supporting better walking and cycling options across the West, and investing in parks and high streets.

Together, we've launched an ambitious new Growth Strategy, with a plan for 72,000 new jobs over the coming decade.

Our new business board will help secure investment, while the Youth Guarantee gets more

young people into work and training.

We've made a strong start but there's more to do, and the best is yet to come.

One of the issues that we can – and must – tackle together is child poverty.

The West is seen as an affluent, progressive region but that reputation belies a painful reality.

In Bristol, 35% of children are growing up in poverty. In some parts of our towns and cities, every other child faces that daily uphill battle.

Our rural areas face similar challenges, with between one in four and one in five children in poverty, compounded by isolation and a lack of opportunity.

This means hungry children unable to learn or play, families bouncing between temporary accommodation, parents blocked from work by constrained childcare, and people cut off from family, services, and social life by unaffordable travel.

This month, building on the commitment in our Growth Strategy, I will be publishing a regional child poverty action plan to complement the work of government and use local levers to help lift as many children as possible out of poverty.

Working with amazing local organisations, we can make a generational impact on the life chances of our most precious asset: our children



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

and young people.

National reforms including the extension of free childcare, school meals and breakfast clubs, funding for new nursery places and 1,000 family hubs, are already making a difference that families can see and feel here, even before a national child poverty strategy is published.

From next April, 2,000 more schools will join the breakfast club scheme and, from September, another 500,000 more children will get free school meals.

I'm determined as your mayor to use every possible lever to try to break the cycle of poverty and give people hope.



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■ ... and then she said by Sid Stace



■ Glad We Came by Ed Shorney

Two's company

LIKE most areas of life, photography has its rules - some more rigid than others.

However, rules are there to be broken, and breaking them can often provide the creative spark that makes one photo better than another.

One of those rules is that there should always be an odd number, be it of people, trees or other objects. An even number will make your composition look too square: odd numbers will give a better balance.

But is this always true? The most recent competition of Lincombe Barn Camera Club - 'Conversations, Real or Implied' - suggested this is a very flimsy rule, to be pushed aside by the subject matter.

What matters is the story behind what is happening and how the photo, and its composition, serve to tell that story.

Three examples from the competition, all with only two figures and each telling its own

story.

'The Explanation', by Ed Shorney begins by breaking another 'rule', with a central character having their back to the camera, leaving the viewer to concentrate on the face of the listener, which speaks of care and concern. A fine story told here leaving the viewer to surmise much.

My own photograph, '...and then she said...', was taken two years ago of my then five-year-old granddaughter. It's definitely a monologue, and she seems pretty definite in her declaration.

Ed Shorney also provides our final example, with 'Glad We Came', as a couple battle the elements in a traditional British seaside bank holiday trip. The British still beat the world for stoicism!

Whether you use a digital camera, are a film lover, or just enjoy snapping pics on your phone, we'd love to see you at Lincombe Barn Camera Club.

We're a friendly group who chat



■ The Explanation by Ed Shorney

about all things photography and get together every other Tuesday from September to June. We also have regular outings during the summer.

We also host regular competitions, practical evenings, guest speakers, and in-house critiques.

Your first visit is free, it's just

£3 for the next two, then you can become a full member.

Details and our programme are on our website at www.lincombebarncameraclub.co.uk.

In the meantime, have a good Christmas and a Happy New year.

May all your pictures bring good memories.

Sid Stace

BRISTOL u3a

The gift for someone who has everything

DECEMBER is the time of year when we can find ourselves struggling for gift ideas for loved ones. We might also be taking stock of the

year and thinking about how we can make a new start.

A year's membership of Bristol u3a is the perfect gift for anyone who has a bit of spare time, or is an affordable personal treat. With almost 200 interest groups across Bristol, around 35 locally and lots of social activities, there's bound to be something you'd like. It's also a great way to meet new friends.

This month several local interest groups are opening their doors to welcome non-members: Listening and Dancing to Soul Music (Downend); Singing for Pleasure (Downend); Daytime Disco 2

(Downend) and Playing Chess for Fun (Hanham).

Email me at learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk if you are interested, and I will share full details of where and when they meet.

Why not also come along to one of our café socials? You'll be able to meet existing members and learn more.

This month you'll find us at the Orchard Coffee & Bakery in St George (flat access) on December 5 at 2, the Market Café and Lounge in Kingswood (stairs) on December 9 from 2pm, the Crafty Egg in

Fishponds (ramp) on December 17 from 2pm and Mokka Downend (flat access) on December 22 from 2pm. Everyone is welcome.

Bristol u3a (you in your Third Age) is for anyone with some spare time. Most members are retired or semi-retired but anyone can join, as there's no lower age limit.

We're proud to be a volunteer-led organisation with no paid staff and no paid teachers.

You can find out more about Bristol u3a - including how to join - by typing "Bristol u3a" into your favourite search engine..

Lindsay Gough

BROMLEY HEATH WI

OUR November meeting was run to a slightly different format, with our new president Mary introducing the WI committee to the members.

There is a very exciting year ahead planned, with theatre trips, a local history walk, talks and interactive sessions for all our members. Further information will be available next month.

This month we had the privilege of a visit from Liz Ferguson, who was clearly passionate about her WWI research project, Remember Me, which initiated from a war memorial in Hambrook.

She brought some interesting artifacts and information on her findings, which was fascinating to listen to.

In December we are planning a festive quiz and American supper.

We meet on the second Thursday of the month in Bromley Heath Junior School hall, at 7.30pm.

If you are interested in joining our friendly WI, please get in touch through email at bromleyheathwi@gmail.com.

We look forward to hearing from you. **Jane Hickey**

DOWNEND WI

THE countdown to Christmas begins!

With Firework Night behind us, it's time to embrace the festive season, and what better way than with our beloved annual Christmas wreath making event?

A month to the day before Christmas we were back at Christ Church Hall for an evening of creativity, laughter, holiday cheer and Christmas jumpers to craft beautiful wreaths with the expert guidance of Jodie Hall, our wonderful local florist who has supported us for several years.

We do not meet in December due to the busy festive period, but we'll be back in the New Year with a fantastic programme, starting on January 27 with a fascinating talk by Ali Ball, Egyptologist and member of the Egypt Society of Bristol. Ali has been studying Egyptology since 1999.

I hope you've had a chance to see the stunning Remembrance topper adorning the post box in Downend during November — a touching tribute to the courageous men and women who gave their lives for our country. This beautiful piece was lovingly crafted by the Downend Yarn Busters, with contributions from members of the Downend WI.

Being part of Downend WI is a brilliant way to connect with others

in the community, try something new, and of course enjoy a slice of cake while you're at it! Whether you're a regular or just curious, you'll always be warmly welcomed.

We meet on the last Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm at Christ Church Hall, North Street, Downend.

Interested in joining us? Drop us a line at downendwi@yahoo.co.uk.

**Linda Russ
President**

FRENCHAY WI

WE held our annual meeting in November, when we reviewed the previous year's activities and voted on our president and committee for the coming year.

We were also glad to host Country Markets, who made their bi-annual visit to sell their fabulous home-made goodies.

We are looking forward to our next meeting on December 15, when our speaker, Robin Burton, will be sharing with us how some of our Christmas traditions came about.

We meet on the third Monday of every month at Frenchay Village Hall at 7.30pm.

There is always a friendly reception awaiting new members.

If you are interested in joining us or would like more information, please email the secretary at FrenchayWI@gmail.com.

Linda O'Carroll

STAPLE HILL WI

THIS is our last article before Christmas, so it is my pleasure to wish you all a very happy and blessed Christmas.

Our WI is celebrating with a wonderful American Supper, some very amusing country dancing and a few Christmas surprises.

We always have such a laugh at the dancing, as we can never seem to follow simple instructions and get into such a tangle, but we are getting better at it.

We had such an interesting talk at our November meeting hearing about the work of The Freewheelers, a voluntary organisation supplying an out-of-hours emergency service for the NHS carrying all sorts of things to where they are needed, such as blood, breast milk, drugs and scans.

They are advanced, highly trained motorbike riders, who carry out their duties 365 days a year between the hours of 7pm-7am. They are entirely self-funded.

With five bikes on duty each day, they are truly unsung heroes.

We also received back the glass baubles we decorated at our October meeting after they were

fired, just in time to hang on our Christmas trees.

We are having our last club and group events of the year, and are busy putting the finishing touches to our programme for 2026.

Our regular monthly meeting is on the third Tuesday evening of the month at 7.30pm, at Christchurch Parish Hall, North Street, Downend.

There is plenty of parking, something for everyone and you can join in as much or as little as you wish.

You can find out more about us at our website, staplehillwi@weebly.com.

Maureen Wood

RODWAY RUBIES WI

OUR November meeting was a little different, as our speaker involved his audience in his talk.

Ex policeman Rob Jones took us through a murder that happened in Bristol in the 1990s.

We all like to think we can spot the 'bad guy' in Morse or Vera, but actually getting enough evidence to bring the culprit to justice is not always easy in a real-life murder.

A serious subject, but we all enjoyed pitting our wits against Rob and flinging questions at him.

We hold regular craft sessions, and some of our ladies crocheted poppies in October which were then sold to members. We raised £29 for the Royal British Legion, and the few remaining poppies were donated to their stall in the local Sainsbury's, where they were sold very quickly.

We hold a wreath /floral arrangement making session early in December at the United Reformed Church in Mangotsfield, where interested members can make their own decorations.

We also continue to support the local food bank at the Resound

Centre on Blackhorse Road on a monthly basis, but at Xmas we try to go the extra mile, with treats for the festive season, especially for the children.

Thank you to all our members who regularly donate to this cause.

Our December meeting is also our Xmas party, where we all contribute food, have some good live entertainment to sing along to, and maybe dance, too.

Our committee is looking at events and days out for 2026: more of that to come soon.

We wish you all a very Happy Christmas. **Jane Eldon**

BEECHMERE BELLES WI

WINTER is almost here, and we Belles are preparing for it with our Christmas craft evening on November 27.

It's always good fun as we sit round our tables and craft. Depending on the difficulty, sometimes there is lots of chat, other times you can almost hear the concentration on the task in hand.

This time it's book folding; you can guarantee there will be lots of beautiful finished decorations going home.

We don't have a meeting in December but some of our members will be getting together for a meal locally for one of their late and live evenings.

We've been busy planning for 2026 – talks, activities, craft and other things – we'd love you to join us if you're looking for friendship, education (but not too serious) and community.

Our next meeting is at Emersons Green Village Hall at 7.30pm on January 22.

To find out more, email beechmerebelles@gmail.com or visit our Facebook page. **Wendy**

MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES

OUR November meeting happened just after the Voice printed, a Yuletide-themed craft evening that had us foraging for ferns, heather, holly, ivy and all sorts of props beforehand to use.

With six visitors coming to join in, it promised to be very busy.

Later in November we were supplying tea coffee and biscuits for St James' Christmas Fayre, in the Hall on the 29th from 11am to 2pm.

December is a hectic month for us, with our Victorian market trip to Worcester and our evening Christmas celebration at Madison's. It's now all booked up, menu choices selected, all paid. The dress code is sparkles, so it's set to be a great evening, especially with some fun and entertainment with Frankie Johns.

There is also St James' Church Tree Festival on December 11-14, which we will again be supporting. A member has donated a 6ft tree with some lights, and we will have great fun decorating it with the 48 bags of Dolly Mixtures which we will donate to the church afterwards.

Our pub lunch on December 15 will of course be a Christmas lunch, and this time dress will be Christmas hats, brooches and earrings.

All the Dollies would like to wish our readers a very joyful Christmas time.

Carol Coombs

Light trails

PHOTOGRAPHING light trails is a very creative experience, transforming moving lights into dynamic streaks of colour and light.

The key technique is to use a long exposure, allowing the shutter to remain open for several seconds, with the camera in manual mode and a tripod to allow for stability, preventing any blurring of stationary elements in the image.

A low ISO of 100-200, aperture f8 – f16 and a shutter speed of 5 to 10 seconds was used to produce two of the images here, taken on Frenchay Village Green in October.

One trail was achieved by lighting a pad of wire wool attached to a piece of string and rotating in a circular motion.

Another was created using a torch in the same way. Similarly, a moving candle can give the same effect.

Light trail photography is very much a 'try it and see' experience, adjusting your camera settings until you achieve the desired effect.

Modern digital cameras allow you to see immediately the results of your efforts and offer the opportunity to make adjustments to your settings.

Urban environments with heavy traffic can also provide ideal settings for light trails photography. Bridges, overpasses, and high-rise buildings offer elevated viewpoints, adding perspective and interest to the composition.

Including landmarks, street signs, or architectural elements can give context and enhance the



■ Light Trails Dave Britton



■ Park Street Russ Smith



■ Sphere Phil Powell

overall scene.

Wet streets after rain can add reflective surfaces, amplifying the light trails and adding depth.

A good source of light trails photography can be the city centre, where stationary neon signs, shop fronts and moving traffic make for a very seasonal

image.

By experimenting with the technical aspects, photographers can create stunning images that highlight the beauty of motion and light.

This genre not only showcases the technical prowess of the photographer but also 'transforms

everyday scenes into captivating visual stories.

For more information about our club, visit www.downendcameraclub.org.uk or join us any Tuesday evening at the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, Downend.

David Britton

CHRISTINE'S COLUMN WITH CHRISTINE BROADWAY

One Christmas past

AS Christmas approaches I'm looking back to the time, many years ago, when I asked Father Christmas for a dolls house.

As the big day got nearer, I began to get very excited.

I also began to wonder about Father Christmas - how would the great man get down our chimney with a cowl on it?

He must have done, for there on Christmas morning was this incredible dolls house, standing on a table in my parents' bedroom.

Here I give the game away: I know my dad

had made it, and my parents made some of the furniture from matchboxes, and chairs out of cotton reels. I still have some of the 1950s plastic tables and chairs today.

Over the years I spent hours playing with it and adding things to it, then eventually the furniture and dolls were put away in the attic and the house covered with a plastic sheet and put in the cellar.

Years went by until I had my own little girl, Kirsty Maree, who sadly was only old enough to play with it after Dad had passed away.

Kirsty was most pleased with the dolls house and used it as a home for her Sylvanian Families: geese, rabbits and squirrels, among others.

She spent hours playing with it, and to add

to it her dad made her a windmill out of thin sheet steel, with a rotating roof and sails.

When the dolls house ceased to be a home for Sylvanians, I decided to take it over again and furnish it in Victorian/Edwardian style, collecting pieces of furniture and dolls for it.

To this day it brings me hours of delight, and is on display in my sitting room.

It is with great regret that I have to tell our speaker morning on December 4, with Ben and his group of ukuleles, will be the last one ever, through lack of support. **For more details see the what's on section on page 42.**

Thank you to all those who have supported me - I plan to continue with this column.

To those on duty as we celebrate

AS we approach the festive season, I find myself reflecting on what binds us together as a community.

Christmas is a time when our streets and towns are lit up, not only by decorations but by gestures of kindness, moments of understanding, and traditions shared with families and friends.

It is also a moment to pause and appreciate the often unseen work that holds our communities together throughout the year.

I want to express my deepest thanks to the volunteers, community groups, support workers and charities across Avon and Somerset who give their time and their compassion to others.

They support families in need, offer warmth to those who feel alone, guide young

people through difficult moments, and provide care when crisis strikes.

Their dedication is not seasonal – it continues long after the decorations are taken down – but at Christmas, it feels especially important to acknowledge it.

I also want to thank the police officers, staff, and volunteers who will spend the festive period working to keep us all safe.

While many of us will be celebrating around the table with our families, they will be on duty – answering calls, protecting the vulnerable, responding to emergencies, and offering reassurance when people need it most.

Their work places significant demands on them and their families, and I am deeply appreciative of the role they

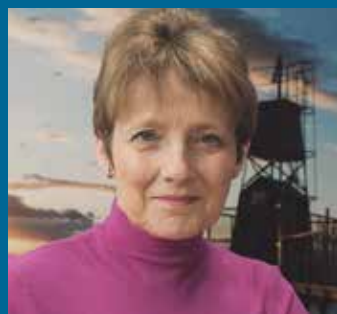
play in maintaining the safety and stability of our communities.

This time of year reminds us of the strength that comes from looking out for one another.

It is easy to feel divided in the age of online conflict and instant commentary, but the real character of our communities is found in how we treat each other face-to-face: in the conversations we have, the support we offer, the neighbour we check in on.

Small acts of kindness have the power to bring people together and remind us that we share more than we disagree on.

As we celebrate, I encourage everyone to take a moment to think of those who may be struggling, those who are grieving, and those who feel



Clare Moody A&SPCC

writes for the Voice

isolated. If you are able, reach out, listen, and make space for someone who might need it. That is how community cohesion is built – person by person, gesture by gesture.

I wish you and your loved ones a safe, peaceful and enjoyable festive season.

May it be a time of warmth, connection, and hope for the year ahead.



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Flyers gain momentum

THERE'S plenty to celebrate this month for Downend Flyers, with all three senior teams showing determination, progress, and exciting football as the season gathers momentum.

The First Team are enjoying an impressive run of form, now four games unbeaten across league and cup competitions.

Their recent performances have seen them book a place in the next round of the County Cup, adding confidence and momentum as they push forward in the league.

The squad's blend of experience, resilience, and attacking spark has been clear in recent weeks, with goals galore - long may it continue!

Our Reserves have also been making headlines, particularly in the Women's Challenge Cup.

A commanding 3-0 victory over local rivals Mangotsfield secured their place in the next round and marked the final game in charge for our Reserve team manager Mark Bragg.

We thank Mark for his dedication and wish him well for the future.

The club is now beginning the search for a new manager to lead this talented squad. Anyone interested in the role is encouraged to contact the club via our social media channels.

The Reserves will be looking to use their



Departing coach Mark Bragg and the women's reserve team

cup success as a springboard to bring greater consistency into their league form over the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, the A Team continue to impress with a young and energetic squad, featuring several players enjoying their first season in women's football after progressing through our youth pathway.

Their recent 4-4 draw away at then unbeaten Lydney Town was a thrilling contest and a standout performance, which highlighted both the team's attacking flair and growing confidence.

With all three teams showing promise, pride, and passion, there's never been a better time to get behind your local club.

Why not spend a Sunday afternoon cheering us on at Pomphrey Hill?

Your support means the world to our players, and we'd love to see more members of the community cheering from the sidelines.

Come down, enjoy the football, and be part of the Flyers family!

Nathan James

Hockey club's tribute to Alistair

BRISTOL & West Hockey Club has paid tribute to former captain Alistair Kilfoil.

Last month's Voice reported that Alistair, who was also the chairman of Hambrook Sports Club, had died suddenly in October, aged 63.

The retired Rolls-Royce engineer was also a long-time member of Grittleton Cricket Club and Chairman of Hambrook Cricket Club.

Bristol & West chair Andy Bryce said: "Al Kilfoil's long association with Bristol & West Hockey Club began back in the mid 1980s when as a fresh-faced graduate moving to the Bristol area, he joined BAC Hockey Club.

"Al was from the start, a solid and skilled fullback. However, it will come as no surprise to all those who knew him that while still in his 20s, he took on the roles of both first team captain and then club captain, excelling

in both.

"From those beginnings Al went on to contribute to the running of the hockey club taking on various committee roles. However, Al's irrepressible desire to support, organise, encourage and grow sport, meant one club was simply not enough and so many other clubs and organisations benefitted from Al's skills, dedication and passion.

"He took on demanding organisation roles in many different directions such as at West Hockey, Clifton Robinsons HC and Avonmouth HC.

"However, he always remained a member of Bristol & West Hockey Club and continued to play whenever he could and, remarkably, still also found time to coach juniors and to umpire.

"It wasn't just the number of challenges and the time and energy that Al devoted to both men's and women's sport

that was remarkable, it was the fact that he did them all so spectacularly well.

"Al had great intelligence and knowledge and was always a source of sound advice that will be very much missed by so many.

"He was, as a consequence, highly respected and loved by his hockey family.

"In later years, Al played masters hockey and was a Gloucester County Cricket senior player.

"In 2024 Al was part of a masters hockey tour to Sicily, accompanied by friends from Bristol & West HC, Westbury HC, OBHC and West Wilts HC.

"It is difficult to come to terms with the thought that we will never again experience the sound of his quite unique laugh, usually rising to a crescendo as he recounted some humorous tale, but invariably told with warmth and affection.

"There is no question that



Al's untimely passing at only 63 years of age means that the local sports community will have a big gap to fill.

"Hopefully however, part of his legacy will be that spirit of unselfish dedication to making other people's lives richer through sport and expecting nothing in return."

Hard-fought win over old rivals for Cleve

CLEVE renewed their rivalry with old adversaries Keynsham with a 26-10 win at the Hayfields.

Years ago Keynsham were usually the opening game on Cleve's fixture list as many veterans at the game, mostly over-60s, observed.

Keynsham are a well-established club at this level, having been in the Regional 2 Tribute Ale Severn league for a number of years.

But Cleve showed no deference to their visitors' reputation, and promptly applied pressure from the outset.

This came at a cost as Lewis Beer, who has been outstanding in previous matches, went off with a hamstring injury.

Cleve supporters and players hope his absence will be brief.

Cleve continued to camp out in Keynsham's 22.

Once the forwards had recycled the ball, Harry O'Donnell joined the back line and

powered his way across the try line, with Matthew Jarvis stepping up and, as usual, kicking the conversion to put Cleve 7-0 up after 10 minutes.

Keynsham stepped up and retrieved the ball from the kick-off, moving along the backs and scoring an unconverted try to make the score 7-5.

Cleve were now fighting to achieve ascendancy.

Archie Staples found himself in possession of the ball after a 50-yard drive, outstripped the defenders and went over to score.

Now 14-5 up, Cleve took control and passed the ball efficiently across the field.

Eventually the ball went wide and Arthur Davis scored but with 30 minutes on the clock, Cleve went down to 14 men after a yellow card.

However this did not stop them from keeping the pressure on Keynsham. Again, movement of the ball gave the centres space and allowed Liam McGrath to score.

Cleve were now cruising and the score at half time was 26-5.

The second half saw Cleve feel the pressure. They lost a player after a bust-up on the wing, and had to play the rest of the game with just 14 players.

For 20 minutes they stopped Keynsham scoring, spending much of their time near their own line, before the visitors went over for another unconverted try to take the score to 26-10.

Cleve continued to fight hard defensively



Cleve celebrate after beating Keynsham

and compete fiercely at rucks and mauls. With a lack of numbers in the backs, they had to spread wide and cover Keynsham's attacking backline.

This resulted in a tremendous defensive effort and when the team reached the end of the game there was a sense of pride and satisfaction of a job well done.

Cleve followed up with a 35-15 win away at Wooton Bassett, with tries from Harry O'Donnell, Will Callaghan, Theo Garnett and Matt Lane, who scored two.

The result kept Cleve are riding high in the league, in third place ahead of two home fixtures in late November.

Stephen Bateman

Old and new a winning combination

CLEVE'S Second team fielded old favourites Neil Evans and Nathan Huntley for their match against Bishopston 1sts.

They also fielded an exciting new player, Daniel Allaker, who has a fine pedigree coming from the northern club Keswick.

Cleve started the stronger but in the 20th minute Bishopston struck to make it 7-0.

An end-to-end game saw Cleve gain possession and move the ball wide to score on the wing.

Cleve had some ex-Colts in the team, but the experience of Evans and Huntley came through, with both scoring to put Cleve 22-14 up at half-time.

After the interval Jack Bush stormed over, knocking defenders out of the way on his way to the try line.

With 15 minutes to go Bishopston showed their first 15 quality and scored twice to go a point up.

Archie Franklin, however, got hold of the ball and went over to put Cleve back in front.

Huntley clinched the game by running 50 yards from a scrum to score, making it 41-33 at full time. After the game coach John O'Hara said the team produced a good all-round performance but he was especially pleased by their resilience to stay in the game.

Cleve also hosted Bristol Bisons for their 47-24 win over Cardiff Lions, a game that garnered significant interest from a large audience.

Stephen Bateman



Cleve 2s compete in a lineup against Bishopston

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Mangos need to find form

MANGOTSFIELD United will need a strong second half of the season to get back among the promotion places.

The team has become consistently inconsistent, with each win followed by a defeat.

The good work from a 2-1 home win against Tuffley Rovers in October - thanks to a goal from Ollie Weaver on 26 minutes and a last-gasp winner from Jacob Spence in the sixth minute of stoppage time - was thrown away in the next game, a 3-2 home defeat against local rivals Cribbs.

The Mangos were leading 2-0 with less than 10 minutes to go, with James White putting them in front and George Neill making it 2-0 on 79 minutes.

Most sides trailing like that would go on to lose the game but, incredibly, Cribbs found a late burst, Buster Reid scoring out of the blue on 87 and 90 minutes, and Joseph Davis bagging the winner on 90 + 3 minutes as the Mangos spectacularly collapsed. It was one of the most unlikely-

looking defeats at Cossham Street in living memory.

Following a much-needed 10-day break, the Mangos returned to winning ways with a comfortable 6-0 home win over Malmesbury Victoria in the Marsh Cup.

George Kellow and Olly Sully gave them a commanding half-time lead before three quick goals after the break, from Sully, Michael Barry and George Neill quickly ended the game as a contest, with Neill adding the sixth on 58 minutes.

The Mangos travel to Longlevens in the next round.

Back in the league a very good 1-1 draw at Corsham Town, always one of the better sides in the Hellenic League, could have been even better: the Mangos led for an hour after George Kellow's 32nd-minute opener, but another late horror show saw the hosts grab an equaliser on 90+2 minutes.

A few days later a disappointing 2-0 away defeat at Fairford Town left a feeling

of "two steps forward and one back".

The following week the Mangos bounced back with a hard-earned 3-2 away win at Hereford Pegasus, another play-off chasing side.

An opener for the hosts on 25 minute galvanised Mangotsfield into action and goals from George Kellow (35), Ollie Weaver (36) and Rudy Hill (45+8) put them 3-1 up at half-time.

Despite an early second-half goal and a lot of late pressure from the hosts, the Mangos stood firm to claim a big three points.

Three days later the Mangos were dumped out of the Floodlit Cup by Highworth Town, going down 3-1 at home. Joe Porton's 41st-minute volley from the edge of the box had ensured Mangotsfield went in level at half-time but the visitors scored two unanswered goals.

There are no Boxing Day or New Year's Day fixtures at Cossham Street but the club will welcome your support at the pre-Christmas home game with



Cirencester Town and Christmas weekend derby match away at Hallen.

Dave Smale

Upcoming fixtures:

November 29: Slimbridge (away)

December 6: Highworth Town (away)

December 13: Longlevens (away, Marsh Cup)

December 20: Cirencester Town (home)

December 27: Hallen (away)

January 3: Pershore Town (away)



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Blog 137 - The four pillars of a healthy Christmas

APART from the obvious fact that Joe Marler should have won Celebrity Traitors, Christmas is one of my favourite times of the year – a chance to slow down, spend time with family and reflect on what we've achieved together. But it's easy for the season to get out of hand: one too many late nights, a few extra mince pies, maybe a back twinge from wrestling the tree into the car!

As we wrap up our Four Pillars of Health series – Movement, Nutrition, Sleep and Mindset – I wanted to show how those same principles can help you enjoy the festive season in balance. Because good health isn't just for January – it's for life, one mince pie at a time.

Move: Keep your body in the festive spirit

When the weather turns cold and the sofa starts calling, it's easy to move less. But regular movement keeps our bodies (and minds) happy. It boosts mood, circulation and helps us stay strong through the indulgent season.

In my house, we always make a point of getting outside over Christmas, even if it's just a brisk walk around Chew Valley or a muddy stomp with the kids. A few small things make a big difference:

- Get outside for a family walk after lunch – it aids digestion and lifts everyone's spirits.
- Try ten minutes of stretching or mobility in the morning.
- And yes, dance in the kitchen.

As chiropractors, we constantly see the benefits of movement – people who keep active recover faster, function better and feel more alive.

Nourish: Eat, drink and be mindful

I love my Christmas food, but the challenge is not letting the whole season become one long buffet. Our nutritional therapist Philippa Parish always reminds us it's about balance and awareness – food should fuel your body and feed your soul.

A few small principles go a long way:

- Fill half your plate with colour – fruit and veg keep your system balanced.
- Slow down and enjoy – it takes time for your body to register fullness.
- Hydrate – alternating every

alcoholic drink with a glass of water is a game changer.

Keeping an eye on alcohol

It's easy to underestimate how much we drink over Christmas. There's nothing wrong with enjoying a festive pint, but I try to be more mindful.

- Know your measures – a large glass of wine can contain more than three units.
- Have alcohol-free days – your body will thank you.
- Go for quality, not quantity – enjoy something special.
- Rehydrate before bed – it genuinely helps your sleep.

Philippa advises drinking alcohol with food and never on an empty stomach – solid advice I try to follow (though not always successfully when I'm in France with a good bottle of red!).

Sleep: Rest and recharge

If there's one pillar I have to protect over Christmas, it's sleep. Between family events, late nights and the odd film marathon, it's the first thing that slips. But sleep is where your body recovers and your mind resets.

A few simple habits make all the difference:

- A herbal tea – rooibos or chamomile – helps me wind down.
- Keep a loose routine, even if bedtime drifts.
- Switch off screens at least half an hour before bed.

Keep your sleep on track and everything else – energy, mood, digestion – will feel better too.

Mindset: Finding calm in the chaos

Christmas can bring joy, but also the pressure to make everything perfect. Over the years, I've learned to let go and focus on what actually matters.

- It doesn't have to be perfect – burnt sprouts shouldn't cause a crisis!
- Take five minutes for yourself – a short walk, a cup of tea, or some quiet time works wonders.
- Laugh often – it's nature's best stress reliever.

As chiropractors, we talk a lot about balance – including mental balance. Give yourself permission to rest, breathe and enjoy the little moments – that's where memories live.

Tim's tips for a healthy Christmas

- Plan your festive season around movement, nourishment, rest and reflection.
- Give your body the same care you give your loved ones.
- Choose connection over consumption – the best kind of indulgence.
- Start January with gratitude, not guilt.

Wishing you a happy and healthy Christmas

As 2026 approaches, I'm grateful for our wonderful patients, my brilliant team at Cleve Chiropractic and the wider community who make what we do so rewarding.

Here's to a Christmas full of laughter, balance and health – and to an energised, positive start to the new year.

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