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Protesters on the march

Campaigners who want to stop land being taken out of the Green Belt to allow thousands of homes to be built on fields east of Mangotsfield held a protest march, ahead of a public hearing on the council's planning blueprint.

Full story: Page 6



On the fast track

Ten-year-old Zane Williams, from Staple Hill, is achieving national success in motor racing.

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Green for Go!

Traffic restrictions at the Hambrook lights on the ring road are being lifted at last.

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Hospital flag row

Cossham Hospital League of Friends says it has been banned from flying the Union flag on a flagpole it paid for.

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Potholes peril

A schedule for pothole repairs this year from South Gloucestershire Council does not include all affected local roads.

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New Frenchay hospital scrapped

A COMMUNITY hospital promised for Frenchay for more than 20 years has been scrapped.

The NHS body in charge of funding services in the region says there is "no longer a need" to build an in-patient rehabilitation unit on a part of the former acute hospital site

reserved for the project.

It will instead focus on helping patients recover in their own homes, in line with changes in national policy.

It comes a few months after the Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board (ICB) told the Voice

there was no money available to take the project forward.

The site could now be sold off by its owner, North Bristol NHS Trust, to raise money to spend elsewhere.

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Publisher **Gary Brindle**
0117 907 8585
07799 461169



Journalist
Linda Tanner
07770 700579



Journalist
Ken McCormick
07715 770377



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sales@downendvoice.co.uk
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EDITORIAL

news@downendvoice.co.uk
Letters to the publication can
be sent to the above e-mail
address.

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edit your letter.

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LOCAL INFORMATION

West of England Mayor
Mayor Helen Godwin
mayor@westofengland-ca.gov.uk
0117 428 6210
70 Redcliff Street, Bristol BS1 6AL

South Gloucestershire Council
www.southglos.gov.uk
01454 868009

Police
www.avonandsomersetpolice.uk
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Fire
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Lorry driver admits causing Tyler's death

THE driver of a lorry which crashed on the Avon Ring Road near Mangotsfield, killing a young passenger, has admitted causing death by careless driving.

Michael Ronner had denied causing the death of Tyler Carley in the collision in 2023 by driving a DAF truck without due care and attention.

He was due to face a trial at Bristol Crown Court at the end of March, but days before the trial was due to start, he changed his plea to guilty.

Ronner, aged 39, from Warmley, is due to return to the court to be sentenced at the end of April.

He has been released on bail.

Tyler, who was 20, was killed when the lorry he was a passenger in collided with the central reservation of the A4174 between the Dramway and Siston Hill roundabouts on the evening of December 5, 2023.

He was working as a scaffolder and living in Thornbury, having spent his early life in Kingswood and Mangotsfield before moving to the town, where he attended the Castle School.

Tyler's friend and colleague Cameron Williams, who was also a passenger in the lorry, survived the crash without any physical injury but later took his own life after suffering survivor's guilt and post-traumatic stress disorder from the incident. Cameron, who was 19 when he died in 2024, was a former pupil of Stanbridge Primary and Downend School.

Police designated investigating officer Noelle Poupard said: "Tyler was a much-loved young man, with his whole life ahead of him.

"His tragic death was a direct result of Michael Ronner's lack of concentration and not appropriately ensuring the safety of his passengers while driving a lorry.

"It is deeply regrettable that Ronner waited until less than a week before trial to enter a guilty plea.

"Had the plea been entered earlier, it would have spared Tyler's family a significant amount of distress and heartache since the incident.

"The police investigation was lengthy and complex, including several expert reports in preparation of trial, but it demonstrated Ronner's actions were the cause for this collision and the death of Tyler.

"I would like to express my deepest condolences to Tyler's family. The strength they have shown in the lead up to the trial is commendable and I am just grateful we were able to provide them with some closure."

Tyler's mum Gemma said: "After back and forth court dates, and him changing his plea three days before trial, it is a relief for me as I never wanted the rest of Tyler's family and friends to have to hear or see the distressing evidence that only I have seen and read.

"No mother should ever have to see the things I have, sadly."

Since his death Tyler's parents have set up a charitable foundation in his memory, supporting charities which help bereaved families.

The Road Forward - Tyler Carley Foundation has organised fundraising events and first aid training sessions.

The latest sponsored event will see Tyler's cousin Lauren Carley and two of his friends take on the Great Bristol Run 10K on May 10, while another two friends run the Bristol Half-marathon.

Donations can be made at the foundation's JustGiving site, at tinyurl.com/4rj3752j, or via its Facebook page.



Tyler Carley

Right turns restored at Hambrook lights

TRAFFIC restrictions at the Hambrook junction of the Avon Ring Road and Bristol Road will be removed by the end of April, South Gloucestershire Council has announced.

A ban on drivers on the westbound A4174 turning right towards Winterbourne, and traffic heading north from Frenchay going straight across or right at the junction, was introduced in 2019.

The then government told the council it had to make changes to cut nitrogen dioxide pollution to within legal levels.

Since that time traffic from Downend and Frenchay has had to go around the roundabout at the M32 junction to reach Winterbourne, and traffic from Frenchay has only been able to turn left at the lights.

The authority was told it could not reverse the changes until the Joint Air Quality Unit - part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs - could confirm that the site had met national air quality standards for two years running.

In 2021 the government said it would not accept figures from pandemic years because of the reduction in traffic during lockdowns.

Now the council has received a letter from DEFRA, which says monitored air quality in both 2023 and 2024 met the national standards.

The improvement is believed to be partly because of an increase in the number of electric cars on the roads and in engine efficiency for other vehicles.

The council said it will fully reopen the junction, removing

the concrete barriers that stopped drivers from making banned turns, by Monday, April 27.

It will also reinstate the bus lane on the westbound ring road on either side of the traffic lights - so other traffic passing through will be restricted to two lanes instead of three.

Council cabinet member for communities Sean Rhodes said: "We know how significant this junction is for road users, residents and local communities, and we have listened carefully to the concerns raised about the measures.

"I recognise they have caused inconvenience and we have worked hard behind the scenes to secure clear direction from the government on this matter.

"We have to be confident that any return to previous routes through the junction will not result in a return to unacceptable air quality.

"But because air quality at the junction has improved markedly in the past couple of years (and it seems likely that this is due to improvements in engine efficiency, and the increase in hybrid and electric vehicles), we can be confident that this will not happen."

The removal of the restrictions has been welcomed across political lines, with Liberal Democrat Frenchay & Downend ward councillor Raj Sood, and Conservative ward councillor and group leader Liz Brennan both welcoming the change.

A petition drawn up by a Moored resident in 2024 gained more than 4,400 supporters, and in the same year



Concrete barriers preventing right turns at the Hambrook junction are being removed

former Filton and Bradley Stoke MP Jack Lopresti called for an end to the "intolerable" delays caused by the restrictions.

Current MP Claire Hazelgrove, who unseated Mr Lopresti in 2024, said: "It has been a challenging time for local residents, particularly those who live close to the junction and others who used it every day, and I know this will be welcome news - and perhaps hard to believe until you see it after so long!"

She said lifting of the restrictions had always depended on proving that air quality had been within legal limits for two years running.

*A driving instructor has called on the council to reinstate speed limit signs on the westbound A4174 between the Wick Wick and Bromley Heath roundabouts.

The 50mph signs were

painted over during recent road works and, while signs warning drivers of a new 40mph limit have been installed between Bromley Heath and Hambrook, the others had not been restored as the Voice went to print.

Richard Sweeting says he has reported the issue three times to the council, adding: "There are no longer any visible speed limit signs, which I consider dangerous.

"I often take students on this stretch of the Avon Ring Road and am not able to advise them of the current speed limit!"

A council spokesperson confirmed the stretch of road with the blanked-out signs still has a 50mph limit but was not able to say when the signs would be restored.

Pothole repairs: Page 10

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NHS pulls plug on community hospital

From Page 1

News of the decision to abandon the plan for rehabilitation beds was contained in a report to April's meeting of South Gloucestershire Council's health overview and scrutiny committee, titled "Next steps for Frenchay Hospital site".

It said: "National NHS policy now prioritises neighbourhood-based, home-first rehabilitation, supported by multidisciplinary teams.

"This represents a significant change from the assumptions that underpinned earlier plans for a bedded rehabilitation facility.

"Existing facilities are adequate, and South Gloucestershire has a high share of beds – current provision in Thornbury and Yate is suitable and appropriately staffed.

"In addition, building a new site is also not financially viable or a capital funding priority."

The ICB said South Gloucestershire already has more rehabilitation beds per head of population than other parts of the region.

ICB chief delivery officer David Jarrett told the meeting that the body had "no other commissioning intentions" for the land, which would enable North Bristol NHS Trust to consider options "including the potential opportunity to generate further capital funds for use on funding further capital priorities".

The news was described as "deeply disappointing" by Tory group leader and Frenchay & Downend ward councillor Liz Brennan, who told the meeting: "For years people in Frenchay and its surrounding communities



Land next to Frenchay Brain Injury Rehabilitation Centre was earmarked for a community hospital

were led to believe the site would deliver a meaningful healthcare service.

"Instead we are now being told there is no strategic need, no financial viability and no clear plan.

"People are already struggling to access GP appointments and services are stretched.

"What scares my community to death is the release of this site for more housing which increases this demand with no actual facilities."

But council director of adult social care and housing Anne Clarke told the committee:

"Older people lose their abilities if they are away from home for too long.

"We should be giving more people the opportunity to recover at home, to have rehabilitation at home, reablement at home, equipment assisted technology that enables them to continue an active life at home and in their community."

Barbara Harris of the Save Frenchay Community Hospital Group has been campaigning

for a new community hospital for more than 20 years. One was first agreed in 2005, as part of a plan to move all North Bristol NHS Trust acute hospital services onto one site, with an upgraded hospital built at Southmead.

But by the time the new Southmead Hospital opened and the old Frenchay Hospital closed in 2014, funding for a Frenchay community hospital, with 112 rehabilitation and mental health beds, had already been cancelled. Plans were later revived for a 50-bed facility, but nothing happened.

Mrs Harris said it was "no surprise" that the community rehabilitation facility plan had been abandoned.

She said: "Since 2005 the plan for Frenchay has been started and stopped five times, but there is no denying the need for the rehabilitation bedded unit when Southmead Hospital beds are either a quarter or a third full of 'bed-blockers' – patients who have had their acute treatment but who now need further

rehabilitation treatment in a proper rehabilitation facility.

"But there is no proper rehabilitation facility for them.

"In all, 750 beds have been lost, during which time the population has risen by 53,000."

Mrs Harris said campaigners were calling on the new Bristol Hospital Group, being formed by the merger of the city's two hospital trusts, to at last begin to implement the plan for a community rehabilitation hospital on the site reserved for it, "so that patients can receive the rehabilitation care they deserve".

She said: "Is it too much to ask that, even at this eleventh hour, highly paid managers and politicians will have the courage to admit their mistake and deliver the formally agreed community facility on the site reserved for healthcare services at Frenchay?"

ICB chief executive Shane Devlin told the Voice: "We recognise how strongly many people feel about the future of the Frenchay site and understand that this will be disappointing news for some.

"Over the past decade, the way rehabilitation is delivered has evolved significantly.

"The evidence shows that we have the right level of capacity to support people's recovery, whether through our existing rehabilitation beds or through high-quality care provided in people's own homes.

"In light of this, we do not believe that developing a rehabilitation facility on the Frenchay site would represent the best use of NHS resources."

Meeting report by Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service



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Cancer turns Rob's world upside down

A DOWNEND dad and his family have had their world "turned upside down" after he was suddenly diagnosed with advanced cancer.

Rob Hegarty, who is 42, is in Southmead Hospital being treated for complications from Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, which has spread to his liver.

He and his wife Martine have had to step aside from running family business Junk Monsters, which Martine is trying to keep going with the help of a close family friend as she divides her time between the hospital with Rob and looking after their two sons, aged 12 and 17.

Friends and the community have rallied round, donating to an online fundraiser to support the family and business, and to pay for anything Rob might need that can't be funded by the NHS.

Rob first started suffering shoulder pain at Christmas but assumed it was a repetitive strain injury from working in their house and rubbish clearance business.

When the pain didn't clear and spread along his abdomen he booked a GP appointment in late February but before he could be seen, he went to A&E in early March with severe shoulder and chest pains and shortness of breath.

Rob was discharged after being given blood tests, which

found mild abnormalities with his liver and pancreas. When he attended the GP appointment a week later, he was told the findings and prescribed antibiotics for a possible chest infection.

After a second visit to A&E, when he was recommended to try yoga to address the pain, Rob and his wife booked a private blood test and ultrasound scan.

The ultrasound found a mark on his liver, but he was told it didn't appear to be anything to worry about.

However the blood test found a large rise in liver function markers, and three days later Rob began turning yellow.

After calling 111 and seeing a GP he was sent to Southmead for more tests.

Shortly before Easter, Rob was called back to Southmead and spent a day undergoing more tests, before he and Martine were given the shocking news that he had Stage 4 cancer - the most advanced stage of the disease.

The following day they were called back to the hospital and, after a ten-hour wait, Rob was admitted to bed on a ward.

Martine said: "Our world has suddenly been turned upside down.

"Other than the shoulder and chest pain, until the point Rob turned yellow there was no indication anything was seriously

wrong - no one seemed worried.

"This has come out of nowhere. He's young, fit, doesn't drink and doesn't smoke.

"At the moment we're in limbo, because he's still very unwell and unable to start chemotherapy.

"He's had to stay in hospital because his liver still isn't working properly.

"We are very lucky to have some wonderful family and friends who are running around and supporting us in the background while Rob is beginning his fight in hospital."

Rob, who grew up in Downend, has been running Junk Monsters with Martine for more than ten years.

He urged other people to trust their instincts when they think something is wrong, saying: "You know when something's not quite right - if you feel you're not being taken seriously, please keep asking them to check."

As the Voice went to print, more than 130 people had made donations totalling more than



Rob Hegarty

£4,600 to support the family.

Martine said: "The support, love and compassion we have felt so far is amazing.

"Our focus is on getting him to treatment, and keeping life as stable as possible for our children.

"At the same time, we are facing mounting financial pressure and loss of income as he is no longer able to work and it's unlikely he will again."

The appeal can be found online at tinyurl.com/4yubcnc2.

Bridge closer to opening

NATIONAL Highways says it expects to be able to announce an opening date for the Badminton Road bridge over the M4 in the next few weeks.

Contractors have been working on the earthworks connecting the bridge, which will carry the A432 across the motorway between Downend and Winterbourne, to the embankment.

They will then move on to lighting, traffic signals, crossing points and surfacing, before the bridge is connected to the A432 next to the Wick Wick roundabout, where there were overnight lane closures during April as part of the project.

National Highways, which is responsible for the bridge and motorway network, has cancelled a series of overnight closures of the M4 scheduled for April 27-30 and May 26-29.

A spokesperson said: "We are still finalising the remaining closures and the opening date, and will be able to announce this in the next few weeks."

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Protesters march as developers make new plans

AROUND 100 protesters marched around areas which could be transformed by housing developments if a new planning blueprint is approved.

Members of Save Our Green Spaces-South Gloucestershire (SOGS-SG) held the joint protest and fundraising walk as part of the Community Planning Alliance's National Day of Action for Nature, Parks and Green Spaces on April 18.

Different groups of campaigners walked with children and dogs, with some riding horses, from areas where new housing could be built if South Gloucestershire Council's draft Local Plan is approved by the government, including Warmley, Siston Common, Siston Hill, Oldland Common, Webbs Heath and Carson's Road in Mangotsfield.

They headed to the old Shortwood Golf Course, near Mangotsfield, where 1,600 new homes could be built under the Local Plan.

A public examination into the legal compliance and soundness of the Local Plan by a government-appointed inspector is due to start at Kingswood Civic Centre on May 19, with a total of 15 days of hearings held in three-day blocks on five separate weeks. The final hearings will take place on July 14 to 16.

The draft Local Plan proposes sites for more than 22,000 homes in the district over the next 15 years.

As well as the golf course, hundreds more homes are proposed for Shortwood and Mangotsfield, while more than 2,000 are proposed for an area north of Lyde Green, between the M4 and Westerleigh and

thousands more are planned for Warmley, Siston and Oldland Common.

SOGS-SG used the walk to collect donations towards professional representation by a planning consultant at the Local Plan hearings - as the Voice went to print they had raised more than £10,000.

Chair Darren Lawrence said: "We've got to keep pushing. "People feel they aren't being listened to.

"It's not about being radical - there's no infrastructure to support homes in these areas.

"This isn't 'grey belt', it's Green Belt - we have to stand up and say enough's enough.

"I'm absolutely overwhelmed with the support we've received on the march - we've also had a lot of support online.

"We're facing the total destruction of the East fringe. We feel that if plans to build in all of the places proposed, from Saltford to Filton to Yate, happen we'll end up with a mega-city.

"We're not against housing but we are against mass housing on the Green Belt - there is an alternative."

Developers have already started to make planning applications on sites included in the Local Plan, even though it has not yet been approved.

Taylor Wimpey has applied to build 150 homes between Cossham Street and Rodway Hill Road in Mangotsfield and Lightwood Strategic Ltd is seeking permission to build 280 homes at Rock House Farm in Shortwood.

The most recent application has been made on behalf of David Wilson Homes for 260 homes on land north of the



Protesters on the former Shortwood Golf Course at the end of the SOGS-SG march

B4465 road to Pucklechurch, north of Shortwood Hill.

Agents Boyer describe the site as "a sustainable location for development that can benefit from existing infrastructure and transport connectivity within Bristol.

They added: "The proposed development on this site will provide up to 260 homes including 50% affordable and will contribute to the comprehensive and coordinated delivery of development in this area."

The site is just to the east of the proposed Rock House Farm development and to the north of the former golf course.

Boyer says the development will be made in line with South Gloucestershire Council's "Urban Lifestyles approach"

Boyer has made a "screening request" to the council to ask whether it needs to produce an environmental impact assessment for the site - the first stage in the application process



Jill Barnes, of Mangotsfield, dressed in a badger outfit and carried cuddly animals representing species whose habitats could be threatened by housing.

for many bigger developments.

More details can be found on the council's planing website by searching for application P26/003/SCR.

Details of Local Plan hearings can be found at localplanexamination.commonplace.is.

SOGS-SG has set up a website with details of upcoming planning applications and its donation page at sogssg.org.

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Row as flag stops flying at hospital

VOLUNTEERS who raise money to support the work of Cossham Hospital say they have been stopped from flying the Union flag - on a pole they paid for.

The League of Friends of Cossham Hospital fundraise to pay for equipment for the hospital in Lodge Road, Kingswood, which provides outpatient services for thousands of people across South Gloucestershire and East Bristol.

The group paid for the pole to be erected on the hospital's roof following a major refurbishment that was completed in 2013, and says flags have been flown at the site for 60 years.

The volunteers allowed patients, visitors and other supporters to have the Union flag flown with a corresponding dedication posted at the hospital's reception, marking anniversaries, birthdays, memorials and other personal events, in return for a £5 donation.

League of Friends chair Margaret Nolder says the flag sponsorship has raised more than £1,100 for the hospital over the past six years.

But when the rope used to raise and lower the flag broke over the winter they were told by North Bristol NHS Trust that it could not be replaced on safety



The Union flag flying on top of Cossham Hospital in August last year

grounds.

And when Margaret put up a flag in the window of the cafe run by the League of Friends, as a substitute, she says she was told to take it down by management.

Margaret says she was told a patient and a staff member had complained - but says many visitors, patients and staff are "up in arms" that the flag isn't flying.

She said: "We paid for the pole and it's such a landmark - it's the highest point in Bristol.

"We're non-political and the flag is used to celebrate or remember people.

"If there's a problem with health and safety on the roof we're prepared to pay to have a new flagpole installed on the ground.

"I've now been sent a memo saying the flag can only be flown on the monarch's birthday, state funerals or Remembrance Day.

"It's political correctness - there's never been any complaints before."

The group, which has 68 volunteers, has spent more than £200,000 on equipment for the hospital over the past eight years, also raising money through its cafe, Christmas sales, donations and legacies.

Bristol North East Damien Egan MP, whose constituency includes the hospital, has written to the trust to raise the League's concerns.

A trust spokesperson said: "We hugely appreciate the ongoing hard work, dedication and support Cossham League of Friends and their volunteers provide to Cossham Hospital and our patients and colleagues.

"Serious safety concerns around accessing the existing flagpole, which is located on the roof of Cossham Hospital, mean that it is no longer suitable for use.

"At NBT we have a protocol that outlines the occasions on which we display flags on our hospital flag poles.

"We recognise the long history of Cossham League of Friends using the flagpole outside of official occasions as part of fundraising efforts and are working closely with the group on how we continue to mark this tradition whilst ensuring the safety of our colleagues and their volunteers."

MORE than three and a half years after Cossham Birth Centre announced a temporary closure, there is no date for its reopening.

A decision on its future looks set to be further delayed while health chiefs work out how to bring together hospital services across Bristol.

North Bristol NHS Trust continues to run antenatal and postnatal services at the unit - but no babies have been born there since October 2022.

The birth centre proved popular with prospective parents after opened in 2013, but had to shut for spells in 2018 and 2021 because of a shortage of midwives.

Staffing challenges at NBT's maternity unit at Southmead Hospital were also given as the reason for the latest closure, and the trust has not given an update since May 2024.

MPs Kerry McCarthy and Damien Egan called two years ago for the birth centre to

Birth centre stays shut

reopen.

Since then, however, NBT and University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust have begun working towards a merger as Bristol NHS Group, which is expected to be finalised this summer.

Services that are provided by both trusts, such as maternity, are being integrated in what the trusts call Group Clinical Services development.

Bristol NHS Group chief nursing and improvement officer Professor Steve Hams said: "Cossham Birth Centre remains an integral part of our long-term vision for women's health - including as part of our Group Clinical Services development - ensuring the very best care and experience possible for those using our service.

"We provide a range of services at Cossham, including

community appointments, breastfeeding support, and both antenatal and postnatal care, ensuring compassionate guidance and continuity throughout every stage of the

maternity journey.

"Women continue to have access to a range of birth options, including midwife-led care alongside obstetric support at Southmead Hospital, as well as a dedicated home birth service."



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Man cleared of stalking on appeal

A DOWNEND man has had his conviction for stalking a woman in Staple Hill overturned on appeal.

Kola Adetu, aged 45, had denied a charge of stalking the woman without causing fear, alarm or distress during 2024, but was found guilty by Bristol magistrates after a trial in July last year.

He was acquitted after making an appeal against the conviction to Bristol Crown Court in February, which was unopposed by the Crown Prosecution Service.

Both the conviction and community sentence have been quashed.

At the appeal hearing a new restraining order without conviction was made under the Protection from Harassment Act, prohibiting Mr Adetu from contacting the woman directly or indirectly for ten years.

Fake crash fraudster jailed

A FRAUDSTER who faked crashes to con drivers out of money has been jailed.

Simon McDonagh, aged 36, would throw an object at a car as it passed his vehicle, making his victims think they had hit something.

He then waved them down and told them they had damaged his wing mirror.

Avon & Somerset police said he would suggest they pay him cash to repair the 'damage', to avoid making an insurance claim and when some said they were unable to provide cash, he asked them to transfer money via PayPal.

McDonagh carried out the scams between March and June last year in Staple Hill, Soundwell, Kingswood and Speedwell, using a vehicle with false number plates.

He made more than £5,500 from 11 different "vulnerable" victims, ranging from a student to men in their 80s.



Simon McDonagh

A police spokesperson said McDonagh accompanied one victim, a man in his 70s, to his bank. After the man withdrew £995, McDonagh demanded another £500 and sent him back into the bank for it, taking a total of £1,495.

After being reported to police, McDonagh, of

Brookthorpe, near Gloucester, was arrested.

He pleaded guilty to 11 counts of fraud and six counts of fraudulently using a vehicle registration, and was jailed for two years and eight months when he appeared at Bristol Crown Court in March.

He was also banned from driving for more than three years.

Afterwards PC Kayleigh Hole said: "While the amounts in this case were not tens or hundreds of thousands of pounds, each amount was significant to each and every one of the victims.

"We hope that this encourages others to recognise and report any signs of fraud.

"Suspicious behaviour may include someone urging you to avoid formal processes – such as going through your insurer – providing false or incomplete details, or requesting cash payments without issuing an invoice."

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Mangotsfield gets a 'little library'

MANGOTSFIELD now has its own mini-library where people can borrow and donate books.

The new book exchange has been mounted on the side of the public toilet building in the St James Street car park, opposite the church.

It is the result of a joint project involving Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council, Mangotsfield Residents Association, Downend Men in Sheds and South Gloucestershire Council, which owns the building.

Deputy parish clerk Colette Lewis suggested the idea to Mangotsfield Residents Association, and found that the association had already looked into the concept, as Mangotsfield is some distance away from the libraries in Staple Hill and Downend.

The idea of a book exchange is that people can freely borrow books from the unit, and also donate books they have finished with and would like others to read.

Colette said: "We looked at several options around the village for accessibility, ownership and visibility, and the toilet block fit the bill."

"The full parish council agreed the proposal and Councillor Ian Boulton recommended Downend Men in Sheds to make the structure."

The volunteer group set to work and created the unit, complete with shelves, plus a roof and doors to keep the books dry.

Men in Sheds vice-chair John Lockwood said: "When we are asked to produce items at Downend Men in Sheds, we have come to expect some items that



Parish councillors and Men in Sheds at the opening ceremony

we have not done before.

"With any new venture, we have to learn new things (timber preservation, and fire-retardant finishes for example). Every day is a school day, as they say!"

Mangotsfield Residents Association chair Clive Heath cut the ribbon to officially open the 'little library' in April.

He said: "We'd like to thank the parish council for providing this facility."

"The MRA will continue to work together with the parish council on behalf of the community."

"It is being well used already!"



The book exchange unit. Picture: Downend Men in Sheds

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Potholes near the Northcote Road, Peache Road and Salisbury Road junction

Potholes: relief for some drivers

SOME of the most badly-potholed roads in the Downend area are set to be resurfaced as part of South Gloucestershire Council's highways maintenance programme for this year.

A new zebra crossing in Staple Hill, pavement improvements and an expansion of 20mph limits are also among the projects that will be funded between now and the end of next March.

The council has published a list of roads where resurfacing work will be carried out over the next 12 months.

It includes a stretch of Peache Road and Northcote Road, between Downend and Mangotsfield, where large patches of road surface have worn away.

Drivers have to steer around many of the worst potholes on the road, including a large area near the bus stop between the Salisbury Road and Stanbridge Road junctions, where a recent patch-up repair has been completely worn away, leaving the next layer of the road exposed.

The council says the length of road to be resurfaced runs from the bus stop opposite Peache Court, at the Westerleigh Road end, to a spot between the Stanbridge Close and Royal Road junctions.

This means the project does not currently include the stretch of Northcote Road near Windsor Place in Mangotsfield, where there are also long, deep potholes.

Set to be completely resurfaced is South View, which links Park Road and Hill House Road next to Page Park.

The road is on the 49 and 49x bus routes, and is used for parking by many motorists visiting Page Park.

For pedestrians visiting Page Park, a new zebra crossing will be built near the northern Park Road entrance, near the junctions with South View and Clarence Avenue.

In Frenchay, Malmains Drive is due to be resurfaced along its entire length between Beckspool Road and Bristol Road.

Charnhill Crescent and Oaklands Close in Mangotsfield are also on the list for resurfacing, along with Cleeve Lodge Close in Downend.

Pavements in Teewell Hill, Gloucester Road and Riviera Crescent in Staple Hill, near the Tynings Primary School, will also be renewed, as will the pavement on St James Street in Mangotsfield, from St James Place to the post office.

A programme of improvements to bus stops across the district is also included in the capital budget, which also allocates funds for work to identify areas in Staple Hill and Downend where 20mph limits could be extended.

Further afield, resurfacing is also planned on Badminton Road, north of the M4 between Cuckoo Lane in Winterbourne and Church Road in Frampton Cotterell, and on Pound Road in Kingswood.



What the same stretch of road looked like in August last year



Potholes on South View

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Zane feels the need for speed

HE may only be ten years old but Zane Williams is already grabbing attention in the world of motor racing.

The Tynings Primary School pupil has recently begun competing at a national level in go-karting, and in his very first race, he finished in second place behind the previous year's champion.

He has also joined a team run by a mentor of current Formula 1 world champion Lando Norris.

Zane got the karting bug visiting the indoor Absolutely Karting circuit in Speedwell during the school holidays last year.

He started outdoor racing a few months later and is now taking part in two contests: the National Karting Championships (NKC) and Forest Edge Championships.

Mum Natalie said: "He loves it - doing 65mph on a seat two inches above the ground, feeling every bump.

"He's definitely got a natural ability.

"He never even played with cars when he was younger, but this is his passion. If he isn't racing, he's watching karting or driving a simulator.

"People have been telling me he's exceptional for his age.

"It has been inspiring to watch, and we're incredibly proud of what he's achieving."

At his first NKC race Zane had to start at 19th as a novice, but finished second. He has



Zane Williams with some of his trophies

picked up a trophy in five out of six races so far.

Dad Bob, who is an F1 fan, has had to learn to be Zane's mechanic and takes him to practice.

Zane said: "I love go-karting because it's very fast, competitive and fun.

"This season I want to win the National Kart Championship and hopefully get as many trophies as possible.

"In the future I would love to move into cars such as GT3 and GT4 - the dream is F1.

"I would still like to do a bit of karting for fun!"

Zane has joined the Poole-based kart team BKC Racing, where Lando Norris started his racing career.

Owner Rob Dodds has been coaching Zane over the past six months.

He said: "Zane impressed me that much that we entered him into the National Kart Championship 2026.

"Zane is testing and racing most weekends and already is showing his potential - he is currently leading the championship, which is amazing as it would normally take a few seasons just to be competitive."

Zane and his family attended a winter testing session run by BKC in Valencia, to prepare for the new season.

Rob said: "I look forward to coaching Zane as I feel, with the right financial support, he can go all the way - there's not many drivers I would make this statement on.

"Zane is a very nice young man and is 100% focused on success, as we are."

For more information about Zane, visit zanewilliamsracing.co.uk.



Zane on the track

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TURNER'S VISION

Why every parent needs to hear about short-sightedness

A CONVERSATION Peter had recently with his friends stayed with me and I was concerned about how little many parents know about this topic. Over the last few years, their child had become increasingly short-sighted, needing stronger and stronger contact lenses just to keep up & be able to see the school board, TV & at the cinema.

Their response after hearing about our Myopia Specialist Clinic at Turners Opticians was simple:

"Why did no one tell me I could stop my child's vision from worsening?"

It's a question we believe more parents should be aware of.

For many families, their experience of eye care has been reactive. A child struggles to see the board at school, their glasses prescription is increased, and life carries on. At their next sight test, the prescription has worsened again, so the lenses are made stronger once more.

And so the cycle continues.

The difficulty is that many parents understandably come to believe that this is simply "what happens" when a child becomes short-sighted.

But it doesn't always have to be that way.

At Turners Opticians in Bristol, we believe parents deserve to know that there is another way; a proactive approach designed to actively work to slow down worsening eyesight wherever possible.

Short-sightedness, or myopia, is becoming increasingly common in children, particularly in a world of intense near work, screens, and reduced time outdoors.

And of course, we don't want our children's eyesight to deteriorate unnecessarily. That's why early action matters.

So what should parents actually do next?

If your child's glasses or contact lens prescription has increased over the last 6-12 months, the most important thing is not to wait until it worsens again.

The next step is to have their eyes assessed in a proactive myopia management clinic, where the focus is not simply "Can they still see clearly?" but:

- How quickly is their prescription changing?
- What is driving that change?
- What can we do now to slow it

down?

At Turners, this starts with a dedicated Myopia Specialist Assessment. We look carefully at how your child's eyesight is changing, how much time they spend on close work and screens, their outdoor time, family history, and the way their eyes are developing.

From there, we create a personalised myopia management plan. For some, the best solution is a specialist spectacle lens designed to slow progression. For others, a carefully selected contact lens or Ortho-K may be more suitable.

Sometimes improvements come from lifestyle changes that families can implement immediately, such as structured screen breaks, working distance habits, and increasing time outdoors.

The important thing is this; you now have options.

You do not have to simply accept stronger and stronger prescriptions as the only path forward. The earlier you act, the more opportunity there is to help protect your child's long-term vision and reduce the risk of higher myopia in later life.

So if you've recently said:

"Their prescription seems to go up every year"

or if you've simply wondered whether more could be done, this is the time to ask the question that changes everything:

"What is the plan to stop it getting



Peter Turner
of Turners Opticians
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worse?"

If your current optician hasn't had that conversation with you, it may be time to speak to a practice that will. At Turners Opticians, our Myopia Specialist Clinic is built to help families.

Because helping your child see clearly today is important. Helping protect how they see tomorrow is even more important. To find out more or to book an appointment, visit our website or contact our friendly team by calling our Henleaze practice on 0117 9622 474 or our Fishponds practice on 0117 965 4434.

GINNY

Georgina Allwood is a Myopia Specialist Optometrist at Turners Opticians in Bristol. She has a specialist interest in Contact Lenses and Myopia Management.



Parents - Is Your Child's Sight At Risk of Deteriorating?

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BROMLEY Heath's community festival, Heathfest, will return this summer at an earlier date.

The one-day event at Bromley Heath Park and playing fields is set to take place on Saturday, June 20.

Last year saw Heathfest staged for the first time since 2019.

More than 1,500 people came out on one of the hottest days of the year, in mid-July, to enjoy live music, games, fairground rides and a variety of stalls.

The volunteer-run event raised more than £2,000 for local charities last year, with donations being made to rehoming charity Dog Friends, Young Carers Bristol & South Gloucestershire, St Peter's Hospice and RAF Air Cadets Frampton Cotterell.

This year's event will again include musical entertainment from local performers, and family-friendly activities.

Heathfest volunteer Jemma Bateman said this year's festival will be a "fun-filled day for all ages".

She said: "Attendees can explore a wide variety of stalls

Heathfest moves to June



Heathfest organisers with the festival logo

featuring crafts, local businesses, a range of food and drink, offering something for every taste and interest.

"Adding to the festive atmosphere, there will be a

selection of fairground rides and a live stage, which will showcase a line-up of local artists performing across the day.

"From music to community performances, the stage will

celebrate the rich talent and creativity within the local area.

"Heathfest continues to be a cornerstone community event, bringing people together for a day of entertainment, connection, and celebration in the heart of Bromley Heath.

"Beyond providing a great day out, the festival also supports important causes - last year, Heathfest raised over £2,000 for local charities, and we are hopeful for similar success again this year."

Tickets are already on sale online at ticketlab.app/series/2613 and via the Heathfest Facebook page, where details of acts and attractions are also being announced.

The first performers to be confirmed are singing group the Frampton Shantymen.

The festival will open at 11.30am and run until 7pm.

Anyone interested in joining the volunteers should email heathfestbs16@gmail.com.

TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

As the seasons change, don't let ear wax catch you out



There's something lovely about this time of year in the UK. The mornings feel brighter, our windows are open more often, our gardens are coming to life, and we naturally spend more time outside enjoying the lighter evenings too!

Interestingly, it's also a time when many patients begin to notice their ears feeling a little different.

I often hear things like, "My hearing just feels a bit dull," or "I thought it was just the pollen or a bit of congestion." And sometimes that's true. But very often, ear wax is quietly contributing more than people realise.

Seasonal changes can influence our ears in subtle ways. Warmer air, increased pollen, dust from gardening, and even mild dehydration can all change the consistency of ear wax, making it drier, firmer, or more likely to feel blocked. If you're also prone to hay fever or sinus congestion, your ears can feel even fuller.

The result can be muffled hearing, a sensation of pressure, ringing in the ears, or occasionally a little imbalance.

The reassuring thing is that ear wax itself is not a problem. It's a healthy, protective part of the ear's natural cleaning system. Trouble only starts when wax becomes impacted or begins affecting your comfort and hearing.

As an audiologist, one of the things I enjoy most is helping patients quickly get clarity about what's going on. Using our specialist camera system, I can gently look inside the ear and show you exactly what's there. Many people find this incredibly reassuring.

If wax does need removing, microsuction is a safe, precise, and comfortable way to do it. There's no water involved, no mess, and most patients are amazed at how quickly their hearing feels clearer afterwards.

I often say that better hearing is about far more than just volume. It's about confidence in conversations, comfort in busy environments, and enjoying the simple pleasures of the season; birdsongs or family chats in the garden.

So if things sound a little muted as we head into the warmer months, it may be worth having your ears checked.

Sometimes even small blockages can make a notable biggest difference, and it's always a pleasure to help patients hear the sounds of the season properly again.

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.

Blocked Ears Don't Fix Themselves



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Runners ready to raise money

TWO members of a Staple Hill running group are preparing to run the London Marathon, then stage more events to help a charity.

Beverley Schuurung-Chin and John Kemp first met at a Staple Hill Runners session a couple of years ago and despite the age difference - retired teacher John is in his 70s and fitness trainer Beverley is in her 40s - they soon agreed to run two marathons together.

The London Marathon on April 26 is set to be the fourth they run together and their second for charity the MS Trust, chosen because one of John's sons was diagnosed with the debilitating physical condition in his late 20s. Last year they raised £5,000 and they are aiming to raise the same amount this time around.

After the marathon Beverley, of Emerson's Green, and John, of Siston Common, will hold a 24-hour cycling challenge at Warmley Waiting Room on May 16-17, with a "battle of the sexes" to see who can cover the greatest distance.

They will then hold a quiz night at Mangotsfield United FC in Cosham Street on May 23, covering a wide range of subjects and with prizes including port, wine and cinema tickets.

For quiz tickets email mstrustfundraiser@gmail.com for more details

John and Beverley have a donations page at justgiving.com/page/bscjk and had raised more than £3,900 as the *Voice* went to print.



Beverley Schuurung-Chin and JoU Kemp



Rich Carpenter and Sophie Bolton

Double challenge

FORMER Downend resident Rich Carpenter will be running the Bristol Half Marathon and the Bristol 10K back-to-back.

Rich, who now lives in the city centre, is taking on the double challenge on May 10 for St Peter's Hospice, in memory of his partner Sophie Bolton.

Sophie died of bowel cancer in 2022 and spent three months at St Peter's Hospice in Brentley receiving end-of-life care.

Rich, who is retired after a career in marketing, said: "Sophie wouldn't tolerate me doing it in anything less than three hours, so that's the plan!"

Donations can be made at tinyurl.com/hm6xm56r.

Bin changes arrive

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council is urging residents to be ready for changes to bin collections in May.

Homes in the district will be moved onto three-weekly black bin collections from Monday May 11.

But residents have been advised that some people who were due to have a collection during that week under the old fortnightly system may find themselves waiting "22 or 23 days" before their bin is emptied on the new rounds.

The council says it has written to all residents who will go over 22 days without a black bin collection during the transition period and will offer "extra allowances for black bin waste on their first three-weekly collection".

Other households may get an extra collection before the new collection rotas start.

The council is advising people to check what can be recycled on its app, and start using new blue bags to recycle soft plastics as soon as they arrive.

A spokesperson said: "This material takes up 29% of the space in the average black bin in South Glos. Recycling these items will free up space in the black bin for waste that can't be recycled."

Households needing special services for nappies or incontinence products are being advised to sign up for free, fortnightly collections. Advice on the new system can be found at tinyurl.com/5f49zpuu.

The council is also advising residents thinking of disposing of fridges and freezers that it may have to stop accepting them at short notice, because of a national shortage in processing capacity.

A spokesperson said: "We are currently still taking fridges and freezers at our recycling centres. Space is very tight and we will check the situation every week. If the situation continues, we may have to stop taking fridges and freezers at short notice."

The council is advising residents to sell or give away fridges or freezers that still work, or use shops' disposal services where retailers take an old fridge or freezer when they deliver a new one.

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Why do I need Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs)?

It seems like you cannot turn on the TV without seeing Martin Lewis (TV's money saving expert) saying Lasting Powers of Attorney are now more important than Wills. This has raised several questions with readers answered here by John Baden-Daintree, solicitor at local specialists Simpson Solicitors.

What are Lasting Powers of Attorney? Known as LPAs, they are legal documents where you name who you trust to manage your money, pay your bills and to get you the medical care you'd want. They are used if you were become injured or became seriously ill.

None of us wants to be a burden, so having LPAs already in place makes it much easier for those you want to support you.

Do you still need LPAs if you are married? YES – otherwise your

other half is likely to face a difficult Court process to prove you would have wanted them to support you

Can I do them myself, without a firm of solicitors? You can but they are quite complicated legal documents, best prepared by lawyers. Martin Lewis has pointed out that 51,000 LPAs were rejected last year. Also, most banks will still require a "Solicitor-Certified" copy.

When should you put LPAs in place? NOW! It must be before you become ill or injured. Martin Lewis did his in his 30s. He understands the problems caused by not having them. Also, the Court takes about 3 months to register them.

What difference do Simpson Solicitors make? We make it easy for you - with no long form filling. Our Complete Service starts with a free planning meeting.

We guide you through all the different options for both Finance and Health LPAs along with additional wording to cover your circumstances.

But with us, it is not just about getting LPAs drafted. We provide the legal Certification to the Court (OPG) that you understand what you are signing and there is no sign of fraud. Then we register them at Court for you and provide the "solicitor-certified" copies you'll need. This is followed with our free after care service to support those you have named.

Lasting Powers of Attorney - protection for whatever life brings: Right now, we offer readers **20% off** the full price if you buy both LPAs. Either call us or email message@simpsonslawuk.com or pop into to book your free meeting.



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School celebrates culture

MANGOTSFIELD School celebrated the diversity of its community with its fourth annual Culture Week.

Planned by the school's student leadership team, with support from staff, the event included activities and competitions including a challenge to greet each other by saying "hello" in languages they had learned during the spring term.

A 'bake off' event, judged by head teacher Hetty Blackmore, saw some imaginative entries including a Union Jack cake, and canteen staff prepared special menus featuring cuisines from around the world.

A celebration day at the end of the week saw students encouraged to wear the colours of their national flag or traditional cultural dress, in return for a donation to charity.

There were lunchtime performances from two Year 11 dance groups, and activities including a photo booth and face painting.

More than £500 in total was raised for the school's chosen charity, Cancer Research UK.

Mrs Blackmore said: "The week celebrates the school's many different cultures, with



Traditional costumes and national colours in the school's celebration day

over 40 languages from around the world spoken by students.

"Several of the world's major religions are also practised within the school, making the event a true reflection of the community's rich diversity.

"Culture Week was a wonderful success, highlighting the strength, diversity, and unity of the Mangotsfield School community."

Right: A patriotic cake



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- 31st Hell - What is it?

Come along to the Christadelphian Hall on Hill House Road, Downend or watch live on YouTube.

Visit bristoldownend.com for more details

Work paused on housing schemes

A DEVELOPER says work to build 42 retirement flats in the middle of Staple Hill will start again soon.

Churchill Living started building Brunel Lodge, a four-storey development of 42 one and two-bedroomed apartments, on Page Road last summer.

But work was paused before Christmas, and the site's landmark crane has not moved for months.

Churchill, which is one of the country's biggest retirement home builders and operators, first applied for permission to build on the site of the former Staple Hill Infant School in 2022.

The developer appealed to the government's Planning Inspectorate the following year because South Gloucestershire Council, which owned the site at the time, had failed to make a decision on planning permission within the legal three-month time limit.

The council fought the appeal, saying it would have rejected the plans, but after Churchill Living won permission for the project, the council sold it the land.

Churchill Living named the development Brunel Lodge and said the apartments were aimed at the over-60s.

After work was paused the developer posted a message on its website, which said:



The building site in Page Road with its crane

"The timeline of this development is under review and may affect the launch date.

"We remain committed to delivering this development and will update you after registration when further details are available."

The Voice contacted Churchill Living, and a spokesperson said: "We expect construction works at our new Brunel Lodge development in Staple Hill to be back under way in early May."

The company said construction work had been paused "for business reasons" and it expects work on the site to be completed next year.

- The site is one of two in Staple Hill



Churchill Living's plan for the finished building

where work has not been taking place as previously predicted.

At the former Bristol Uniforms factory site in nearby Wathen Street, developer Woodstock Homes had indicated demolition work would start early this year.

The builder, which is working with affordable homes provider Bromford Flagship to provide 56 homes at the site behind Fountain Square and Broad Street, had indicated that construction work would begin this spring after being granted planning permission last October.

The Voice has asked Woodstock Homes for an update on the project and whether it has a revised date for demolition to start.

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New chapter for family-run jewellers as The Goldsmith Co takes over former Spencer's jewellery shop

AFTER more than 35 years serving customers in South Wales, a family jewellery business is starting an exciting new chapter in Staple Hill, Bristol.

Simon began his career as a goldsmith in 1976, training in London's renowned Hatton Garden. Alongside his mother Judith, the family has been in the jewellery trade for over 50 years. Over the years, the business built a strong reputation through its Barry-based shop, JKS Jewellery.

Now, his two sons Kyle and Dan are continuing in their father's footsteps, bringing a new modern approach to a friendly local jeweller with the launch of The Goldsmith Co.

"We've been in Barry for a long time, but we felt it was

the right time for a change," Dan explains. "We've always liked Bristol, and years ago we did really well trading from a jewellery trailer in Bristol Fruit Market, so it feels good to be coming back. Staple Hill felt like the perfect place for us to start fresh and bring what we do to a new community."

The name reflects exactly what sets them apart. They are working goldsmiths, carrying out their work on-site rather than sending items away.

"One of the biggest things people notice is how quickly we can get things done," says Dan. "We offer repairs while you wait wherever possible, which is something a lot of places don't do any more."

Alongside repairs, The Goldsmith Co offers bespoke jewellery making, from fully handmade pieces to CAD-designed and cast items, giving customers the chance to create something truly personal.

They also stock a wide range of jewellery, from affordable pre-owned pieces to brand-new designs, offering something for all budgets without losing that quality feel.

Another key service they are keen to highlight is gold buying. "We pay the highest prices on gold in any condition. Just pop in for an instant quote."

To celebrate the opening, the team will be offering 20% off all jewellery for the first two weeks. This is a 2-week opening promotion.

With a focus on being modern, approachable and built on real craftsmanship, the team is looking forward to becoming part of the local community.

"We're really excited to meet everyone in Staple Hill and hopefully become a trusted local jeweller for years to come."

Grand Opening **Saturday May 2**. We invite you to come and check out our new shop and meet the team.



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Demand better buses

RESIDENTS are being urged to have their say in a consultation which could shape the future of the region's bus services.

A consultation on the West of England Combined Authority's new Bus Plan runs until May 10, and is being promoted as "a chance for everyone in the West to help shape improvements across the region".

Metro Mayor Helen Godwin, who launched the consultation, said: "We want to help more people across our region to get home sooner, get out into nature more, and explore the best the West has to offer, rather than being stuck waiting for a bus or in traffic.

"Residents, businesses, bus users, and people who don't get the bus too, can have their say about what matters most, to help shape improvements for our buses, as we build a transport network that people can trust."

People can have a say online at haveyoursaywest.co.uk/betterbuses, call 0117 428 6210 or write to FREEPOST West of England Combined Authority to have a say.

Downend resident Leonie Wilkinson told the Voice many people want to see bus services to Yate return to the area, to allow them to access the town's shops and leisure facilities. Downend lost the Y2 and Staple Hill and Mangotsfield lost the Y5 to and from Yate in 2022.

The survey is running as South Gloucestershire Council's cabinet member for infrastructure Chris Willmore warns that Donald Trump's war with Iran is 'messing up' the future of bus services in the region.

Cllr Willmore told a cabinet meeting in April that the surge in fuel prices caused by the Middle East war was coming as bus operators were bidding for routes subsidised by the WECA, which means the cost of keeping supported bus services on the road will also be higher. • More than half of the public supports North Somerset joining WECA, a consultation found. Adding the area to the mayoral group of councils was backed by 56.7% of the 1,273 who responded, with 37.6% against.

AI threat to council

FRAUDSTERS using artificial intelligence are a growing threat to South Gloucestershire Council's finances and security, councillors have been told.

The authority is hitting back by using the technology itself to prevent attacks and scams but is "slow to keep pace with risk", a meeting heard.

An annual counter-fraud report said a major initiative led by the government's Cabinet Office to match suspicious activity with data held by South Gloucestershire Council found the authority had recovered a total of £479,183 in the last year.

The vast majority of the money – £437,468 – was from households with more than one adult wrongly claiming council tax single person discount.

The council's head of internal audit and risk Justine Poulton told the audit and accounts committee in March that fraud was still a big risk for the organisation, although while the number of cases had doubled in

the past six years, the average value of each one had halved.

She told the meeting: "AI-enabled fraud is becoming more prevalent, with fake identities."

Ben Burton (Con, Frenchay & Downend) said: "The report looks at AI from a negative perspective in terms of increasing potential activity.

"More concerning is the fact that councils are slow to adopt the technology of AI to counter that threat."

Cllr Burton asked whether the council could team up with others to invest in AI collectively to combat the danger.

Finance director Joss Convey said AI was used to look at overall information but that this was then followed up by officers on a case-by-case basis.

She said council tax and business rates collection remained 'pretty solid' as the team was a keen adopter of AI and data management.

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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YOUR Community NEWS

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**DOWNEND & BROMLEY
HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

You Are Warmly Invited to the **Annual Assembly** of Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

The Annual Assembly is a public meeting and provides an opportunity for local residents to speak with their Parish Councillors and discuss any matters affecting our community.

THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL ASSEMBLY WILL TAKE PLACE ON:

Thursday 21st May 2026, 7pm
Badminton Road Methodist Church
Badminton Road, Downend, BS16 6NU

Councillor Janet Biggin, Chair of the Parish Council, will give a short presentation, and we will also be presenting our Parish Champions Awards, recognising and celebrating individuals and organisations who make a valuable contribution to life in Downend & Bromley Heath.

Refreshments will be provided, and we look forward to welcoming you.



EXCITING NEWS: TENNIS COURT UPGRADE!

Bromley Heath Playing Fields is receiving a fantastic upgrade to the Tennis Courts beginning Spring 2026.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

- New high security perimeter fencing with double width access gate
- New playing surface
- New line painting to include 2 additional pickle ball courts
- Improved security for the new facilities

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DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCILLORS

Downend Ward

Councillor Phillip Abbott

phillip.abbott@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 0117 957 0075

Councillor Janet Biggin

janet.biggin@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 0117 957 6987

Councillor Jacky Dockerty

jacky.dockerty@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07963 841 270

Councillor Matt Pitts

matt.pitts@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07837 870 039

Councillor Mike Richards

mike.richards@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07846 893 543

Councillor Raj Kumar Sood

raj.sood@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07901 621 632

Councillor Sam Burch

sam.burch@dphparishcouncil.co.uk 07812592256

Councillor Terry Meech

terry.meech@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07900451267

Councillor Georgina Clarke

georgina.clarke@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk

Councillor Sharon Nobbs

sharon.nobbs@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07534603704

Staple Hill Ward

Councillor Dave Somers

dave.somers@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07831 239 195

Councillor Stephen Pick

stephen.pick@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk 07584 425 242

Clerk to the Council

Mr Kevin Spratt - Email: clerk@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk

www.dbhparishcouncil.uk



Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

'Sort out the Square'

PEOPLE living in Staple Hill want to see regeneration projects focus on Fountain Square, a survey has found.

Action to cut the cost of parking and target antisocial behaviour and mess were also highlighted in a recent public consultation.

South Gloucestershire Council is working with Staple Hill and Mangotsfield Parish Council to develop a 'Place Shaping Plan' to guide improvement works for the High Street. It asked residents to have their say on their priorities for the area. A report said 326 people completed the survey.

The report said: "The engagement demonstrates a strong community desire to revitalise Staple Hill High Street by focusing on Fountain Square, greening initiatives, shop front improvements, supported by proactive efforts to attract a more diverse range of businesses and activities. Accessibility, safety, and maintenance are essential to ensure inclusivity and long term success.

"While there is enthusiasm for creative and environmental enhancements, addressing practical concerns - such as cost of parking, cleanliness, and antisocial behaviour - are considered more effective shorter term priorities."

The report's authors pointed out that a "much lower proportion" of under-30s filled in the survey than live in the area, and a higher proportion of women than men took part.

They said more than three quarters of those who filled in the survey visit the High Street at least once a week, mainly for smaller grocery shops, cafés, and the library, with almost 60% walking and 35% driving.

The authors noted: "The introduction of parking charges has deterred some visitors."

They said that while people saw the High Street as being about more than shopping, including socialising and accessing services, "there is concern about the loss of beloved shops and the range of businesses present".

Sarah reaches target

A MUM has hit her target of running 225km to raise £1,500 for a Downend school.

Sarah Davis ran 1km for each one of the 225 pupils at Christ Church Infant School in Christchurch Avenue.

The Royal Navy medic has two children at the school and wanted to raise extra funding for the "incredible" extra-curricular work the school does to support pupils' mental health and well-being.

She started the challenge in March, completing a 10km run on most days before finishing with a run alongside pupils, staff and families at the Page Park parkrun on March 29.

Sarah said: "The final run was great. There were so many of the kids there from school, and some of the teachers joined, too!



Anna Martin, head of CCI, with Sarah Davis

"The head teacher Anna Martin ran with a group of the children around her, which was lovely to see."

The school plans to use the funds raised by Sarah's challenge to pay for one of the teaching assistants to become a 'thrive practitioner', a specialist role supporting children's social and emotional development to improve attendance, behaviour and well-being.

Donations can still be made via Sarah's online fundraising page at tinyurl.com/bda7z9kb.



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DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS PREVIEW

THE CHARLOTTE CARRIVICK BAND + ERIKA OLSON

FRIDAY 15 MAY

WITH a shared passion for modern bluegrass, The Charlotte Carrivick Band brings together four of the most exciting musicians in the UK today. Charlotte Carrivick is a flatpicking guitarist of international renown, sought for her inventive lead playing and regarded as an expert fiddle tune interpreter on the guitar, and her band headlines Downend Folk & Roots' May concert.

Joining Charlotte is long time collaborator and in-demand fiddler, Kieran Towers (Pet Yeti); master of tone and taste, Evan Davies (The Often Herd), on the mandolin; and the firm hand of fellow Midnight Skyracer member, bassist Eleanor Wilkie. Together, their music is at times joyous, poignant, dark, pensive or exuberant with virtuosic instrumentals and close harmony singing.

As a founding member of IBMA

award nominated, Island Records signed bluegrass powerhouse band, Midnight Skyracer, and one half of the more folk infused and award winning duo The Carrivick Sisters, Charlotte's taste covers the breadth of the genre as well as taking influence from old time and jazz. It was during the recording of her debut solo album *Sensible or Otherwise*, showcasing her guitar playing and tune writing, that the band was formed.

If you are lover of new acoustic music, bluegrass, old time and swing you won't want to miss this band!

Opening the evening will be an artist heralded by *Americana Highway* as "a modern-day troubadour" with "impeccable musicianship and vocals." Erika Olson brings a distinctive blend of folk, *Americana*, and pop to the stage, forging a powerful connection with audiences through her intimate live performances.

Since releasing her acclaimed debut album *This Is How I*



Pray (2023), Erika has earned recognition as a finalist in Holler's inaugural songwriting competition, secured a coveted place in the Purbeck Rising Competition, and performed widely across the UK, Europe, and the US. With a voice likened to Everything But The Girl, Emmylou Harris, and Bonnie Raitt, and songwriting reminiscent of Joni Mitchell, Erika weaves deeply personal narratives into universal themes.

Tickets for the concert, which takes place at Christ Church

Downend on Friday 15 May 2026, are available online via downendfolkandroots.com or from Downend Cards and Gifts (cash only). They are priced at £15 each in advance or £17 on the door. Doors open at 7pm and the music starts at around 7.45pm.

There will be a bar, stocking cider, soft drinks, wine, hot drinks and real ale from Bristol's Hop Union Brewery. For further information, please email info@downendfolkandroots.com or find them on social media.

DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS REVIEW

SHERBURN BARTLEY SANDERS + PAUL LLOYD NICHOLAS

FRIDAY 20 MARCH

IT could be said that folk can, sometimes, be a bit of a backward-looking genre. What with all of that adventuring on the high seas, wandering off into woodlands and general knavish behaviour that goes on. This evening at Downend Folk & Roots was backward looking in a different sort of a way. There were times when Sherburn Bartley Sanders, an Irish flecked three piece, felt as though they'd stepped straight out of a 1970s folk club.

Chris Sherburn (concertina) and Denny Bartley (guitar) have been doing their thing for years and it is only, relatively, recently that Emily Sanders' fiddle has been added to the mix. It all works brilliantly too because she is an absolute star.

As if to lay down their Irish credentials the trio start with The Pogues' *A Rainy Night in Soho*. Bravely, they dispense with MacGowan's original tune and squash his wonderful words into their own arrangement. The guitar and concertina thrum gently, a counterpoint to Bartley's strident folk club shout, until Sanders' fiddle swirls in. It's a glorious late St Patrick's Day celebration, a celebration of good, old-fashioned,

no-nonsense folk music.

Bartley's voice carries with it decades of pub sessions; it is as honest as the day is long, as strong as a pint of stout. On *The Longford Weaver* he is drenched in his homeland (he's from Co. Limerick), blurring words together as his guitar powers the song along. Sanders see-saws her fiddle to keep pace with him; it's a breathless, dizzying slice of joy and is, according to Sherburn "way faster than any of us was expecting".

He can be gentle too, though. *Bright Blue Rose* is slower, more beautiful. The guitar and fiddle crooning and swooning around one another, just as Bartley and Sanders drip honeyed harmonies. On *The New Rail Road* an old-timey country buzz surrounds him as he tells of sweat and toil. Stabs of concertina and fiddle slash holes through his world until all three break loose into a delirious instrumental conclusion.

If Bartley's voice is traditional and Irish then Sanders is a perfect English complement. *Adieu Lovely Nancy*, taken from their latest album *Be-guile*, is gorgeous, despite the heartbreak that befalls the heroine. Bartley's guitar and Sherburn's concertina strum subtly behind her, allowing that voice centre stage. It is sweet but as clear and clean as a March morning. *William Taylor* is full of fol-de-rolls, expertly marshalled by Sanders



while Bartley whips the tune along. The concertina adds whistles and cheeps until the uplifting crescendo of *The Autumn Child* sweeps away any vestige of trad-folk politeness.

There's a lovely feeling of family togetherness for much of the evening. A voice from the front of the stage continually joins in on choruses and, it quickly transpires, that that voice belongs to young Barney Sherburn, Chris and Emily's son. He comes into his own for the encore, lending high harmonies and "woo-woos" to Pete Coe's *The Fireman Song*. His enthusiasm is utterly charming - it is the very best of those Sherburn Bartley Sanders old-fashioned values.

The support act for the evening was Welsh singer Paul Lloyd Nicholas, and he had a bit of old school folk club about him too. His songs are very sweet indeed,

taking little snatches of normal life and weaving them into little stories. *Ernest & Adeline* is a lottery-win-fantasy packed with heart tugging loveliness while *Hold the Line* is a love letter from the Verdun frontline. He is jovial company, rolling tales into one another, relishing an audience for the yarns he spins.

The only things that could have made this evening more of a celebration of a time gone by was a cheese and pineapple hedgehog and a keg of Watney's Party Seven but, every now and again, there's not much wrong with embracing a time when things just felt a bit simpler. Sherburn Bartley Sanders, and Paul Lloyd Nicholas, were simplicity itself, and all the better for it.

Words: Gavin McNamara
Photos: Barry Savell

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Praying for a peaceful world

AS I write at the start of April, petrol is £1.50 and diesel is £1.80. I hope by the time you read this, things will have calmed down. However, once a stone is dropped into a pool the ripples continue for some time. At the beginning of the war the Pope asked us to say a prayer each day for peace. For me, feeling overwhelmed by world events is not good, it drags me down. But saying just that one prayer each day has made a difference. There is a sense of connection with everyone else at prayer. I also don't like being angry as I watch the news and have had to limit myself to twice a day and never late at night. So, how do we reconcile the fact that we are in the Easter Season with all that is taking place in our troubled world?

This is the time of better weather, nature at its best, warmer weather ahead. We have had some first class potholes in Boscombe Crescent outside our church. Thankfully they have now been filled in, but in three stages. Stage one, you know where they are and avoid them. Stage

two, they are painted, a promising sign and also easier to see. Stage three, they are filled in.

There is an old adage where you counted one to ten to calm down. Does that always work? Once I had to walk away from a parishioner to avoid saying too much which only made matters worse. Knowing ourselves makes handling difficult situations easier. Listening to those around us may help as they do know us.

Rolling the stone away from the tomb can also happen in stages. With the Disciples it was disbelief, gradual understanding then rejoicing. And with us, that slow process of learning knowing that stage four with the pot holes means they will open up again!



Let's celebrate!

THERE are free community events for all on the early May bank holiday weekend at Christ Church Downend.

So what are we celebrating? The answer is - you!

The church family wants to celebrate the community in which we are placed: the people of all shapes and sizes and walks of life who live nearby.

With that in mind, congregation members are giving their time during the weekend to put on some completely free events - you can see more details in the advert below.

Hopefully, this will be especially welcome as families look for affordable bank holiday activities.

Vicar Dan Watts says: "We are pleased to provide these free events because we want to share God's love and bless our local community. We hope to see you there!"

Christ Church, Downend, is fully accessible, with an accessible loo and baby change station.

Parking is at the car park shared with Christchurch Medical Centre on Christchurch Lane, off North Street. **Anita Dobson**

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AT CHRIST CHURCH
No booking required

Friends of Lincombe Barn Park & Woods



Cormorant in the River Frome.
Picture: Luke Paddon

A HUGE thanks to all who got involved with the all-age Big Spring Clean, and to Tina and Paula, who provided delicious home-made cakes.

A big thanks also to Ellis for leading our spring dawn chorus

walk. The dawn chorus was in full swing when we began at 5.30am, and we were richly rewarded by the distant call of a tawny owl and the sight of a heron sweeping low across the meadow at twilight.

Many thanks to Gary for renewing and relaunching our website, www.lincombebarnparkwoods.co.uk, where you can find news, events and children's activities.

The Friends have organised a stargazing event for 7.30pm May 15, inside a mobile planetarium. Places are limited - please visit the website and let us know if you would like to attend.

Our 'community Sundays' are held the first Sunday of every month from 10-11am (weather permitting). All ages are welcome to join us for a bit of litter picking and/or light woodland management. They are good fun, rewarding and make a real difference.

We continue to seek clarity on responsibility for the maintenance and safety of the beautiful Jubilee Walkway alongside the River Frome from the Jubilee Bridge to the Frenchay Bridge, which has been deteriorating.

Discussions with South Gloucestershire Council, Bristol

City Council and staff of Claire Hazelgrove MP are ongoing.
Diane Paddon

Friends of King George V Park

SPRING is in the air, and the park has looked lovely with the spring flowers and the trees showing signs of green shoots.

Our Easter egg hunt was a great success, with 96 entries: a joint effort between the parish council team and our group.

We had some wonderful donations for the prize hamper from businesses, and would like to thank Norville & Dobson opticians, What A Cake! Andrews, Michael Nicholas and Hunters Estate Agents, Mortgage Advice Bureau, Freshly Ground, Good Frydays and Motaparts.

We hope to be able to share photos of the lucky winners soon.
Fiona Konteh

Friends of Page Park

THE Friends of Page Park are

looking for businesses to sponsor new equipment for the younger children's play area.

The volunteer group is fundraising for new attractions, including an accessible ramp and slide.

The equipment can cost up to £50,000 per piece and the Friends welcome sponsors who would like to make a donation, which would be marked with a plaque or sign.

The group is researching equipment that can be used by all children, including those with disabilities.

Vice-chair Steph Purser said: "We need play equipment that every child can access."

Anyone who is interested in sponsorship opportunities should email friendsofpageparkbs16@gmail.com.

The friends are also looking for new volunteers to join general maintenance sessions every other Tuesday from 1-3pm and Sensory Garden maintenance on Wednesdays from 9-11am. For more details visit the group's Facebook page.

Sunday yoga sessions, weekly at 10am, have resumed in the Sensory Garden.

Your black bin collections are changing



Find your new three-weekly collection day and set reminders in the council app.



southglos.gov.uk/app



Singers at the Voices for Life concert

Choirs join forces

PUPILS from a Downend primary school joined with other children from around South Gloucestershire to perform in a massed choir.

The Year 4 pupils from St Augustine of Canterbury were among 150 children from five schools who took part in The Elements, a concert at St Michael's hall, Stoke Gifford, organised by charity Voices for Life before the end of the spring term, following ten weeks of singing practice and rehearsals.

St Augustine's head teacher Mark Hilliam said: "Voices for Life have been working in our school for three consecutive years, preparing our Year 4 classes to perform publicly. The impact it has had on their well-being and confidence has been tremendous.

"We are so proud of every single child – they sang beautifully, performed with confidence and represented our school brilliantly. It was a truly special experience to be part of such a powerful performance celebrating music, nature and teamwork."

Time running out for £1m winner

A LOTTERY player who won £1 million last year is running out of time to claim the prize.

The winning ticket, bought in South Gloucestershire, matched five main numbers and the bonus ball in the Lotto draw on November 1, when the numbers drawn were 17, 18, 31, 36, 39 and 51, and the bonus ball was 29.

The ticket-holder has until April 30 to find it and claim their prize.

After that the prize money, and the interest it has generated, will be put towards National Lottery-funded projects across the UK.

National Lottery operator Allwyn will not disclose exactly where or when the ticket was bought.

It says this is "to protect the player's anonymity as much as possible".

The company's senior winners advisor, Andy Carter, said: "Double-check any places you may have stashed your pink ticket – any safe spots, an old wallet or even the pocket of a winter coat you haven't worn in a while. This draw was just after Halloween - could it be stashed in your costume?"

"It's our job to track down our missing millionaire and unite the lucky winner with their prize money. Just imagine how this seven-figure win could change your life."

Anyone who has any queries or who believes they have the winning ticket for any of the National Lottery draws within the 180-day deadline can call the National Lottery Line on 0333 234 5050 or email help@national-lottery.co.uk.

People can also check tickets at shops with a lottery terminal, online at national-lottery.co.uk or via the National Lottery app.

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Platinum celebration for JoÚ and Anne

A COUPLE from Staple Hill have celebrated a remarkable 70 years of marriage.

John and Anne Amos have lived in the same house since they married at Dyrham Church on April 2 1956, when John was 23 and Anne was 22, followed by a honeymoon in Torquay.

John grew up in Dyrham, and Anne, nee Senior, grew up in Pucklechurch.

They both attended Chipping Sodbury Grammar School, and love blossomed when they were teenagers, following a dance in Pucklechurch in the early 1950s.

When he left school, John started work as a mechanic at Rumsey's Ford Dealers in Portwall Lane, Bristol, before doing his National Service in the RAF.

After being demobbed, he worked for Bristol Aero Engines, which later became Bristol Siddeley and then Rolls-Royce.

Anne worked in a number of jobs, including for the RAC, before her wedding but had to give up work, as many firms in the



JoÚ and Anne Amos on their wedding day in 1956

1950s barred women from employment after marriage.

Later she became the catering manager at Page School for Girls in Staple Hill.

John and Anne have two children and two grandchildren.

They celebrated their platinum wedding anniversary with lunch at Chipping Sodbury Golf Club with close family, including their brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren.



JoÚ and Anne today

Son Chris said: "Dad is one of eight and they are all still going; mum is one of five, of which four are still with us, so there is obviously something in the water in and around Dyrham and Pucklechurch!"

"They received a message of congratulations from the King and Queen, which goes with the one they received from the late Queen for their 50th anniversary. There can't be many people who've managed that."

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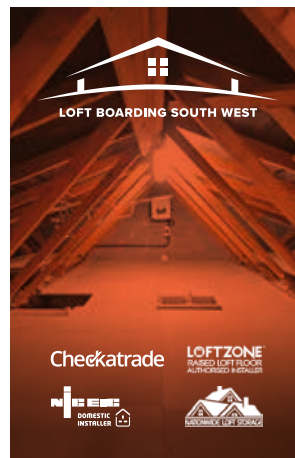
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Reg shares his memories of Imjin

A VETERAN of the Gloucestershire Regiment's famous stand at the Battle of Imjin River has told of his escape under fire.

Reg Portlock was an Army truck driver ferrying ammunition to and from the front line during the Korean War battle, which took place from April 22 to 25, 1951.

The Bristol-based infantry regiment helped save the city of Seoul from invasion by a huge force of Chinese soldiers.

But it came at a heavy cost, with 622 casualties among the Glosters' 1st Battalion, including 59 men killed in action. Some 522 Glosters were taken prisoner, with 34 of them dying in captivity before war ended in 1953.

Last month's *Voice* told the story of the battle to mark its 75th anniversary - and asked readers if they had any relatives who fought there.

Reg's son John and daughter-in-law Ann, of Chipping Sodbury, saw the article and Reg, aged 94, agreed to share his memories.

Born and bred in Berkeley, Reg had worked as a driver at Sharpness docks from leaving school at 14 until he was called up for National Service at the age of 18, in 1950, and was drafted into the regiment's motor transport section.

He said: "Just a few months in, we were told we were going to Korea.

"We were all saying, 'where's that?' Nobody had heard of it.

After arriving in Korea on the troopship *Empire Windrush*, Reg started making daily ammunition

runs to the positions where different companies of soldiers were dug in.

He didn't think about it at the time, but Reg's job was highly dangerous.

Reg said: "The lorry was full of ammunition, grenades and mortar bombs, and right at the back I had 45 gallons of napalm - any little spark and it was goodbye!"

Every day Reg drove for miles along dirt tracks from the stores, known as B Echelon, to the front lines, where his truck would be unloaded at the bottom of the hills.

Part of the United Nations force defending South Korea from the North and its Chinese allies, the Glosters were part of the larger 29th Infantry Brigade, guarding a ford over the Imjin River.

On April 22 the Chinese 63rd People's Volunteer Army attacked and the 750 men of the 1st Battalion fought a defensive battle against more than 10,000 Chinese troops, eventually becoming surrounded on Hill 235, which would later be known as Gloster Hill.

Reg said: "When the Chinese first encircled the Glosters, we didn't know.

"We were coming back and there was this stream we had to go through. There was an American-type ambulance, with the driver laid out of the door - he was dead."

Reg said he and the corporal riding with him saw some people they thought were Koreans but were actually Chinese troops, who opened fire.

ALEXANDER Cormack, the father of *Voice* reader Viv Edwards, was a Company Sergeant Major in the Glosters who fought at Imjin.

Born in the Dings and living in Bedminster after he left the Army, he died in 1995, aged 82.

He wrote an account of the battle which Viv, from Downend, has shared.

Known to his comrades as Mac, he was awaiting discharge after 22 years' service when he was ordered to rejoin his unit and sent to Korea.

He described the battle as "four days of hell on earth", where "the motto was kill or be killed".

Defending a large hill from

mortars, waves of Chinese infantry and even a mistaken air raid by the Americans, the key moment came when US forces withdrew from a hill to the Glosters' left, leaving their flank exposed.

Mr Cormack wrote: "Every round of ammunition was fired until we were overrun.

"The lads fought them hand to hand and never gave up, until the order came from Battalion HQ that it was every man for himself.

"By then the Chinese were through us, leaving us not a chance or a round between the



Reg Portlock wears his Glosters beret and medals

He said: "The corporal stood up on the passenger side and was shooting back, and I gave it some welly, so we rushed out."

Reg believes he was the last ammunition truck driver to make it out from the battlefield.

After the battle he waited with the rest of 1st Battalion in the rear, as survivors made it out on foot.

Reg recognised himself standing next to his truck in a photo showing a roll-call of survivors, published by the *Voice* last month.

Soon afterwards he was sent back to the UK, where he finished his National Service and moved back to Berkeley, driving lorries for Western Transport.

He married Joyce, who died earlier this year, in 1952. They



Reg in his truck in Korea

had two sons, five grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Reg still has his Glosters beret, the Queen's Korea Medal, United Nations Service Medal Korea, National Service Medal and the blue ribbon of the US Presidential Unit Citation, the highest American award for heroism and collective gallantry, awarded to the 1st Battalion after the battle.

'Four days of hell on earth'

lot of us.

"There were casualties piled up in Battalion HQ and many more lying around."

Expecting to be taken prisoner, around 80 survivors found they had a chance to escape and started walking back towards UN lines.

After around two miles they were spotted by the Chinese and came under fire.

Mr Cormack wrote: "They all went to ground for a long time, without moving, and many were either killed or wounded. But whoever had opened up on the men must have thought they had



Alexander Cormack

killed the lot.

"After a very long time they found they were able to move on again and, helping their wounded, eventually got back to Yankee lines."

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

May 2

■ **AFTERNOON CREAM TEA** at Christ Church Downend, 2-4pm. Free event for the community - bring friends and family. No need to book.

May 2-3

■ **MANGOTSFIELD** Community Association 'Red Lion to Lisbon' spin cycle fundraiser at the Red Lion pub, starting at 10.30am each day. Raising money for St Peter's Hospice and Pancreatic Cancer UK. All welcome to clock up virtual miles on the spin bikes - just register at the Red Lion or show up on the day.

May 4

■ **FAMILY FUN AFTERNOON WITH BBQ**, Christ Church Downend, 2-4pm. Free bank holiday event for families in the community. Bouncy Castle, games, face painting, crafts and refreshments.

May 6

■ **MOTHERS UNION MEETING** at Christ Church Downend, 2.15pm. Talk on metal detecting with Roger Hemming, worship, refreshments, fundraising for local causes.

May 8

■ **CONCERT WITH UKULELE PLAYER BRIAN MILLER** in the David Baker Room, Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Oldbury Court, Fishponds (served by 16, 47 and 47x buses). Concert 1-2pm. Refreshments on sale 12.30-1pm. Free entry - retiring collection.

May 10

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

May 11

■ **DOWNEND SENIOR FILM CLUB** 2pm - please note this is a week earlier due to the Bank Holiday Wonder (PG) Based on the beloved best-selling novel. Carers welcome, easy access Refreshments £4 Christ Church Hall, 57 North Street, Downend BS16 5SG For more information, please call 0117 435 0063.

May 12

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

May 15

■ **FRIENDS OF LINCOMBE BARN PARK & WOODS** Stargazing event, Lincombe Barn Park, from 7.30pm, with mobile planetarium. Advance booking via parkandwoods@gmail.com. More details at www.lincombebarnparkwoods.co.uk.

May 16

■ **STANBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL SUMMER SPECTACULAR**, noon to 4pm. Family-friendly fun for all with entertainment from Party Peeps, DJ, BBQ, stalls, and activities including inflatables, animal encounters, games and more. Tickets £2 (pre-schoolers free).

May 16

■ **FRIENDS OF PAGE PARK** plant sale at the artisan market, Page Park, 11am-3pm. Donations of plants and all things gardening-related welcome before event - email friendsofpageparkbs16@gmail.com for details. Profits from sale support Friends' plant fund to improve flowerbeds and sensory garden.

May 17

■ **CAR BOOT SALE** at Mangotsfield School, Rodway Hill, 10am-1pm to raise money for new school minibus. Sellers arrive from 9am - £5 per car, £10 per van; £1 entry per adult. More details at Friends of Mangotsfield School Facebook page.

May 17

■ **MESSY CHURCH** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 4pm. Craft-based afternoon for all the family, including a shared meal. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

May 21

■ **DEMENTIA CAFE** at Warm Space, Christ Church Downend, 11am-1.30pm. Free. Full hot meal. Also hot meal at Warm Space on first Thursday of the month. Live music from Music Train, soup and roll lunch on 2nd & 4th Thursday.

May 21

■ **THURSDAY CHURCH** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 11.15am-noon. Relaxed, traditional Christian worship service. Refreshments from 10am.

May 23

■ **COFFEE MORNING AND TABLETOP SALE** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 10am-noon. Coffee, cakes and bacon rolls. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

May 23-25

■ **FLOWER FESTIVAL** at Staple Hill Methodist Church, High Street, Staple Hill. Theme: Books in Bloom, with displays inspired by classic novels, plays and Bible stories. Open 10am-4pm on 23rd and 25th, 2.30-5pm on 24th. Free entry (donations welcome). Refreshments. Floral arrangements from members of the community welcome - call Karen on 07909 330583 to take part.

May 25 & 26

■ **TOOLS FOR SELF RELIANCE, BRISTOL** Massive Tools Sale Find yourself a bargain, pre-loved refurbished Hand and Electrical Tools for carpentry, plumbing, engineering, sewing, gardening and more.... Sunday May 25th and Monday May 26th 2026 11am to 4pm At Kingswood Heritage Museum, Tower Road, Warmley, BS30 8XT Donations of tools welcomed www.tfsr.org.

May 26

■ **VINTAGE ADVENTURE** at Church Centre, Quakers Road, Downend, 2-3.30pm. Activities, refreshments, friendship and a Christian message for the season, for seniors. All welcome. Theme: Holidays remembered.

May 31

■ **PAGE PARK PRAISE** with Major Colin and Staple Hill Salvation

Army Band, from 3pm. Music and worship. Bring a chair if you can.

May 30

■ **THE DOWNEND AND KINGSWOOD BRANCH OF THE RNLI** are holding a coffee morning on Saturday 30th May 10am-midday at Staple Hill Methodist Church. Cakes and bric a brac on sale. Everyone welcome.

June 13

■ **FREE HOME ENERGY FAIR** 2-4:30pm Emersons Green Village Hall Meet trusted retrofit installers and talk to neighbours who have their cut energy bills - plus talks & cake! Part of Earthfest 2026, visit ELCOE's website for more info & to book: www.elcoe.co.uk

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, Overdale 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.

Whats On at Downend Library

Free IT Help sessions at Downend Library

Need help getting to grips with your computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone then our new Digital Champion Stephen is here to help!

He can assist with basic computer skills, using the internet, social media, word processing, online transactions, setting up accounts, and more!

See a member of staff to book a free one-hour session, or for more information.

Tutor available every Wednesday for a 1pm or 2pm session.

Monday Crafternoons at Downend Library

Every Monday 3:30-4:30pm (Term Time Only)

Join our free, drop-in after school craft sessions! We have lots to cut, stick and decorate so you can make your own work of art.

This activity is suitable for primary school age children. All children must be accompanied by an adult. Some materials may not be suitable for pre-school children.

Coffee Morning at Downend Library

Every Friday 10:30 - 11:30am

Come along to this friendly group for a cuppa and a chat!

Please contact the library for dates
Downend.library@southglos.gov.uk

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

■ **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 CLASSES**, Frenchay Village Hall, Monday mornings, 10.30-11.30am Fun class with lots of laughs. £9 a session. Call Suzanne 07787 396718

Tuesday

■ **DOWNEND GARDENING IN RETIREMENT CLUB** meets at the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, on the third Tuesday of every month at 9.45am. Speaker at 10.30am. Non Members welcome, £3 including tea/coffee.

■ **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, Overdale Road. New members always welcome. For information see website at www.lincombebarncameraclub.co.uk or email lincombe.barn@gmail.com.

■ **BEGINNERS AND REHAB PILATES** (GP referral qualified, Tuesday 18:15 £8 per session. Pendennis Church, Staple Hill. Message Samantha on 07736309272 for more information.

■ **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.

■ **DOWNEND BAPTIST CHURCH:** Coffee time 10.30-12.30 the first Tuesday of the month.

■ **FRIENDSHIP & EXERCISE GROUP**, Salvation Army, Broad Street, Staple Hill, every Tuesday

10-11.30am.

■ **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, Cossham 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** We are a friendly group who meet in Downend Baptist Church Salisbury Road Downend on the 3rd Wednesday afternoon of the month from 2 30pm - 4.00pm. Everyone is welcome. If you require any more details Contact Ruth on 07733413823

■ **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 Lincornish@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 noon.

■ **QUIZ NIGHT** at St James Church, Mangotsfield, 8pm.

■ **BEECHWOOD READING GROUP** Meets at the Beechwood

Continued on next page

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

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.

■ **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.

■ **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.

■ **TUTTIFLUTTI**, 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.

■ **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. For more information contact Julia Mackay on 07563 628513

■ **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 Way. Contact Simon on 07765 201435, e-mail church.egbc@outlook.com or visit www.emersongreenchurch.org

■ **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.

■ **RESTORATIVE SEASONAL YOGA** 1st Sunday each month 18:00-19:30 Frenchay Village Hall (Jubilee Room) Only 8 spaces - booking necessary: www.SarahBtheOT.com

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WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

■ **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.

■ **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

■ **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

■ **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

■ **FRENCHAY QUAKER MEETING**, at the meeting house, Beckspool Road (opposite Frenchay Village Hall), every Sunday 10.30-11.30am. All welcome to come and experience stillness, reflection and connection, with refreshments afterwards. Regular children's meetings. More details from frenchay.clerks@bristolquakers.org. uk or 0117 956 7337.

■ **ALL AGE WORSHIP** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 10am. With band, choir and children's band and singing group. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.



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

ASHLEIGH TEL 07948 602404

Group every Tuesday 5.30 & 7pm
St Augustine's Church, Boscombe Crescent, BS16 6QR



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Murder, mystery - and laughs

A DRAMA group is promising a night of laughter and suspense as it presents a murder mystery comedy.

St Stephens Drama Group will perform Deadline, by Don Zolidis, at St Stephens Church Hall, Soundwell, from June 25-27.

The play tells the story of a group of fiercely competitive writers thrust together to compete in a challenge to win a book deal in a spooky mansion with dangers all around.

Long-time group member Andrea Reid is producing and directing for the first time.

She said: "After 15 years of being on the stage, I wanted to challenge myself and try a new perspective. It's a big learning curve for sure, but I'm enjoying the challenge."

Tickets cost £7 and are available via the group's website and TicketSource, with more details on Facebook and Instagram.

The venue has a bar and there is a raffle taking place during the interval of each show.



The cast in rehearsal

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Animating our history

HOW did Downend and Emersons Green evolve over the centuries from a wild deer forest, owned by the king, to today's multicultural suburb of Bristol?

A fun and entertaining animation produced by Downend Community and History Arts Project (CHAP) tells the story – in just two minutes!

This short animation depicts changes in livelihoods, starting with living off the land and including farming and mining.

It shows key places and people like Christ Church, the Horseshoe Inn, WG Grace, Cleve Hill House, and the Scout Memorial, and reflects changing styles and appearances.

It was devised and written by CHAP, funded by Historic England, and made by local University of

the West of England Animation graduate Callum O'Sullivan.

Historic England local heritage education manager Michael Gorely said: "I am thrilled to see the final animation, telling the varied and fascinating story of Downend."

"I look forward to using the animation in schools as a stimulus for local children to raise questions about their local area and the stories that are to be found there."

You can view the film on CHAP's website www.downendchap.org, on YouTube and social media.

Downend CHAP is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation, established in 2018, that aims to produce a community history resource and encourage the local community to take part in activities that bring history to life.

It is a group of volunteers, without any premises or overheads.

As well as our website, you can also contact CHAP at big.gin@yahoo.com or by writing to CHAP, 49 Overhill Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 5DS.

Helen Rana



Images from the new Downend CHAP video, showing a miner and the Cleve Hill House during its use as a wartime hospital.

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Who owns this haven for nature?

SINCE our last article we've held our first couple of 'Hour A Month' sessions, where we get together to help improve the village, and we like to think they went very well.

The first was at the end of February, when we walked around the village inspecting our planters.

It's fair to say that the plants look OK, but the planters all need a bit of TLC, a good clean and repaint, so we'll be doing that in May.

After our walk round we popped into Mangotsfield's new café, the Brigstow Bike Café, and very nice it is, too - lovely coffee, lovely cake, lovely people.

Many in the area have been asking for a café for a number of years, so now we have one, let's get behind it and use it, so it becomes an enduring part of the village.

On March 28 we joined forces with the parish council to litter pick around Burley Grove and Hillside. It was great to see some new faces join us: long may that continue.

We filled over 10 bags in less than an hour - that's a lot of litter!

We met with South Glos Council earlier in April and agreed to start work to take down our Christmas Lights, so they can be inspected and repaired, so we know what state they are in and whether they need repairing or replacing.

Did you know that there is a wildlife haven developing in the area, the opposite side of the road to Rodway Common?

We would like to work with parish and South Glos councils to turn it into a formal "nature reserve" but are struggling with one big issue, which we hope people can help us with: no-one seems to know who owns the land. Without the permission of the landowner, nothing can be done.

Numerous people have searched filing cabinets, old records and websites, to no avail.



The nature area. Picture: Simon Budd

So if you know anything, please let us know! This may reach you after the event, but our AGM is on April 23 at St James Church, from 7.30pm.

It would be great to see you there, hopefully to get involved and help us with our main aim, to make Mangotsfield a slightly better place to live! We've achieved a fair bit over the years - with more people we can do even more.

If you can't make it, our next HAM, sorting the planters, is on May 2 at 10.30am and the Red Lion coffee morning is on May 6 at 10am - all welcome.

If you want to get in touch, email us at MangotsfieldRA@gmail.com, visit the ever popular Mangotsfield Matters Facebook or phone our chair, Clive Heath, on 07507 168700 or me on 07918 701881.

Chris Amos

On the move

THE time has come, the Walrus said, to make a move again!

Just over 11 years ago I moved out to Emersons Green to be nearer to my daughter, Kirsty.

She was returning to work after maternity leave from having her first-born, Logan; I was going to look after him three times a week, and her in-laws were there twice a week.

A couple of years later Finn came along.

Now they are lovely boys, Logan is at secondary school and Kirsty is OK with me moving.

I now turn to Lance, who has not been very well of late.

He lives in the area of Chipping Sodbury. To get there is an expedition on the 525, as it goes all round the houses, literally, and takes at least three quarters of an hour.

When I get to Yate I am generally lucky and get a connection, the Y6. Lance will bring me home or Tony, my ex-husband, will pick me up on his way from Wotton-under-Edge to Bristol.

I have thought for several years now I would like to move to pastures new, and explore a different area.

Now I have made up my mind to be closer to Lance and move house once again to Yate. From the bus terminus it takes 10 minutes to get to where he lives.

So, my house is on the market once again.

As I write I still am waiting for an offer - perhaps I will have some exciting news to tell you next month!

I will tell you all about my new abode, and will still come to Staple Hill for my piano lessons, with my wonderful teacher Jane.

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New town bid shows our potential



I HOPE you've all had a lovely Easter.

I'm pleased that our community has been recognised by our government as being among those with the most potential in the country, with the area stretching from Brabazon to the Bristol and Bath Science Park one of seven locations shortlisted for official 'New Town' status.

Why does this matter? In addition to the homes we need, including social and affordable homes, this would boost the local infrastructure and green spaces we need.

I was glad to attend the unveiling of the name of the new 'Bristol Brabazon' train station, due to open this autumn, and to see the m4 metrobus start to go through the area, making journeys easier for local people.

Since being elected 20 months ago, I've worked hard to secure national investment for our area. I'm delighted that the government has awarded Bailey's Court Primary School



Claire at Bristol Brabazon rail station naming

funding for a Best Start school-based nursery, and was pleased to visit the future 'Bailey Bird Nursery' on site.

I've also successfully campaigned for Patchway to have one of the first Best Start Family Hubs in the country, rebuilding Sure Start-style services at Patchway Children's Centre, after earlier cuts unfairly left our area with less support than most.

In other good news, Hambrook Junction is reopening after seven years, as air quality has met legally safe limits.

I've worked closely with Cllr Sean Rhodes of South Gloucestershire Council to help ensure clarity from ministers on next steps if the air quality data came back as we hoped. This joined-up work has helped the council reopen the junction as soon as possible.

Raising residents' concerns and my own about the proposed development on Hicks Common, in Winterbourne, I met the potential developers about this speculative development. I believe it's important for the council's 'Local Plan' for housing, which is in final stages, to be followed - and it does not include this site.

Last month, my small team and I have supported residents with 856 new cases, including helping a local business facing antisocial behaviour and assisting with

accessing pensions.

I held my regular advice surgery in Stoke Gifford, and a specific 'Coffee with Claire' in Filton I discuss the government's plans to improve SEND support.

This follows the previous event I ran with local parents of children with SEND needs, after which I shared feedback with the Education Secretary to inform proposals. I will again share local input directly with her.

It was a pleasure to visit Holy Trinity Primary School, and open SAH Diagnostics' community-based cancer clinic in Bradley Stoke.

I also met with the dedicated Mamas Bristol team, and joined a Ukrainian community event in Stoke Gifford.

I was also pleased to speak at an Eid celebration in Emersons Green and donate Easter eggs to the Mayor of Patchway's appeal for local children.

There is still lots more to do!

Please get in touch any time at claire.hazelgrove.mp@parliament.uk.



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■ The Clifton Bridge Moonlit by Ed Shorney



■ A Cratered Face by Sid Stace



■ Troopers Hill by Adam Wakefield

A thought on Artemis II

THE moon has been an ever-present mystery throughout human history and, as such, has found itself a frequent focus of the arts.

Poets and novelists have written about it, painters have included it in their moodiest and dreamiest of images, composers have dedicated music to it.

As we saw in April, with Artemis II, scientists and engineers have responded to it, sending human beings there once again.

What about photographers? Every time there is a special kind of large full moon, the following day's newspapers will carry images of it rising above famous structures such as the pyramids or the

Parthenon.

Those images aren't so easy in Britain where clear night skies aren't as common, but can still be achieved with a little patience.

For my own photograph, 'A Cratered Face', I took advantage of a full, large moon and a very cloudless sky, setting up a camera with a long lens on a tripod. Because of the distance, the focus was set to infinity and a long time lapse. I was excited to find my image clear enough to see the outline of mountains around the north-eastern edge, something I certainly couldn't manage with the naked eye.

My other two choices are images of the moon showing off a couple of Bristol's landmarks.

Ed Shorney's photograph, 'The Clifton Bridge, Moonlit', has taken a very familiar landmark and photographed it from a dramatic angle, spotlight by the moon above. Again, this needed a full moon in

the right place, a clear night and, possibly, some careful editing.

Adam Wakefield has gone to a less well-known Bristol landmark with the old industrial chimney atop Troopers Hill. The moon, floating in apparent close companionship, is unimpeded by any other buildings and has a coy wisp of cloud to protect its modesty.

Whatever you enjoy photographing, we'd love to see you at Lincombe Barn Camera Club. We're a friendly group who chat about all things photographic and get together every other Tuesday from September to June, with regular outings during the summer.

We also host regular competitions, practical evenings, guest speakers, and in-house critiques. It's a great way to learn from others and improve your

skills.

Your first visit is free.

Lincombe Barn is conveniently located on Overdale Road, Downend, with plenty of parking on-site.

Details and the full programme are on our website at www.lincombearncameraclub.co.uk.

You can also contact us at lincombe.barn@gmail.com.

The astronauts may be safely home but the moon is still up there awaiting its next visitors.

Pay it a compliment, and get snapping!
Sid Stace

BRISTOL u3a

HOW old do you have to be to qualify as an 'older person'?

There's no official definition and while Bristol u3a (you in your Third Age) has no lower age limit, most members are in their late 50s upwards.

Some members are still working and others retired: everyone has found a bit of free time to join in.

Once a member, most tend to stick around - I joined u3a when I was 57, and I'm still here 12 years later!

There are almost 200 u3a activity groups meeting across urban Bristol and South

Gloucestershire, with about 35 groups meeting here in the East, from languages to Scrabble, cinema to cycling and Tai Chi to current affairs.

Bristol u3a is proud to be an organisation that is run 100% by volunteers. With no staff, we're wholly dependent on members keeping everything running as well as participating in groups. There are lots of scientific papers about the benefits of volunteering and particularly about its positive impact on your sense of well-being. With u3a, you don't have to be a long-term member to "do your bit".

You're welcome to come along to any of

our café socials to meet existing members and find out more: you don't have to be a member to attend.

All café socials are scheduled at 2-4pm, and in May you'll find us at Orchard Coffee & Bakery in St George on the 8th, the Market Café and Lounge in Kingswood on the 12th, the Crafty Egg in Fishponds on the 20th, Mokka Downend on the 25th and Hillfields Park Community Centre on the 28th.

Can't make it to a social? Email learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk and I'll do my best to answer your questions.

Lindsay Gough



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A huge thank-you to William Lee

AFTER more than a decade of dedicated service, William Lee has stepped down as the chair of trustees at Staple Hill Community Hub.

We want to take a moment to say a very heartfelt thank-you.

William has been a constant presence at the Hub, quietly and consistently making things work. Whether it was guiding the board through tricky decisions, supporting the staff team or simply being a steady hand during uncertain times, he led with warmth and good humour.

The Hub is a stronger, more rooted organisation because of him.

The good news? William isn't going anywhere. He's staying on as a volunteer — and we're glad to say the Hub hasn't lost him entirely.



William Lee

Now we need you

With William stepping back from the chair role, we're looking for someone to step forward. Could that be you?

The Staple Hill Community Hub is a small but mighty local charity.

We run a community lunch club, Singing for the Brain, children's clubs, emergency food parcels, and much more, all from our home at Berkeley House in Nelson Road.

William said: "Being the chair of trustees for the Hub has been great.

"It has been very rewarding to have been able to play a key leadership role and to see the positive impact the Hub has had for so many people in so many ways.

"The staff and other volunteers are also a lovely community to be a part of."

We're looking for a new chair of trustees who can chair our meetings, support the staff team, and help shape the Hub's strategic direction.

An understanding of charity governance would be helpful, as would a genuine connection to Staple Hill and the surrounding area.

The time commitment is around one to two days per month, including some evenings.

We're also keen to hear from anyone interested in joining the board as a trustee.

It's a rewarding role, and the Hub team are a lovely bunch to work with.

To find out more or to apply, send a brief CV and covering letter to hello@staplehillcommunityhub.org.uk or call 01454 868374.

Thank you again, William.

The Hub — and this community — is lucky to have had you.

Katie Cooper

Louise Boustead
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Staple Hill



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Moving with the times

In a new feature, photographer Chris Bigg shares some of his collection of pictures of Downend, taken decades apart



Wottons, 1985

I AM a keen amateur photographer and a member of Downend Camera Club.

I have lived in the area for 40 years, and during this time I have taken nearly 2,000 photos of local buildings and places of interest.

Record photography is regarded as a mundane pursuit, but it can become much more interesting when comparing images of the same site taken at different intervals.

The pictures featured here are in the same location but are 40 years apart in time.

The first was taken in 1985 in Dial Lane, showing the premises of Wottons, a well known and respected removal and storage company with their bright red lorries.

The Bedford lorries and six figure phone number, from the days of the 0272 Bristol dialling code, will bring back memories for many.

Now the Wottons site is part of a small new development of nine houses in Dial Lane called Baily Court, as seen in the second picture, taken last year. Enjoy your trip down memory lane!



Baily Court, 2025



Pizzas, frog spawn and strawberries in the Bee Garden

FINALLY, we are having some decent weather! Our panolas are really appreciating the heat.

At the end of March, the group held a successful fundraising event, selling handmade wooden Easter bunnies. You may have spotted some in one of the High Street cafes.

The funds we raised will go directly towards purchasing bedding plants for this summer's display, ensuring the area will once again be filled with vibrant colour in the coming months.

The following week the Bee Garden welcomed a special visitor, Councillor Liz Brennan.

We were so lucky as we were blessed with a beautiful, warm day. Liz was eager to get involved in our work, rolling up her sleeves and joining our volunteers in clearing one of the raised beds ready for planting strawberry plants.

She was impressed by the transformation of the garden into a thriving and beautiful community space, and she is already looking forward to returning to sample the strawberries.

Her visit coincided with the final session of a six-week Thrive programme, involving pupils from Downend School.

Over the course of the project, we have had six students who have engaged in a wide range of hands-on activities, including building and



In Bloom volunteers with councillor Liz Brennan at the Bee Garden

varnishing bird boxes, crafting Easter wooden wreaths and decorating them with Easter eggs and flowers (the glue gunning was often difficult, with lots of sticky fingers!), making wild flower seed bombs and planting chili peppers.

On their last day they made pizza from scratch - outdoors, which was a bonus - and cooked them in the wood-fired oven.

The pupils were very engaged in weighing out, mixing and kneading their dough and, as the weather was so warm, the dough rose really well in the short time we had.

The results were excellent - thanks to Dave for cooking the pizzas to perfection.

In addition to their creative projects, the students have also had the opportunity to witness nature close up.

One of the biggest draws was the pond that the first group of Downend pupils helped us build.

The students loved watching the activity in the pond and luckily we now have, for the first time, frog spawn there.

They found the development from frog spawn into tadpoles fascinating.

Now that spring has come, the garden itself is bursting with new life and colour, reflecting both the changing season and the dedication of everyone involved in the upkeep and development of the area.

Well done and thank you to all the volunteers who continue to contribute to the ongoing upkeep of this area.

For more details on In Bloom, visit our Facebook page or email dbhinbloom@gmail.com. **Sandra Drakett**

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Tudor Royal Experience

BROMLEY HEATH WI

A ROYAL visit brought history to life for our members, when they were treated to a fascinating talk from Lady Samantha and her lady-in-waiting from Tudor Royal Experience.

Dressed in stunning and authentic Tudor costumes, the ladies immediately captured everyone's attention, helping to transport us back in time.

Their presentation offered a unique glimpse into the daily lives, customs, and intrigues of the Tudor period, delivered with knowledge, humour and engaging storytelling.

Members found the talk both entertaining and educational, gaining insight into everything from royal etiquette to the challenges faced by women of the court.

The interactive nature of the session made it especially memorable, with many commenting on how immersive and enjoyable the experience was. Lady Samantha and her companion's passion for history made a lasting impression.

The event was a wonderful addition to the BHWI programme and will be remembered for bringing history to life in such an engaging and visually striking way.

If you would like to join the Bromley Heath WI, we meet at Bromley Heath Junior School on the second Thursday of every month.

For more information, please contact us at bromleyheathwi@gmail.com.

Helen Kendall

DOWNEND WI

I HOPE you all had a wonderful

Easter, enjoying time with family and friends.

In March, we were delighted to welcome Jenny Benson from SARSAS, who gave a truly insightful and thought-provoking talk about the charity's vital support for anyone affected by sexual violence, regardless of gender.

Their work includes campaigning, counselling, and self-care online courses and they can be reached on Freephone 0808 801 0456.

At our next meeting on April 28, we'll be swapping serious discussion for something a little more lively as we don our cowboys hats for a fun-filled evening of line dancing. Our teacher, Ashley Syms-Rees, will guide us through some

steps—no experience needed!

We have an exciting year ahead, packed with inspiring speakers, creative activities, and plenty of opportunities to connect and socialise.

On May 26 we have a visit from the Blood Bikes charity.

If you'd like to come along and see what we're all about, you'd be very welcome. We meet at Christ Church Hall, North Street, Downend, on the last Tuesday of each month at 7.30pm. Guests are always welcome, for a small fee of £3.

As a member, you're free to take part in as much or as little as you like.

To find out more about joining, please get in touch at downendwi@yahoo.co.uk.

We look forward to welcoming you!

**Linda Russ
President**

FRENCHAY WI

IN April our speaker on the wonderful topic of Land Girls was Fiona Warin. Such an interesting subject: those ladies were incredible.

In May Country Markets are visiting us, with their home made cakes and preserves amongst other things. We will also be discussing and voting on this year's resolutions.

We have lots of interesting speakers lined up so do come along and join our friendly group this year.

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 our WI or would like

more information, please email FrenchayWI@gmail.com.

Linda O'Carroll

STAPLE HILL WI

ISN'T the blossom wonderful this year?

As soon as one variety such as magnolia or camellia finishes, another beautiful one comes out to take its place. There is so much colour around.

On a lovely morning, our walking group strolled around the Harbourside. There are always new things to notice there. They followed this with lunch at Za Za Bazaar.

Our Easter surprise this year turned out to be decorating eggs. One heroic lady boiled 36 in her kitchen, and these were turned into Easter chicks and rabbits, using feathers and fabrics rather than just painting them. We enjoyed ourselves very much, and had the additional bonus of all going home with a chocolate egg.

In April we reached the milestone of our 30th anniversary, celebrated with an American supper and some belly dancing.

Our regular monthly meeting is the third Tuesday evening of the month at Christchurch Parish Hall, North Street, Downend. There is plenty of parking.

We also have coffee mornings at the Staple Hill Oak on the first Monday and last Wednesday of the month, informal get-togethers with time to get to know each other better and make friendships.

If you would like to learn more, please come and visit us or our

website at staplehillwiweebly.com.
Maureen Wood

Staple Hill Flower Festival

PREPARATIONS are well under way for the return of the annual Flower Festival at Staple Hill Methodist Church.

Since 2017, the church has been opening its doors across the late May Bank Holiday weekend, inviting members of the church and wider community to create floral displays across a varied range of themes such as the 'Queen's Platinum Jubilee', 'Miracles', 'Music in Bloom' and 'Through the Decades'.

The theme of this year's festival is 'Books in Bloom' with a colourful array of floral arrangements depicting some of our favourite books including Black Beauty, Anne of Green Gables, Mary Poppins, Shakespeare, the Bible and more.

The Church welcomes contributions of floral arrangements from members of the local community. If you would like to take part, please contact Karen on 07909 330583 for further information.

The Flower Festival runs on Saturday May 23 from 10-4pm, on Sunday 24th from 2.30-5pm, and Monday 25th from 10-4 pm.

Entry is free, but donations are welcome. Refreshments will be available every day.

Jane Hole

MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES

OUR number 19 bus trip to Bath went well.

We all managed to get the same bus, so had a laugh and a joke on the way there and got off at the stop near Wetherspoons for coffee.

Lunch at The Botanist was booked for 1 o'clock, so there was a half hour or so to peruse the shops and make those purchases.

The Botanist is certainly a beautiful place, and steeped in history. It seems it was also the venue for Fred Sirieix's First Dates programme on Channel 4.

Most of us took advantage of their lunchtime menu, with falafels, dips, salad and choices of fish, vegetarian, lamb or chicken and presented on a wooden platter.

The service and ambience was wonderful, a super afternoon before the 4 o'clock bus home.

We have just had our April meeting in the hall, where Mel Frampton provided a 'sound therapy' session, playing a range of home-made string and percussion instruments to create a variance of tone, which provided calming or relaxing feelings.

We all provided feedback as to how the immersive experience affected us. In my own case I found it helped with daytime stressy times and assisted me in 'switching off'.

Our bespoke tour to explore subterranean passageways under Corn Street and St Nicholas Market is now booked. We are looking forward to looking at the history of Bristol during the Second World War.

For more information email carol@applause.co.uk. **Carol Coombes**



■ Ladybird larva by Ian JoŪstone



■ Swollen-thighed beetle by Ian JoŪstone

My journey into macro photography

IT began with curiosity as my only guide.

I had enjoyed photography for a long time, but it wasn't until I looked closely at a spider through a macro lens that my perspective truly changed. What seemed ordinary to the naked eye transformed into a world of patterns, textures, and hidden details. That moment marked the beginning of a deeper connection with photography and with nature itself.

At first, macro photography felt intimidating. The shallow depth of field, sensitivity to light, and need for precise focus challenged my patience. My early attempts were

full of blurred images and with the wrong light. Yet, those struggles taught me to slow down. I learned that macro photography is not about rushing to capture an image, but it is more about observing, waiting, and respecting the subject. Each photograph requires planning, patience and lots of discipline.

As I practised, I began exploring my surroundings closer to home. Dew drops on leaves, the fine hairs on an insect's wing, inside of flowers and other fascinating subjects.

I didn't need exotic locations: beauty existed in my backyard and local parks. This realization made my photography more accessible and deeply personal. Every outing felt like a small adventure, full of unexpected discoveries.

Macro photography also taught me the importance of light, using flash guns and diffusers, especially during early mornings and late afternoons. Learning how light interacts with tiny subjects helped



■ Aphid by Ian JoŪstone

me create images with depth and mood. I experimented with angles, backgrounds, and settings, gradually developing my own style.

Beyond technical growth, macro photography changed the way I see the world. It encouraged patience, curiosity, and appreciation for the small details often overlooked.

My journey is still evolving, but each photograph reminds me why I

started — to celebrate the hidden beauty that exists all around us, waiting to be noticed.

For more details about Downend Camera Club, visit www.downendcameraclub.org.uk or come along to the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, where meetings are on Tuesdays at 7.45pm. Russell Smith

Ian JoŪstone

BROMLEY HEATH NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH

A new weapon against fraud

AT BROMLEY Heath Neighbourhood Watch we see residents facing ever-rolling scam challenges.

If you become a victim, don't forget fraud reporting has been modernised, with the launch of Report Fraud.

Recently, the City of London Police, the national lead force for fraud, announced the full public launch of Report Fraud, which has now officially replaced Action Fraud.

A new media and advertising campaign went live earlier in the year to help raise awareness of the brand new service for reporting cyber crime and fraud.

An advertising campaign across radio and social channels featured the service's clear new visual identity and message: "Every Report Counts".

You can see the campaign video at youtu.be/CpZRbpNxCOM

Long-time volunteers retire

Lynda and Chris Stone have hung

up their BHNW credentials after many years looking after the Oakdale sector, and being one of the most successful recruiters of contact people we've seen.

Our thanks to them both for all they've done for the patch, and their contribution to Bromley Heath safety as a whole.

Volunteers wanted

We're looking to recruit new volunteers to committee roles. They aren't onerous – honestly!

We are one of the many



contributor organisations to the lovely place that is Bromley Heath.

Rose, our splendid secretary has stood down and I will do the same by this time next year.

For an informal chat, call us on 0117 956 3325 or email contactus@bUw.org.uk.

Bill Crocker
Chair

Something exciting this way comes

LAST month I wrote that we thought we had found our group a new home.

I can now expand on our transition. We recently signed a lease for a unit on what was the old Heritage Fencing site on Cuckoo Lane, near Winterbourne.

The transition will take a couple of months, given that our new home is a shell that needs converting into a bespoke working space.

Having said that, things are moving on at pace!

We are facing two predominant challenges. Firstly, balancing the need to continue contributing to the community, building/creating wooden items that will improve the lives of those living locally, and selling items that will fund our future work. Secondly, preparing the unit for our imminent move.



Men in Sheds members at their new base

The guys have continued to work on various projects (swift boxes, tool holders, planters, bird tables, tea-lights, dinosaur cut-outs, and much more) in the current somewhat cramped shipping containers. In collaboration with Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council, we recently installed a book swap unit on Mangotsfield High Street (see news story elsewhere in the Voice). There is a lot going on!

With regard to our new home, there is also a lot going on. The unit had been unoccupied for a long time and still bore the dusty, nail-

ridden, worn and damp echoes of past labours.

If walls could talk, what stories would they tell...but they can't, and they were dirty, and we had paint!

We have now moved from cleaning mode to optimising the space mode, and under the guidance of Chris (our project manager), we are starting to see a new footprint.

In the light of the increased demand for our skills, it would be easy to slip into "business/production mode" but this would fly in the face of what Men in Sheds is about.

Our key aims are combatting loneliness, improving mental/physical health, skill-sharing, community contribution, bridging generation gaps, and providing a safe space.

Finding that sweet spot between maintaining our financial security and sticking to our aims is uppermost in our minds.

Challenges remain, perhaps the main one being: how do we fund the changes needed to create a safe, inviting, ergonomic working space? More of that in the next issue.

Establishing a new base can involve integrating into a community.

A big shout out goes to Josh, who owns Core Supplies building merchant (opening in May) and the guys at Bristol Sheds and Gates, who have made us feel very welcome.

I may be somewhat naïve, but it feels as though there are the seeds of a community being sown here - watch this space.

Interested in joining us? Contact dave.mensheds@gmail.com or downendmensheds@gmail.com.

Dave Alcock

Memory Lane

“It's hard losing someone. The pain doesn't really ever go away. But the setting here is so lovely and green, calm and peaceful, it helps. We can't bring them back but when we're among those trees they feel less far away.

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Chris, Bristol

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Go your own way



A year of progress

A YEAR on from being elected as your Mayor, I've been reflecting on what we've achieved together and what comes next for the West of England.

From day one, I said I wanted to do things differently. That has meant focusing on the things that matter most to people, while also laying the foundations for the future.

We've made a strong start: you will have noticed the West Country's voice growing louder during the last 12 months, as we continue catching up with other places and securing more investment for the country's fastest-growing regional economy.

We've secured a record-breaking £752 million to improve transport, including better buses, more reliable journeys and exciting mass transit plans for the future.

That's on top of investment which will soon see 250 new electric buses serve routes across the West, helping make more journeys cleaner and more comfortable.

We've continued to invest in rail too, with work on new and improved stations, including Bristol Brabazon and Charfield.

The Bristol & Portishead Line has received the green light, with work well underway, and half-hourly services are being protected.

The launch of our Kids Go Free scheme has helped families right across the West, with more than 910,000 free journeys taken last summer

alone, with the offer returning over the Christmas and Easter holidays.

It's been especially positive to see the difference it's making in communities where it matters most. The latest data shows that, in areas where families have some of the lowest incomes in the country, children's bus travel has doubled.

Alongside this, we've frozen the £1 child bus fare cap until 2029 and extended free bus travel for care leavers, helping young people and families with the cost of getting around.

While transport is at the heart of much that we do regionally, it's only part of the picture.

In September, we launched an ambitious Growth Strategy, with plans to create 70,000 new jobs over the next decade, backed by a new Business Board to help attract investment and support local businesses.

Our creative industries will benefit from £25m of new funding to help support jobs, skills, and opportunities in one of our fastest-growing sectors.

We've also made progress towards North Somerset joining the combined authority, with the majority of responses in a recent consultation showing that people and businesses support the move.

For communities, we've secured £45m to unlock new affordable homes, set out plans for a new regional hub bringing together charities to



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

provide food and essential items to people who need it most, and continued investment in our parks, high streets, walking, cycling and green spaces. We're also supporting nature and tree planting through the Western Forest, helping to make our region greener for the future.

We are also supporting the development of Brabazon and the West Innovation Arc, with the potential for the area around the upcoming Aviva Arena to become one of the UK's most significant new towns.

We've made real progress in our first year. I'm determined to keep building on this momentum, working together to make the West of England the best place to live, work, study, and raise a family.

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Challenge cup win for bowlers

“THERE is a tide in the affairs of men (and women) which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune.” So said Shakespeare, and so it was for Downend Short Mat Bowls Club, who have won the Avon Challenge Cup.

The club had suffered a string of disappointing results after Christmas but come spring, they had turned things around.

A convincing win in the league against Wellsway, the current leaders, proved they had certainly returned to form.

The club therefore approached this year's Avon Challenge Cup with a certain degree of confidence, despite having fallen short in all their previous attempts in the competition.

The Avon Challenge Cup takes place at the Bristol Bowls Centre and is open to all Avon short mat bowls clubs.

Each club is represented by two teams, which both need to be on form if they are to get through what is always a difficult group stage.

Unfortunately, a less-than-convincing performance by one of the Downend teams in



Julie Ford, JoÚ Smallcombe, Dave Ford, Sue Chard, Mike Parsons and Pete Chard

the early rounds put progress in peril.

However, this was more than compensated for by some stunning bowls by the second team: a performance that was enough to get the teams through to the semi-final against Saltford.

The match turned out to be closely fought, and in the early stages it looked as if it could have gone either way, but with both Downend teams now performing at a high level, they

proved too strong for Saltford, and Downend made it through.

The final was played against a strong team from St Andrews, Weston-super-Mare.

It turned out to be a close game, with some excellent bowling from both sides, but by now Downend were on a roll and proved too much for St Andrews, going on to take the match, and the cup.

Mike Parsons

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Momentum builds for Downend Flyers

DOWNEND Flyers FC have hit their stride this month, with all teams back to regular fixtures following a difficult winter period.

Improved weather and lighter evenings have brought a noticeable lift across the club, with players enjoying consistent game time and a renewed sense of rhythm.

A significant milestone has been reached at Under-16 level, where both the Giants and Dragons sides are completing their final season in youth football.

The two teams have developed impressively over the years, and their progress reflects the commitment of players, coaches and parents alike.

For many, this transition is simply the next step. A number of players will continue within the club at Under-18 and women's level, while coaches remain involved to support that progression.

The club also extends its thanks and best wishes to those



Downend Flyers' U16 Giants side

moving on, and hopes they carry positive memories from their time at Downend Flyers.

At the younger end of the club, the Under-7 Robins and Crows have made an encouraging start to their football journeys.

Week by week they are

building confidence, learning the game and, most importantly, enjoying it. Their energy has been matched by growing teamwork and resilience, both on and off the pitch.

Preparations are also underway for the club's annual tournament at the end of June, a well-established event that will once again bring a large number of female players to Johnsons Road.

The day promises a strong mix of competitive football and community atmosphere.

Clubs interested in entering

are encouraged to get in touch soon, with spaces filling quickly.

Email info@downendflyers.com for more information.

With the season entering its final stretch, there is plenty still to play for.

Several teams are involved in closely-contested league campaigns, with the coming weeks set to be decisive.

Downend Flyers FC look ahead to the run-in with focus and optimism as they aim to finish the 2026/27 season on a high.

Steve Poole

Boxers win in Dublin

STUDENTS training with Downend Boxing Club have tasted success at a tournament in Ireland.

Matt Smith (University of the West of England) produced an outstanding performance in a hard-fought contest against Henry Sherlock (Dublin City University) in the two-day tournament at Trinity College, Dublin.

The bout featured sustained, toe-to-toe action throughout the opening round before Smith launched a decisive attack that resulted in a standing count against his Irish opponent.

Boxing effectively at close range, Smith secured a unanimous points victory to claim the tournament championship.

Further success followed for UWE as Rowan Lewis faced Oliver Fitzgerald of Limerick University. Lewis displayed intelligent ring craft, landing clean, well-timed shots against an aggressive opponent to earn a clear points decision. This result secured a second title for Downend and UWE.

Bristol University's Felix Clarke then took to the ring against Oleh Maynovych of the host Dublin club. Clarke delivered a composed and technically sound performance against a strong opponent, earning a deserved tournament title at the event on March 28-29.

Another championship was added for Bristol when Stirling Thomas contested the 60kg final against Dublin boxer Gauray Naudiyal. A highly technical display in the opening round saw Thomas control the bout and frustrate his opponent, who was forced to retire at the end of the round due to a shoulder injury.

Craig Turner

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Cleve make winning start in play-offs

CLEVE have won the first of the knockout games that determine whether the rugby club advances to a higher league.

They welcomed Keynsham to the Hayfields in Mangotsfield on April 16, in front of a large, lively crowd.

Cleve found Keynsham particularly tough opponents in the regular season, and spent the first 20 minutes of the game in defence to stop the visitors taking advantage of their possession.

Will Warman had to pull off a great last-ditch tackle, and the forwards stopped Keynsham going through the middle.

Then, after a scrum, Cleve moved the ball wide and Henry Williams scored in the corner. Matt Jarvis added the conversion, but Keynsham replied straight away with a penalty.

A yellow card took Cleve down to 14 players but this stirred them into action and, after good ball movement, Archie Staples scored under the posts.

Keynsham were really up for the game

and some aggressive tackling led to a try, before it was Cleve's turn to turn the screw, and mounting pressure brought another try to make it 19-10 at half-time.

The second half saw Cleve go through the gears, with Matt Lane at the forefront of some great passing. A catch and drive in the corner produced a score for 26-10 but Keynsham fought back, with an interception try again bringing them close.

The game then swung decisively towards Cleve, with Tom Gollop storming through like a steam train from a lineout, before Staples and Lane each scored again.

A consolation try from Keynsham made the final score 40-24 to Cleve, who went through to face Chippenham in the next round.

Cleve went into the play-offs in fine form, finishing the regular season with a 113-5 away demolition of Cheltenham.

The final home league fixture was a 74-17 win over Gloucester side Longlevens.

Cleve started sharply, Theo Garnett scoring on the wing in the first few minutes after a catch and drive, and Matt Jarvis kicking the conversion.

Tries from Mitch Abraham, Will Warman and Nick Coe quickly brought the score up to 26-0, with Matt Jarvis leading the backs well and kicking superbly.

Further tries from Matt Lane, Garnett again, Leo Holbrook and Henry Williams put Cleve 50-0 up at half-time.

Longlevens benefitted from the break



Archie Staples in action against Longlevens

and came out with more intent, with their large back row forwards starting to crash into Cleve's backline, resulting in a try.

Cleve got back on track, and kept up the pressure despite a yellow card, with further tries for Giles Davis and Lane with his second.

After a second Longlevens try, Ben Robinson skipped through and scored under the posts to make the final score 74-17 to Cleve.

Steve Bateman

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Fore! Keeping you on the fairway this golf season

THERE'S something about this time of year... the days get longer, the sun makes a rare but welcome appearance and suddenly the golf courses are full again. At Cleve Chiropractic, we see it every single year – a spike in golf-related injuries as people dust off the clubs and head back out with enthusiasm (and maybe a slightly rusty swing!).

The good news? Most golf injuries are very treatable – especially if you act early.

Golfer's elbow... what's that?

One of the most common complaints we see is golfer's elbow (medial epicondylitis). This is pain on the inside of the elbow caused by irritation of the tendons that attach to the bone. It's usually linked to repetitive gripping, swinging, or simply doing too much too soon.

Despite the name, it's not just golfers who get it – and funnily enough, they can also suffer from tennis elbow (which affects the outside of the elbow). The two conditions are very alike – they just affect different tendon groups – and are often treated in a similar way.

How we diagnose it

We don't just guess, we test. It's a little like putting together a golf swing by taking out the guesswork.

A proper diagnosis starts with a detailed history and a series of orthopaedic tests to pinpoint what's going on. We'll assess movement, strength and reproduce symptoms in a controlled way to confirm what's wrong and work out how we can fix it.

We can also use diagnostic ultrasound that allows us to see the tendon, identify irritation or

degeneration and guide treatment much more precisely. It's quick, safe and incredibly useful.

How we treat golfer's (and tennis) elbow

The key here is a tailored, hands-on approach. No two golfers are the same, so the treatment shouldn't be either.

We commonly use a combination of:

- Shockwave therapy to stimulate healing in stubborn tendon injuries
- Laser therapy to help reduce pain and inflammation
- Active release techniques (ART) to free up tight muscles and improve movement
- Gentle joint work, including elbow manipulation where appropriate

Importantly, we often look 'upstream' at the neck and shoulders, as these areas can contribute more to the problem than people realise.

In some more advanced or persistent cases, ultrasound imaging can show increased blood vessel growth within the tendon – something we call neovascularisation – which is often linked with ongoing pain. In these situations, targeted injection therapies can be very helpful to calm things down and support recovery when combined with the correct rehabilitation.

Timing is everything

If there's one takeaway, it's this: don't wait.

When tendon problems like epicondylitis are caught early, they tend to settle quickly. Leave them for months (or even years, which we do see), and they become much more stubborn.

Our goal is always to get you better quickly and effectively, using the least invasive options possible.

It's not just elbows...

Golf might look gentle, but it can cause repeated stress throughout the whole body.

We regularly see:

- Wrist pain – often caused by catching the ground or overdoing time spent on practice at the range
- Lower back pain (LBP) – from rotation and loading through the swing
- Thoracic spine pain – that stiff, achy feeling between the shoulders
- Neck pain – especially if posture or mobility is limited

The reassuring part? The vast majority of these respond really well to conservative treatment. And for more stubborn cases, we can guide treatment using imaging to get the best possible outcomes.

From weekend golfers to professionals

We're lucky to work with everyone from elite-level players to enthusiastic weekend golfers just trying to keep their ball on the fairway.

Golf is a technical sport and small physical limitations can have a big impact on performance. That's why we're big on not just fixing injuries, but improving how your body moves.

Jack, one of our team, has completed his Titleist Performance Institute (TPI) training, allowing him to assess your swing from a physical perspective and help you both recover and perform better.

And don't forget... golf is great for you!

It's easy to focus on the injuries, but let's not lose sight of the bigger picture – golf is fantastic for your health. You're walking for miles, spending time outdoors, socialising and challenging both your body and mind.

We absolutely want to encourage people to get out on the course and enjoy it. Our role is to keep you doing it comfortably, confidently and for the long term – it's certainly a sport you can play for life.

Tim, Clinic Director, Cleve Chiropractic

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“ The ultimate professionals, I would highly recommend
Kyle Sinkler ”

“ The sessions I had with Tim really helped prepare me for Saturday's game
Mike Tindall MBE ”

“ Seeing Catherine to work on my back and hip mobility regularly allows me to continue training
Les Ferdinand ”

Mangos' boost for children's hospice

MANGOTSFIELD United have handed over a donation of more than £1,300 to charity Children's Hospice South West.

The Cossham Street club raised a total of £1,368 over the season with the help of sponsors and supporters, through events including a raffle with prizes donated by local businesses.

The charity helps children with life-limiting conditions and their families, including at its Charlton Farm hospice at Wraxall, and relies almost entirely on public donations.

CHSW area fundraiser Liana Sommers thanked the club and long-standing supporter Richard Iles for their continued support.

She said: "Community fundraising like this makes a real difference, helping us to provide vital care and support to children and families who need it most. It's wonderful to see local businesses and the community coming together in such a meaningful way."

To help fundraise for CHSW, email liana.sommers@chsw.org.uk or visit www.chsw.org.uk for more information.



Liana Sommers of CHSW, with Mangotsfield players Lewis Powell and Stuart Tovey, and chairman Steve Brown

Mid-table finish to disappointing season

MANGOTSFIELD United's season has tailed off to a disappointing mid-table finish.

Recent results included a run of five draws in a row, followed by two heavy away defeats that saw the Mangos finish 13th in the Hellenic Premier League.

It was a very disappointing campaign: the club reached the play-offs last year and had aimed to mount another promotion challenge when the season kicked off.

First of the run of draws was a visit from promotion-chasing Corsham Town.

The Mangos led 2-1 at the break, thanks to goals from Archie Morris (9) and Lewis Powell (31). Nick McCootie - often a thorn in the Mangos' side down the years - levelled twice for a good Corsham side, who ended the season one place outside the play-offs.

Three days later there was another 2-2 home draw, this time against Hereford Pegasus.

Again, the Mangos led twice, courtesy of Lewis Powell (22 and 61), and twice the Hereford outfit pegged them back.

The following weekend saw another draw, this time 1-1 away at promotion-chasing Worcester Raiders.

This was a battling performance by the Mangos, with Lewis Powell netting five minutes before the break. Worcester levelled in the second half but the Mangos stood firm to claim a well-earned point, with the hosts going all-out for the winner to boost their play-off challenge (they finished the season in fifth).

Next up was a third 2-2 home draw, this time on Easter Saturday against Royal Wotton Bassett Town. The visitors scored both their goals in the first 20 minutes, with Finlay Harper getting one for the Mangos in between. Charlie Warren finally levelled for the Mangos on 76 minutes, but it was another two home points dropped.

The Mangos final home game of the season on Easter Monday also ended in a disappointing draw, this time 1-1 against relegation-threatened Thornbury Town.

Aran Wong netted for the Mangos just before half-time but they could not build on the lead, and Thornbury equalised with 10 minutes to go.

The run of draws came to an end with a 3-0 defeat at Hereford-based Westfields, a day to forget for the Mangos. The hosts were

2-0 up within 25 minutes and wrapped things up in the 82nd.

The final match was away at Droitwich Spa, who were already assured of third place before kick-off.

Mangotsfield kept the hosts out for nearly half an hour but were 2-0 down by half-time, and Droitwich scored another two in the second half to make the final score 4-0.

One thing that has dogged Mangotsfield down the years has been failing to make home advantage count. That seems even more the case now, with visiting teams sometimes upping their game on the club's artificial pitch, and it is clear that too many points were dropped at home this season.

Manager Ollie Price will no doubt be looking at this issue in particular as he looks to rebuild for another promotion push next season, having already had to re-shape the squad following various departures.

The club is already one of the best-supported clubs in the Hellenic League, and a return to Southern League football is a must.

Dave Smale

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