

downendvoice



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'Heroic' mum died saving loved ones

THE family of a mum killed in an explosion in Frenchay have praised her "heroic" actions and "legacy of love, compassion, and strength".

Joanne Shaw, who was 35, was killed on May 3 after her ex-partner Ryan Kelly forced his way into a house in Sterncourt Road, carrying an explosive

device.

Kelly, aged 41, was also killed when the device detonated.

It has been reported that Joanne got her child out of the house before the explosion. Two other people in the house, who are understood to be family members, also survived the incident, with minor injuries.

Police released a statement from her family, which said: "Joanne's actions were nothing short of heroic.

"She showed extraordinary strength, selflessness, and love in the face of unimaginable fear, placing herself between danger and those she loved.

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Gift of life

A Downend dad who died suddenly aged 42 has helped give three people new life through organ donation.

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Bridge to open

The new Badminton Road bridge over the M4 is due to open to motor traffic at 7am on June 20, ending nearly three years of diversions and delays.

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30 minutes free

All council car parks in South Gloucestershire will offer 390 minutes' free parking from later this month.

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Ban on phones

Downend School and Mangotsfield School are introducing lockable pouches to ensure they are "fully phone free".

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The new bridge seen from the M4. Picture: Euan McCormick

Date set for bridge opening

NATIONAL Highways has confirmed that the new Badminton Road bridge over the M4 will open to traffic in June.

The bridge next to the Wick Wick roundabout junction of the A432 and A4174, which has been under construction for the past six months, is set to open to pedestrians and cyclists first, on the afternoon of June 19.

Motorists will be able to drive over from 7am the next day, ending nearly three years of diversions and delays on the main road between Downend and Yate.

The old bridge, which carried 16,000 vehicles a day, closed in July 2023 when an inspection discovered "accelerated deterioration and cracking" in the concrete and steel structure, built in 1966.

Since then traffic has been diverted onto narrow country lanes in order to reach Yate, Chipping Sodbury, Coalpit Heath and Frampton Cotterell.

The government's road management body launched an accelerated programme to design a new bridge. The old one was demolished in March last year and the new bridge beams were installed in October, during two of three complete weekend closures of the M4 between Hambrook and Tormarton staged as part of the work.

National Highways route manager Sean Walsh said the new bridge was being finished "much faster than usual for a project of this size".

He said: "Since we announced the old bridge needed to be demolished, the team have worked incredibly hard to deliver this project in just two and half years - half of the five years it would normally take.

"I would like to thank everyone in South Gloucestershire for their patience and support during this project."

South Gloucestershire Council is building upgraded pedestrian and cycle paths on either side of the bridge, which has been widened to ensure traffic lanes and paths meet modern safety standards.

Side barriers have also been built higher to increase safety for people walking and cycling on the bridge.

Council leader Maggie Tyrrell and co-leader Ian Boulton said the opening of the new bridge "will come as a huge relief to everyone affected by its closure," adding: "This is a vital route between Yate and Bristol, and its reopening means local communities along it are reconnected, helping people get to work, school, shops and services more easily, and restoring an important link for local businesses.

"We have worked closely with National Highways throughout the process, providing our input into the design and putting measures in place to help minimise the impact of the closure on the surrounding road network."

A final series of overnight closures for the motorway between junctions 18 and 19 will take place over two weeks from June 1-6 and 8-13, from 8pm to 6am, for the final work on the embankments.

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The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

DEADLINE

Our July edition deadline is June 17.

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Mum 'made the ultimate sacrifice for others'

From Page 1

"She will always be remembered not for the violence inflicted upon her, but for her bravery, her protective instinct, and the ultimate sacrifice she made for others."

Police say they are treating the explosion as deliberate and Joanne's death is being investigated as a homicide.

They have been unable to confirm reports that the explosion was caused by a hand grenade, telling the Voice that analysis of the device had not been completed.

A spokesperson said: "We are not looking for anyone else in connection with her death.

"Joanne's family have asked for their privacy to be respected but want the world to know how much she meant to them all."

The family said: "Joanne brought warmth, kindness, and strength into the lives of countless people.

"Her loving presence will be missed more than words can ever express, but her memory will forever remain in our hearts.

"Her child has suffered the unimaginable loss of their mummy in this tragedy. Joanne's love for her child was boundless, and the centre of her world. She was a devoted and loving mother.

"Joanne grew up in Stapleton, where she lived her whole life and became well known in the community for her bubbly, friendly personality.

"She welcomed everyone into her life with open arms and the biggest heart.

"Joanne loved meeting new people, listening to their stories,

sharing advice, and forming genuine connections wherever she went; a number of these resulted in eternal friendships.

"Her infectious laugh could fill a room and light up everyone's world. Life and soul not only of the party, but our lives.

"She leaves behind a legacy of love, compassion, and strength that will never be forgotten.

"We ask for privacy at this deeply difficult time as we mourn our tragic loss. Joanne will always be in our memories, our thoughts, and our hearts.

"We love you forever, sweetheart. Mummy, I miss you and love you so much."

Avon & Somerset police is referring itself to the Independent Office for Police Conduct over the incident, because the force had previously received complaints about domestic incidents from Ms Shaw.

On the day of the explosion, police said they were called at 6.17am, about 15 minutes before the explosion, by a caller who said a man had forced entry to the house in Sterncourt Road in a "domestic-related incident".

A spokesperson said several "double-crewed" police units were sent to the address and were told that Kelly was in possession of an explosive device at about 6.30am.

The first officers arrived at the scene at 6.34am, about two minutes after the explosion.

People were evacuated from neighbouring homes in the estate between Frenchay Park Road and Begbrook Park as it was declared a 'major incident' and bomb disposal experts were



Police guard the house where Joanne Shaw was killed and ex-partner Ryan Kelly died



Emergency services vehicles inside the cordon

called in.

Temporary rest centres were set up, first at the nearby Snuff Mills Harvester and then at the Stapleton & Begbrook Club, in nearby Frenchay Park Road.

A house in Speedwell linked to Kelly was searched but no evacuations were needed.

Forensic investigators also searched a car found parked near Five Acre Drive. It was cordoned off, along with the footpath access to Sterncourt Road from

Begbrook Green Park.

The following day the cordon was reduced, before being fully removed by May 5, although police remained at the house where the incident happened.

An online fundraising page launched to help pay for a funeral for Ms Shaw and for support for her child and family had raised more than £22,000 as the Voice went to print.

It can be found at tinyurl.com/3brxsp58.

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Changes to 2+ and bus lanes

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council is holding consultations on the bus and 2+ lanes on the Avon Ring Road.

The council says some changes are needed to the 2+ lane near the Wick Wick roundabout to better support bus movements and car sharing, and prevent weaving near junctions on the road, following recent upgrades to bus stops.

It is also planning to legally confirm the extent of the bus lane by the Hambrook traffic lights, which was first introduced in 1998 but was removed when a number of turns at the junction were banned in 2019 to reduce air pollution.

The consultations on the statutory notices authorising the changes have been launched as many drivers are calling for the bus lane near the traffic lights to be removed, following its reintroduction when the junction fully reopened to traffic in April.

Explaining the reason for the proposals, the council said: "The purpose of the scheme is to amend the extents of the existing HOV (high occupancy vehicle) lanes to better support bus movements and car-sharing activity along this section of the A4174.

"Adjustments to the start points

and lengths of the lanes are required to accommodate an upgraded bus stop facility, improve lane discipline, and reduce vehicle weaving and conflicts near junctions.

"These amendments are intended to enhance safety, reliability, and the strategic aims of creating a consistent, high-quality bus and high-occupancy vehicle route."

The bus lane order confirms the extent of the lane either side of the Hambrook lights, which is slightly shorter than the previous lane, which was reduced in 2014 and removed in 2019.

The 2+ lane order will remove part of the lane on Bromley Heath Road next to the Bampton Drive junction, extend it to meet the westbound exit of the Wick Wick roundabout heading towards Bromley Heath and remove a short section on the other side of the M32.

Comments on both orders can be made via the consultations section of the council's website, with the bus lane consultation at tinyurl.com/p8jfrfjh and the 2+ lane consultation at tinyurl.com/n78dzz6a.

The consultation is being held as many residents are reporting longer queues for traffic from Downend to get through the lights since the extra movements and bus lane were restored.

Local Plan hearings can be viewed live

PUBLIC hearings on South Gloucestershire's draft Local Plan are being streamed live online.

Hearings to examine whether the plan, which proposes sites for more than 22,000 homes in the district over the next 15 years, meets the requirements of current planning laws and guidance, started on May 19.

They are being held in front of a government inspector at Kingswood Civic Centre, 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 Local Plan is being opposed by campaigners who object to proposals to open Green Belt land near Shortwood, Siston and Warmley for development.

The council says all of the hearings will be broadcast live via its website.

Details of Local Plan hearings can be found at localplanexamination.commonplace.is, and the sessions can be viewed via a link at beta.southglos.gov.uk/new-local-plan.



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Council makes first 30 minutes free in car parks

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council is making parking free for the first half hour in all of its car parks where charges were introduced last year.

The new rule will apply to any space in a car park, and will come into effect from mid-June.

The authority announced the change of policy to "make the scheme easier to use and promote the use of local high streets".

But the move has come too late for one Staple Hill business, which is closing in June and says the charges were a factor in the decision.

All four car parks in Staple Hill where charges are in force - Byron Place opposite Tesco, Haynes Lane and the two in Page Road - will allow short and long stays from June.

Currently Byron Place, Haynes Lane and the Page Road/Kendall Road car park are long stay-only, with a minimum charge of £3; the main Page Road car park is short stay-only.

The cost of parking is going up for stays of between 30 minutes and three hours.

An hour's stay will rise from 70p to 80p, two hours will rise from £1.30 to £1.40, and three hours will go up from £3 to £3.20 - although the £3.20 rate will now apply to stays of up to four hours, with stays over four



hours costing £4.20.

The new rates will also apply in the St James Street car park in Mangotsfield.

Weekly, monthly and annual season ticket prices are being reduced, and blue badge holders will continue to be able to park free for up to four hours, in any space.

After the shake-up all drivers, including those parking for a 30-minute free stay, will have to register their vehicle at a ticket machine or via the council's parking app, and will be able to

extend stays.

The council brought in charges in 22 car parks last May, aiming to raise £800,000 in the first year.

It says it actually collected around £750,000: some car parks, like those in Page Road, raised more than first forecast but others, including Byron Place and Haynes Lane, raised less.

The council says the changes follow a series of face-to-face meetings with chambers of commerce, town and parish councils, individual traders and

residents.

Council cabinet member Sean Rhodes said: "We have been listening to our local traders and high streets and know that they are facing many challenges, common across the country, as people's shopping habits continue to change.

"We have to balance measures we can take to help keep our high streets thriving with the steps we need to take to maintain all council services in very difficult times financially."

Parking charges 'a factor' in shop closure

A STAPLE Hill shop owner says the introduction of parking charges caused a "significant drop" in trade - and is a factor in the closure of the business.

Nikki Watten opened Nom Wholefoods in Broad Street in 2021, having started the business as a delivery service from her Fishponds home in 2019.

The refill shop, which helps people reduce their plastic waste by selling loose food, cleaning and bathroom products, will shut on June 9.

In 2024 it was named one of the country's 100 most impressive small firms by the Small Business Saturday UK campaign.

Nikki said: "When we opened we

identified Staple Hill as an up and coming high street - a lot of people were moving out here, there was a good community of traders and free parking - it was on the up and up."

She said that last April she was facing burn-out and decided to sell the business on, so she could dedicate more time to her school-aged daughter - but a fall in trade meant she has had to close it instead.

Nikki said: "The parking charges came in and we really did see a significant drop in business, and we've never recovered.

"I'm not saying it's the only thing that made me decide to close but it's definitely a factor - all of us on the road have seen our business drop.

"The general economic climate is very difficult anyway, with the cost of living crisis."

Nikki said a number of shops were also closing because the owners were retiring - the latest is Top to Bottom curtains in Fountain Square, which has announced it will close at Christmas.

Nikki, who employed two part-time staff, is holding a closing down sale to clear her stock, and has thanked the "wonderful" customers and community who have helped save thousands of pieces of plastic from going

to waste.

Nom's premises are set to become a convenience store.

Staple Hill Chamber of Trade chair George Georgiou said he was disappointed the council had only made the first 30 minutes' parking free.

He said: "It's better than nothing but it's not what we requested, which was the first hour free.

"We're in direct competition with Emersons Green and Longwell Green, where people don't pay a penny to park - why will they come to Staple Hill now?"

"If people can find a space on the High Street they can park free for an hour but if they are only getting half an hour in the car park, they will visit one shop then go - they won't have time to stop at a cafe."



Nikki Watten outside Nom Wholefoods

Schools lock phones away

THE area's two secondary schools say they will become "fully phone-free" from June.

Downend School and Mangotsfield School are introducing "secure" lockable pouches, which pupils will have to keep their phones in throughout the school day.

The fabric pouches are locked and unlocked magnetically on entering and leaving school, which means pupils can keep their phones with them but can't access them.

Castle School Education Trust (CSET) is introducing the pouches for around 4,500 children in all four of its secondary schools.

Announcing the policy, the trust said: "By becoming fully phone-free, the schools are creating an environment where pupils can focus on their learning without the distraction of their phones."

"It also supports more meaningful social interaction, as pupils spend breaktimes and lunchtimes talking and playing together rather than being on their phones."

The trust says it has "worked closely" with staff, pupils and parents to prepare for the policy.

CSET director of secondary schools Joe Docherty said: "Our priority as a Trust is that our students receive the very best educational experience, enjoy school and engage fully."

"By going phone-free across our four secondary schools, we are creating an environment where our students can thrive in the classroom and focus on building authentic human connections."

"We want our students to grow into themselves without the anxiety of constant comparison, ensuring they leave our classrooms with not just

better grades, but better mental health and strong positive relationships."

The pouches are produced by Yondr, a company which has already supplied more than three million to schools in over 55 countries.

They are also used at some events, such as concerts and comedy shows, to stop interruptions or video recording.

Organisations typically pay £15 to £25 per pouch, with users charged a fee if they damage or lose one.

Yondr founder Graham Dugoni said the pouches "give school staff a break from constant enforcement, while giving children a space to switch off from their phones during the school day, focus on learning and engaging with their peers".

He said: "We know the positive difference this makes, not only in lessons but across the whole school culture."

The trust says international studies found 60% of pupils believe smartphone use has disrupted lessons, and almost half felt anxious when separated from their phones.



One of the lockable pouches

It says schools one school that started using the pouches reported an 80% decrease in cyberbullying, a 40% reduction in detentions for disruptive behaviour, and a 75% drop in truancy.

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson recently said that the government expects every school to have an effective phone-free strategy for the entire school day.

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Dan's final gift of life

DAN Theobald was a much-loved husband and father, a well-respected carpenter and popular member of his community.

When he died suddenly last summer, at the age of 42, his family and many friends were devastated.

But Dan continued to touch people's lives after his own death - giving three strangers a new chance of life by donating his kidneys and liver.

To honour his donation, Dan's family have been presented with an Order of St John UK Award for Organ Donation, which his nine-year-old daughter collected at a ceremony in April.

Dan grew up in the Downend area and went to Oldbury Court Primary School - now Frome Vale Academy - before attending Downend School.

He continued to live and work in the area as his kitchen and carpentry business grew by word of mouth, with most of his customers in the local community.

Dan collapsed suddenly while at home in Downend with wife Gemma, daughter Thalia and five-year-old son Tate last July, after suffering a cardiac arrest

Gemma said: "It should have been an ordinary Wednesday afternoon.

"Dan had just picked my daughter up from school and I was cooking the dinner. We went upstairs, saying 'when I come back down I'll cook the kids pancakes for dessert' but unfortunately not long afterwards, we heard him collapse on the bathroom floor.

"What followed was an

incredibly traumatic experience."

Gemma called 999 and said the emergency services' response was "amazing".

She said the house was soon full of firefighters and paramedics, who restarted Dan's heart after 20 minutes and took him to the Bristol Royal Infirmary, where he stayed in intensive care for six days on life support.

Gemma said: "Unfortunately, we had the heart-breaking news that there was too much damage to his brain and there was nothing else they could do."

After a post-mortem examination couldn't establish why he had died, Dan's heart was sent to London for further tests. They established his death had been caused by Sudden Adult Death Syndrome, a condition where an abnormal heart rhythm causes the heart to stop.

Gemma said hearing the news felt "completely surreal", and Dan's death left everyone who knew him in shock.

Because Dan had been young, fit and healthy, hospital staff asked Gemma about the possibility of donating some of his organs for transplant.

The NHS in England has an 'opt out' system of organ donation, which means all adults are considered to have agreed to be an organ donor when they die, unless they have recorded a decision not to donate.

However, families are always



Thalia and Gemma Theobald with family friends Alice and Ashley Burdock at the awards ceremony

involved in making decisions before donations take place, so medics can establish whether someone had expressed a wish to be a donor or not.

Gemma said: "We hadn't really discussed it in much detail.

"I thought, if I was sitting with Dan chatting with me now, what would he say?

"I just knew he would have said 'absolutely, I don't need them any more' - he would definitely have wanted to help others."

Later Gemma received a "really lovely letter" from NHS Blood and Transplant, telling her that a woman in her 50s had received one of Dan's kidneys, after being on a donor waiting list for at least a year and a woman in her 40s had received his other kidney after being on a waiting list for four years.

He had also saved the life of a man in his 60s, who had received Dan's liver weeks after being put on the transplant waiting list.

In April Gemma, her daughter and close family friends Alice and Ashley Burdock attended a ceremony at Kings Weston House in Bristol, where the Lord-Lieutenant of Bristol, Peaches Golding, presented the Order of St John UK Award for

Organ Donation to Thalia.

Gemma said: "It was a really special afternoon, and we got to speak to the organ donation nurses - it was very emotional, but very uplifting and positive.

"It was a proud moment having Thalia with me, and that she was able to come up and collect the award.

"I want my children to know that their dad was a hero and saved somebody's life - it's a lovely way for them to remember him."

Gemma said that since Dan's death her children's schools and Downend School, where she works, had all given the family "amazing" support, as had relatives, friends, neighbours and the local community as a whole.

She said: "We've been overwhelmed by their kindness, which is a real credit to Dan and all the people he has touched with his kind and caring nature.

"He was really loved and I've felt that love from people - how well thought of he was, how much support we've been getting.

"Dan was a chatty, caring and kind man who was everyone's friend. I can now proudly tell my children that their daddy is also a superhero, who saved someone's life."



Gemma and Dan with Tate and Thalia

Shoplifting crackdown

POLICE arrested three people in a "targeted operation" to tackle shoplifting in Staple Hill and Downend.

Officers from the Staple Hill Neighbourhood Policing Team went to hotspot areas where a large number of thefts had been reported, and said the action followed "ongoing reports of prolific offenders impacting local businesses".

They arrested three people during the operation on May 5, which they said used a range of.

One man was charged with 15 offences and remanded in custody ahead of a court appearance. A second man is also facing court action.

The *Voice* has asked police what happened to the third person arrested, and for more details about the charges.

In a social media post the neighbourhood team said: "Retailers, please continue to report all offences. Intelligence and reports help us build cases and act against repeat offenders."

Have you seen stolen bike?

A DOWNEND motorcyclist is appealing for help after his treasured bike was stolen from in front of his home.

Cliff Yeo had secured the 2021 Royal Enfield Meteor 350 to a ground anchor in the paved garden at his home off Dial Lane. It was also covered and had a disc lock on the front wheel.

The motorbike was taken in the early hours of April 14 by thieves who cut the cable to the anchor and also appear to have prevented his doorbell camera from filming them.

Cliff, who discovered the theft later that morning, believes more than one person would have been needed to steal the bike, as the wheel lock was not left behind and it was probably lifted into a van or trailer.

He said: "Although I have a Ring doorbell camera it recorded no activity between 10pm on the 13th and 6.45am on the 14th.

"The motorcycle was less than a metre away and is normally in clear view on the doorbell camera.



The Royal Enfield bike

"I can only assume that the thieves used some probably electronic device to block the camera from recording their activity."

He said a neighbour had footage on their camera but it was not clear enough to identify the thieves.

Cliff added: "How easily and quickly my bike was taken indicates that the thieves had kept us under observation and planned this, possibly to order.

"This was to be my last

motorcycle, at nearly 78 years of age; it was my hobby and my passion.

"What upsets me most is that I took great care to secure the machine in my property with modern video surveillance, which it appears was easily overcome."

Police have urged anyone with information about the incident or the bike's whereabouts to call 101 or report it online, quoting the crime reference number 5226 101 252.

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'Caring' after-school club is praised

AN inspector has praised a Downend club's "approachable and caring" staff and effective partnerships with its host school and families.

Ofsted visited the Oldbury Court Out of School Club (OCOSC) at Christ Church Infants School in March.

It was the club's first inspection since the regulator changed its method of assessing and grading after-school clubs.

Previously Ofsted only said whether a club met its expected standards.

Now it has colour-coded ratings, where clubs are assessed in four areas: behaviour; attitudes and establishing routines; inclusion; children's welfare and well-being; leadership and governance.

Inspector Chelsea Woollard said the club, which has places for 32 children aged from four to 10, achieved the green 'expected standard' in all areas.

She said: "Children build caring and trusting relationships with staff. This means children feel safe and secure in their

environment.

"Children of all ages play collaboratively together."

The inspector said the club has 'golden rules' for behaviour, which children generally follow well, with staff understanding the importance of "robust routines".

She said: "Leaders ensure the environment is welcoming, safe and suitable for children. Children benefit from daily fresh air and exercise and use the space well."

The report highlighted use of the school's hall and playground to ensure children can play inside and out, with staff "deployed effectively" to monitor each area.

Staff remind children about manners and picking up litter, acting as "positive role models", also providing healthy snacks and social time to eat them in.

The inspector highlighted the club's "close partnership" with the infant school, and consistent sharing of information from teachers to parents.

She said: "Parents report on



Children and staff from OCOSC at Christ Church Infants School

the approachable and caring staff."

To improve further the inspector said leaders should ensure all children fully understand expectations and boundaries for behaviour, and staff should ensure interactions with children support their feelings and emotions further.

Manager Charlie Sutton said: "We are extremely proud of our team and the recognition of the positive atmosphere within our after school club.

"The inspector spent time

talking to the staff about our daily practice and their knowledge around childcare, as well as observing how the children played, the experiences that were available to them and how their interests were supported whilst at club.

"Providing a safe, welcoming and enjoyable space for children is at the heart of everything we do.

"We are grateful to our staff, the school staff, the children and their families for helping make our club such a success."

Report calls for urgent improvements at pre-school

OFSTED has called for a pre-school in Staple Hill to make a series of urgent improvements.

The committee which manages Little Sheep Pre-School says it is "deeply dismayed" by the regulator's verdict and is "committed to making the necessary improvements swiftly".

Inspector Victoria Nicolson visited the pre-school at Staple Hill Methodist Church, which has 16 places for children aged two to four, in January.

Her report, published in May, called for "urgent improvement" in five areas: achievement; behaviour, attitudes and establishing routines; children's welfare and well-being; curriculum and teaching; leadership and governance.

Only one area of the six assessed by Ofsted, inclusion, did not receive the lowest red rating under its new grading system: the inspector said this area also needs attention.

The inspector said: "Children's safety and welfare are not fully assured at this

pre-school.

"Furthermore, leaders do not have sufficient oversight of the quality of the curriculum. They are unable to tackle weaknesses that are identified.

"The ineffective curriculum and weaknesses in teaching mean that children do not develop the skills they need for future learning."

The report said the pre-school does not correctly follow safeguarding procedure, provides inconsistent support for children with special educational needs and disabilities, and does not help children develop good attention and focus.

Staff do not promote basic early counting skills for all, and read some children books intended for much younger children, the inspector said.

She said staff do not consistently maintain expectations for behaviour, and some children do not develop positive attitudes to learning.

The inspector praised the "positive relationships" between children and their key workers. She said children are happy in the care of staff, enjoy socialising together and develop self-help skills as they make independent choices.

The inspector said leaders and staff have a friendly relationship with parents, but the information shared with them is "vague" and not relevant for supporting learning at home.

The report made six recommendations for improvement in areas including staff

training, safeguarding and managing behaviour, and implementing "a curriculum that offers children challenge".

In April the pre-school advertised for a new manager.

It was established in 2014 and found to require improvement after an inspection last year, following two previous 'good' ratings.

The pre-school's management committee said: "We are deeply dismayed by the findings of the recent Ofsted Inspection.

"The report makes clear that urgent improvement is needed in several key areas and we take these concerns extremely seriously.

"The care, safety and well-being of every child in our pre school community has always been, and remains, our highest priority.

"Since the inspection took place, there have been staffing changes, and the management committee and staff team are working closely together with South Gloucestershire Early Years Team to restore the high standards that Little Sheep has achieved in past years.

"We are confident that our improvement plan will deliver the changes highlighted by Ofsted and move the pre-school into a far stronger position for both children and staff.

"Our families and the wider community can be assured that we are committed to making the necessary improvements swiftly, responsibly and with the children's best interests at heart."

Road repairs get under way

WORK to sort out some of the most potholed roads in the area is under way.

Highways workers moved onto South View, next to Page Park in Staple Hill, in early May. As the Voice went to print the road had been resurfaced and was awaiting new markings.

Malmains Drive in Frenchay has also been resurfaced.

Work to resurface a stretch of Peache Road and Northcote Road, between Downend and Mangotsfield - where large, deep patches of road surface have worn away - is due to begin on June 5.

The council's work schedule, reported in last month's Voice, indicated that the stretch to be resurfaced would be from the bus stop opposite Peache Court, at the Westerleigh Road end, to a spot between the Stanbridge Close and Royal Road junctions. But the map supplied by the authority to Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council highlights the whole of Peache Road and Northcote Road, from Westerleigh Road up to the junction with St James Street and Windsor Place.

Residents have raised concerns over the



South View is being resurfaced



A zebra crossing is being installed on Four Acre Road

quality of the work already carried out on some roads, including Oaklands Close in Mangotsfield, where holes had been worn in a thin layer of new surfacing within 24 hours of it being laid.

Pavements on St James Street in Mangotsfield were resurfaced at the end of April.

Work was also under way on a new zebra crossing on Four Acre Road in Bromley Heath as the Voice went to print.

South Gloucestershire Council first drew up plans for the crossing next to the junction with Quakers Road in November 2023, to provide a safer route for families walking to Bromley Heath infant and junior schools.

Contractors have also been resurfacing a stretch of the Avon Ring Road that was only laid last year.

The council's Streetcare department says

the work follows "quality issues" identified with the surface laid last year, and says the work to rectify the error is being done at no cost to taxpayers.

A trial installation of solar lighting studs is being carried out on the Bristol & Bath Railway Path, near Siston Hill and Hobbs Lane, east of the Avon Ring Road, to see if they are suitable for wider use.

If the trial is judged to be a success, the ground lights could be installed between the Siston Hill roundabout, near Mangotsfield, and Warmley Waiting Room.

Voice readers have pointed out other roads not on the council's work schedule which are badly affected by potholes, including Bromley Heath Road and Croomes Hill in Downend and Beaufort Road, Staple Hill.



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The factory started to come down in April

Factory bites the dust

HISTORIC factory buildings that stood for more than a century in Staple Hill have been demolished.

Excavators moved in at the former Bristol Uniforms plant behind Fountain Square during April.

They tore down most of the derelict factory to make way for a development of 56 homes.

The only building left standing is the two-storey

gatehouse, which fronts on to Wathen Street, between Victoria Street and Beaufort Road, and will be refurbished to provide office space.

Behind it, flats will be built in three-storey blocks, with a communal garden, for developer Woodstock Homes in partnership with housing association Bromford Flagship.

Speaking last year after planning permission was granted, Woodstock Homes & Woodstock Partnerships managing director James Hutchinson said the scheme would be "fully affordable", describing it as "a significant



The main factory building was pile of rubble by early May

transformation of this long-underused brownfield site into a thriving community, providing homes for the families who need them most".

Bristol Uniforms, now known as MSA Bristol Fire Safety Clothing, moved to a new factory in Yate early in 2023.

Its predecessor, clothing manufacturer Wathen Gardiner & Co, moved to Staple Hill at the turn of the 20th century. Many of the buildings dated back to 1917, when the factory was rebuilt following a huge fire.



The gatehouse now stands alone



The factory shortly after it closed

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TURNER'S VISION

Exciting news: a new chapter

THIS month has been a lot of fun at the Opticians, well actually very exciting, and we've a big decision to share with you.

After more than 50 years in Fishponds... we're moving.

Now before you think, "Oh no..." let me explain why this is actually very good news for you.

The truth is, our optical practices are growing. More patients. More complex care.

More families trusting us with their eye health and vision.

And whilst we're incredibly proud of our Fishponds home (Philip and Harold moved to Fishponds in the 1970s)... it's simply no longer able to support the level of care we believe you deserve.

The rooms are too small. Access isn't as easy as it should be. And we've reached the point where we're working around the building, rather than the building working for you.

So... we've taken the next step.

We are currently creating a brand new, larger practice in Downend, in the former Fabrics

Plus shop, a place many of us remember fondly. And here's what that means for you:

- A more comfortable, accessible environment
- More space. More time. Less rush
- Enhanced clinical care and facilities
- An even better experience from the moment you walk in

In short... everything we already do well, done even better.

Because at the heart of this decision is a very simple belief:

'Effortless vision isn't a luxury – it's the standard'

And to deliver on that properly... we needed to grow.

Alongside this exciting move, we're also delighted to share that our Henleaze practice is now expanding too! We've added

additional eye care clinics and appointments now available on Fridays.

This means improved availability for patients across both sides of Bristol, whilst still maintaining the same personal, family practice approach you're used to.

As a third-generation family opticians, we never take for granted the trust people place in us. Many families who visit us today first came to see Harold or Philip decades ago, and that support means a huge amount to all of us.

We'll be sharing refurbishment updates over the coming months and would love for you to join us at our opening event when the time comes.

This is the next chapter for Turners Opticians and we think you're going to love it!

As the refurbishment progresses and would love for you to join us at our opening event in the coming months. Thank you to our patients for being part of our journey so far, and for trusting



Peter Turner
of Turners Opticians
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us with your eye care. This is the next chapter. And we think you're going to love it.

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.

Peter

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




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Show back on common

FRENCHAY Flower Show is returning to the "heart of the village" this year.

This year's event will take place on Frenchay Common on July 11 from 10.30am, having moved to Frenchay Parklands on the former hospital grounds last year.

The show will include more than 60 stalls, activities from carving and painting to engineering, live music and a K-Pop dance troupe.

In the marquee there will be more than 200 classes to enter, from flowers, plants, and vegetables to art, photography, cookery and handicrafts, with 28 children's categories.

This year the event will hold its first fun dog show, with a "light-hearted, family-friendly focus" and seven classes to enter.

There will be blue badge parking nearby and free parking at Frenchay Parklands.

Flower Show chairman Mark Woolley said: "We really wanted to bring the show into the heart of the village this year and we felt that Frenchay Common by the parish church would be ideal.

"It's a stunning location. The site is actually smaller than last year but it will have better accessibility for people with mobility issues, and there are more activities on the site."

The cost of tickets has been reduced this year, to £6 online before July 1 and £8 after that, with accompanied children under 16 free.

Mark said the move back to a smaller site had enabled the committee to reduce costs.

Organisers are looking for volunteers to help on the gate or provide stewarding and support on the day and in the lead-up, with free entry to the show for anyone who helps for two hours or more.

They are also on the lookout for owners of classic pre-1980 cars or bikes to be part of the show's vehicle display.

Entries of exhibits for the marquee are free, and open until July 8. People can enter and buy tickets at www.frenchayflowershow.com.

Heathfest unveils acts

ORGANISERS of this year's Heathfest have revealed details of the acts who will be entertaining festival-goers.

Maria and the Wilds, Kris Nock's Big Band, the Frampton Shantymen and local singers the Bromley Heath

Choir are among the acts who will take to the stage at Bromley Heath Playing Fields on June 20.

Elsewhere there will be inflatables, fairground rides, sports activities and stalls selling toys, ice cream and sweets, as well as family activities, a range of food and a bar.

Organisers of the volunteer-run festival are also encouraging everyone to take part in the fundraising raffle, with prizes donated by local businesses, and to "bring along a picnic blanket, relax with family and friends, and enjoy a wonderful day celebrating the local community".

The event runs from 11.30am until 7pm, and advance tickets are on sale at £2 for adults and £1 for children at ticketlab.app/series/2613 or via the Heathfest Facebook page.

The festival team is currently looking for volunteers to help throughout the day in roles including stewarding, helping on the entrance gate and providing first aid support.

Anyone interested should email heathfestbs16@gmail.com.



Bromley Heath Choir at last year's Heathfest

TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

How Can I Stop Ear Wax Building Up?



As an experienced Audiologist, one of the questions I get asked most often is:

"How can I keep my ears clean and stop ear wax building up?"

The simple answer is... you can't really. And actually, that's quite normal!

You see, ear wax isn't dirt in the way most people think it is. The visible wax around the outer ear can gently be cleaned away, but the wax deeper inside the ear canal is there for a very important reason; it helps protect and lubricate your hearing system.

Most of the time, the ears are wonderfully self-cleaning. As we talk, chew, and move our jaw, wax slowly migrates naturally towards the outside of the ear where it can safely clear away on its own.

The problem only comes when too much wax builds up, or when it becomes dry and impacted enough to affect your hearing or comfort. You may notice muffled hearing, blocked ears, ringing, or simply feel that things don't sound quite as clear as they should.

If this happens, the safest option is usually to soften the wax with olive oil drops or spray for around a week before having it professionally removed with microsuction.

Here at Turners Opticians, you can book in with me, Debbie, for a gentle ear examination and microsuction treatment.

Using olive oil beforehand helps soften the wax, making removal quicker, easier, and far more comfortable. And if you're curious, I can even show you the camera images and videos during the appointment!

I look forward to helping you hear more clearly again if ear wax is getting in the way.

Get in touch with us here at Turners Opticians and book in to see me, I'd love to help you hear clearly again!

Debbie 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.

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A small club with a big heart

Spirit Health Club has grown into something we are incredibly proud of, a welcoming, supportive community that continues to grow day by day. It has quickly become a space where friendships are formed, memories are made, and wellbeing feels genuinely personal. We may be a small club, but we have a big heart.

At Spirit, we believe wellness is about more than exercise. It's about feeling comfortable from the moment you walk through the door, whether that's thanks to the friendly, familiar faces on our team or the warm connections made with fellow members along the way. From shared swims and gym sessions to relaxed chats after a workout, our club is a place where everyone is welcome.

We're proud to offer our members far more than just great facilities. As part of the Spirit community, members enjoy a range of exclusive

benefits, including 20% off drinks at the hotel, children aged four and under swimming for free, and our popular Free Friend Friday, held on the first Friday of every month. We also reward commitment through attendance incentives and referral rewards, alongside discounts with selected local businesses in the area, with even more benefits always being added.

To make joining even more inviting, we are currently offering a £0 joining fee. As a special thank you to readers of this magazine, anyone who brings a copy with them when joining will receive one complimentary guest pass, along with a coffee voucher for three free hot drinks, perfect for relaxing before or after a workout.

We also offer discounted memberships for Blue Light card holders, students, and employees of selected local businesses.

If you're considering joining



or would simply like to learn more, we'd love to welcome you. Please feel free to contact us to arrange a personal tour of the club with one of our friendly leisure team, and discover how Spirit Health Club could become your wellness space.



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£1m claimed, just in time

A LOTTERY player who won £1 million claimed their prize just one day before the deadline to come forward.

The winning ticket, bought in South Gloucestershire, matched five main numbers and the bonus ball in the Lotto draw on November 1 last year.

A 180-day deadline to claim the prize meant the winner had until midnight on April 30 to come forward.

National Lottery operator Allwyn made a series of appeals to people to check their old tickets as the deadline approached, including one that appeared in last month's *Voice*.

Less than 36 hours before time ran out, the company confirmed on April 29 that it had received a claim for the prize.

The ticket matched five of the six main numbers - 17, 18, 31, 36, 39, 51 and the Bonus Ball number 29 to win the life-changing prize.

Allwyn senior winners' adviser Andy Carter said: "Wow, this is truly incredible.

"To receive a claim for this life-changing £1 million Lotto prize in the final hours before the final deadline is absolutely extraordinary.

"While it is unusual for prizes to go unclaimed, players coming forward at this final hour is even more rare.

"We search for missing winners, so to see a claim come in following our appeals to unite the lucky winner with their £1m prize is just fantastic.

"Huge congratulations to our Lotto winner, we're absolutely thrilled to now be supporting them as they begin what will no doubt be a remarkable, life-changing journey."

As the *Voice* went to print the winner had not decided to go public, which means no information on whether the prize was won by an individual or syndicate, or where the ticket was bought, has been revealed.

Had the winner not come forward, the prize money, and the interest it has generated, would have gone towards National Lottery-funded projects.

Post buggies do the rounds

POSTIES in the Downend area are using golf buggy-style electric vehicles to help them get through their rounds faster.

Officially called micro electric vehicles (MEVs), a fleet of the buggies is now based at Royal Mail's Fishponds Delivery Office in New Station Way, which covers the BS16 postcode area.

The Norwegian-built Paxster XL vehicles cost around £17,000 each.

Royal Mail says they reduce carbon emissions and increase delivery speeds.

They have replaced larger vans, which posties had to unload into hand carts or satchels several times per round.

Delivery staff have their own MEV to do a round instead of sharing a van, which Royal Mail says streamlines route planning and speeds up deliveries.

Unlike regular electric vans and cars, they can be plugged into a standard three-pin plug socket for charging.

More than 100 are now in operation across the country, although Royal Mail would not confirm how many are based at Fishponds, whether they are in use across the entire postcode area, which stretches from Fishponds to Pucklechurch, or whether it intends to buy more.

Delivery design manager Mark Riley said the MEVs are "a smart solution for delivering more sustainably and efficiently, especially in busy urban areas".



One of the new MEVs in Frenchay

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Runners remember Tyler

A TEAM of runners has raised more than £1,100 for bereavement charities in memory of a young man killed in a lorry crash near Mangotsfield.

The five fundraisers took part in the Great Bristol Run on May 10 in support of The Road Forward - Tyler Carley Foundation.

Tyler, who was 20, was killed when the lorry he was a passenger in collided with the central reservation of the Avon Ring Road between the Dramway and Siston Hill roundabouts in December 2023.

After his death Tyler's parents set up the charitable foundation in his memory, organising a series of fundraising events to support charities that help bereaved families, as well as CPR training.

Funds raised by the Great



Connor Iles and Finn Searle ran the Bristol Half-marathon

Bristol Run team are going to 2wish, a charity that offers immediate bereavement support to the families and friends who have suddenly lost children or young adults aged under 25.

Among those running was Tyler's cousin Lauren Carley and two of his friends, Lily Pate and her dad Ben, who took on the Bristol 10K.

Another two friends, Connor Iles and Finn Searle, ran the Bristol Half-marathon.

As the *Voice* went to print they had raised more than £1,170, and their JustGiving site

was still open for donations at [tinyurl.com/4rj3752j](https://www.tinyurl.com/4rj3752j).

Tyler's dad Mark said: "I would like to say a massive thank you to Finn, Connor, Lauren, Ben and Lily.

"Personally it means a lot to me that you've done this for Tyler and the charity, and I can't thank you enough for that.

"There's still time to get those last-minute sponsorships in, with all money raised going to 2wish.

Thank you for your continued support."

Tyler was working as a scaffolder and living in



Lauren Carley, Lily and Ben Pate ran the Bristol 10K

Thornbury at the time of his death, having spent his early life in Kingswood and Mangotsfield before moving to the town, where he attended the Castle School.

More details on the Road Forward - Tyler Carley Foundation can be found at the charity's Facebook page or by emailing info@tylercarley.org.
• Lorry driver Michael Ronner, 39, of Warmley, who has admitted causing Tyler's death by careless driving, is now due to be sentenced at Bristol Crown Court in June after a hearing at the end of April was postponed.

BRISTOL DOWNEND CHRISTADELPHIANS

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- 17th What do the Dead Sea Scrolls Teach Us about The Bible?
- 28th Persia in Bible Prophecy

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

Visit bristoldownend.com for more details

Page Park will host two festivals on consecutive weekends in June

Armed Forces Day

SOUTH Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day will return to Staple Hill on June 20.

The event, which celebrates past, present and future military service personnel, attracted around 2,000 visitors to Page Park last summer.

This year's event promises more attractions, including a historical re-enactment with cannon and musket firing, drill displays and demonstrations.

Organisers describe it as "a vibrant day of celebration, commemoration and entertainment, bringing together the local community to honour the service and sacrifice of the Armed Forces past, present and future".

The day will begin at 10.30am with a parade through Staple Hill High Street and Broad Street to the park, led by the Bath Royal Air Force Cadet Band.

It is set to include motorbike riders, military vehicles, veterans and cadets from across the region.

Following the parade, the programme of events will continue in Page Park, with live music, arena displays and interactive attractions.

Organising committee chair Ian Campbell said: "One of the highlights of the day will be an exciting historical re-enactment featuring firing cannons and muskets, alongside precision drill displays and military demonstrations that showcase both history and modern service traditions.

"Families will be able to explore military vehicles up close, meet veterans and cadet organisations, browse a wide variety of stalls from local traders and charities, and enjoy food, refreshments and entertainment across both the park and Staple Hill High

Park will host



Last year's Armed Forces Day parade along Broad Street. Another parade will kick off this year's event on June 20

Street.

"The event is also a fantastic opportunity to support local independent businesses and community organisations, helping to showcase everything Staple Hill and the surrounding area has to offer."

Visitors are encouraged to walk to the event where possible or make use of public transport to help reduce congestion on the day.

Bus operator First is offering free travel to the park, which is on the 7, 49 and 49x bus routes,

for serving Armed Forces personnel and veterans, to make it easier for them to attend the celebrations.

Ian said: "The event will also include a free Armed Forces VIP reception for serving personnel and veterans, recognising their dedication and contribution.

"In addition, a special reception will be held for the children of those currently serving, celebrating the important role military families play in supporting service life.

"Organisers are encouraging

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two festivals

residents from across South Gloucestershire and beyond to come along, wave their flags and join in a day designed to celebrate community spirit, remembrance and pride in the Armed Forces."

The event is free to attend and runs until 4pm.

For more information visit www.southglosafd.com.

Celebrate With Me

A CELEBRATION of global culture and communities will return to Page Park on June 27.

Celebrate With Me is part of the Bristol Refugee Festival and will follow a series of Refugee Week events elsewhere.

The free family-friendly event includes music and dance displays, with plenty of chances to join in.



Latin Gems dancers at last year's festival. Picture: Viktoriia Zeleniuk

It was first held at Page Park in 2022 and continued there for the next two years before moving to Kingswood Park last year.

Now the event, which is described as a "vibrant celebration of cultural diversity and community spirit" and is organised by the park's Bean Tree Café and charity Movema, is back in Staple Hill.

Movema co-chief executive Penny Caffrey said: "The event

will feature a lively programme of global music and dance performances, hands-on craft activities, yoga sessions, international food stalls and an artisan market.

"Music and dance connect people regardless of ethnicity, religion or background, which is why we want to create this day of unity and shared experiences.

"Following the success of previous years, local feedback has highlighted the importance of creating inclusive spaces where resettled people feel welcomed and connected within their neighbourhood.

"This year's festival continues to build on that vision, offering opportunities for meaningful interaction, shared experiences and celebration."

Melody Beard of the Bean Tree Café said: "We hope that 'Celebrate With Me' can help reduce loneliness and isolation by offering resettled people the opportunity to get to know their neighbours.

"We want Page Park to be seen as a hub that brings people together, supporting the theme of this year's Refugee Week,

'Courage'."

The event runs from 11am-4pm and the line-up includes performances and workshops from Kozachky Ukrainian Choir, Rhythms of Peru, the Bristol Griot, playing music from Senegal, and Eastern European music from the Kitchen Kapelye Klezmer Band.

The event is supported by South Gloucestershire Council, South Gloucestershire Race Equality Network (SGREN), SGS College and the Friends of Page Park.

It follows a series of events for the Bristol Refugee Festival 2026, which takes place from June 6-21, and the worldwide Refugee Week, which is described as "the world's largest arts and culture festival" and celebrates the contributions, creativity and resilience of refugees and people seeking asylum to societies across the world.

Bristol Refugee Festival also runs Celebrating Sanctuary events all year round.

For more information on Celebrate With Me, visit tinyurl.com/7f37ntwf.

Page Park





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Report clears school of anti-Semitism

AN INQUIRY into a school at the centre of a political row over the cancellation of an MP's visit has found no evidence of anti-Semitism.

Cabot Learning Federation commissioned the independent review into Bristol Brunel Academy in Speedwell, led by former Association of School and College Leaders president Dame Joan McVittie.

It followed a snap Ofsted inspection in January, called after Communities Secretary Steve Reed claimed that a decision by school leaders to cancel a visit by Bristol North East MP Damien Egan the previous September had been made on account of his Jewish faith.

Dame Joan has concluded that the decision to cancel the visit was made on safety grounds, after reports that a protest was planned at a gate used by 1,300 students.

She said she found no evidence that either the school or federation were anti-Semitic.

However, details from the report have been redacted in 12 places, and Mr Egan, whose constituency includes Staple Hill and Mangotsfield, has called on the CLF to make the full version public.

The visit was called off after members of the National Education Union learned of the invitation and planned a protest over the Israeli invasion of Gaza. In a social media statement, Bristol NEU said members planned the action because of Mr Egan's position as vice-chair of the Labour Friends of Israel group. Other groups were also expected to join the protest.

In her report Dame Joan said: "Three senior leaders from the Cabot Learning Federation made the decision to postpone the visit.

"The reviewer did not find evidence of external or internal groups which influenced this decision.

"The decision was based solely on safeguarding and health and safety grounds for

students, staff and the MP.

"If the school had followed their own procedure for visitors, they may have been more alert to the potential protests and sought external advice from the police, local authority, DfE and other stakeholders well in advance of the visit."

Dame Joan also looked at the wider culture and policies of the school and trust, and concluded: "The evidence I have gathered leads me to conclude that neither CLF or BBA are anti-Semitic."

The CLF has sent the report to Mr Egan and media organisations, and published a press release on the school website, which said the school "has seen its decision-making vindicated".

Mr Egan said: "I have seen the redacted version of the report that the Cabot Learning Federation Multi Academy Trust have released and would strongly encourage them to publish the complete version of the report. I will be writing to the Secretary of State to the same effect."



Damien Egan

Responding on the CLF's behalf, Dame Joan said: "The redactions in the published report are there so that individuals referenced cannot be identified, as is normal in a report of this kind.

"The published report with redactions was agreed and accepted by the Department for Education.

"In my opinion the redactions make no material difference to my findings and recommendations."

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**DOWNEND & BROMLEY
HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

Antisocial behaviour: stay vigilant

Over the past few weeks, there has been a noticeable increase in anti social behaviour in and around the King George V Pavilion. Incidents have included nuisance behaviour and damage to property.

The Pavilion is a valued community space, used daily by families, sports groups, local organisations, and visitors. Anti social behaviour not only disrupts this enjoyment but also places unnecessary strain on community resources.

Residents are being encouraged to remain vigilant

and to report any incidents directly to the Police. Reporting helps build an accurate picture of what is happening, allowing officers to prioritise patrols and take appropriate action. Even if an incident seems minor, every report contributes to a safer community.

Anyone witnessing anti social behaviour, or with information that may help, is urged to contact the Police via 101, or 999 in an emergency. Alternatively, you can contact the Parish Council via the details below.

Annual Assembly

Thank you to everyone that attended our Annual Assembly in May, it was lovely to see so many members of the community join us. I am sure you'll agree it was great to hear about the community events held at King George V Pavilion, the Bromley Heath Tennis Court improvements, and the projects that our Local Climate and Nature Action Plan (LCNAP) group are involved in. Exciting times ahead!

It has become somewhat of a tradition that in the lead up to our Annual Assembly, the Councillors of the Parish can nominate an award for Community Champions of the year. There were so many individuals and organisations to consider, and we thank everyone that helps to make a difference.

We can confirm the winners are

The Friends of King George V & Badminton Road Playing Fields

for their continued dedication to the care, improvement, and protection of our green space.

Their volunteer work from helping to organise community events to supporting with maintenance the grounds is really appreciated.

And ... The Post Box Toppers

We would also like to recognise the wonderful group of volunteers who create the much loved post box toppers across the Parish. Their creativity, care, and community spirit bring colour and joy to our streets throughout the year.



DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCILLORS

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Clerk to the Council

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

www.dbhparishcouncil.uk



Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

School runners are cross-country champs

A TEAM of young runners from Bromley Heath Junior School ran through rain, mud, and freezing temperatures to train for a cross-country championship.

The 47 members of the after-school running club saw their hard work pay off when they won the three-week South Gloucestershire cross-country series in April.

Their success was thanks to two strong team performances, with the Girls' Team A and Boys Team B both securing second place overall in their competitions.

Head teacher Tracy Serle said: "The children's resilience, courage and positivity was simply amazing! We are so proud of all the runners for giving it their all and representing the school so wonderfully.

"The success of this club is a testament to the dedication of Mr Adamson. As a class teacher and the driving force behind the running club, his inspiration, expert advice, and unwavering support gave the children the platform they needed to shine.



The winning Bromley Heath Junior School team

"His enthusiasm is infectious, and we are so lucky to have him providing these opportunities for the children to push themselves, feel proud and succeed.

"While the trophies are a wonderful bonus, the real triumph was seeing the

school's core values—respect, responsibility, resilience, courage, positivity, and kindness—brought to life.

"From the runner who pushed through to finish their race, to the teammates cheering at the finish line until the very

last person crossed, the children showed that character matters just as much as pace. Every single child who participated, demonstrated incredible grit and a 'never-give-up' attitude that left parents and teachers beaming with pride."

M32 repairs will last six years

MOTORISTS and bus passengers have been told to expect six years of roadworks on the way in and out of Bristol, as repairs are carried out to a flyover carrying the M32.

National Highways, which is responsible for the concrete Eastville viaduct, has pledged to keep two lanes open in both directions throughout the work, and says roads which cross underneath will also stay open.

The work, which could cost up to £450 million, could be done quicker were the flyover to shut - but that would leave the busiest route into Bristol, which

carries 85,000 vehicles a day, closed for three years.

The project will involve renewing the drainage, creating new noise barriers and replacing 130 bearings on top of the concrete columns or piers, extensive repairs to the concrete both on the top and bottom of the bridge deck, replacing parapets, lighting, the central reservation and gantries.

The 1km flyover, which takes the motorway past Ikea and the Eastville Tesco store, will also be resurfaced and re-waterproofed, and possibly have its edge beams replaced.

After funding for the project was confirmed in March, design work has been underway and is due to finish next year, with a contractor set to be appointed in 2028.

Work will get underway in 2029 and is expected to take up to six years, which means finishing in 2035.

Project manager Will Miller said National Highways is committed "100%" to keeping the M32 open in both

directions, as there is nowhere else that could cope with the amount of traffic that uses the motorway.

He said: "It's essential to keep Bristol city centre open for business."

Muller Road and Stapleton Road, which cross under the motorway at the Junction 2 roundabout under the flyover, will also be kept open - but the motorway entry and exit slip-roads will be closed in turn, for several months each, for work on the edge of the viaduct.

During the works, the central reservation will be removed so the lanes can be moved away from the side where work is taking place at any given time.

The speed limit will be reduced to 30mph to protect contractors at work, before being returned to 40mph after the work is finished.

When slip-roads are closed, motorway traffic is likely to be directed to the next junction, and Mr Miller said National Highways will work with

Bristol City Council to alleviate congestion "hotspots" caused by the work.

Engineering team manager Terry Robinson said the viaduct is a post-tension steel-reinforced concrete structure - the same type as the Badminton Road bridge over the M4, which had to be closed in 2023 due to structural failure.

The Eastville flyover has not suffered the same problems. The steel cables that compress the concrete to make the bridge stronger are in good condition, as is the main structure on the whole.

But he said if nothing is done with the bridge now, within 10 to 20 years problems would start to emerge that could lead to emergency lane closures and repairs, weight restrictions and eventually the viaduct becoming unusable.

The planned six-year refurbishment programme should give the bridge another 40 to 50 years of use.

Got a story? Contact us at news@downendvoice.co.uk

DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS PREVIEW

BELINDA O'HOOLEY + GREN BARTLEY

FRIDAY 19 JUNE 2026

A FAMILIAR face returns to headline Downend Folk & Roots' June concert.

Belinda O'Hooley is an acclaimed pianist, singer, songwriter and composer celebrated for her expressive and distinctive musicality. Best known as one half of O'Hooley & Tidow, with her wife Heidi Tidow, she has been nominated four times for the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. The duo's song Gentleman Jack found international recognition as the theme for the BBC/HBO drama of the same name.

Her piano playing - elegant, inventive, and emotionally charged has made her a sought-after collaborator with artists including Rufus Wainwright, Nic Jones, Sophie B Hawkins, Jackie

Oates, and Rachel Unthank & The Winterset, with whom she received a Mercury Prize nomination.

Belinda's artistry also extends to acting, most recently in her role as DCS Liz Thornton in the BAFTA-winning drama Happy Valley.

Opening the evening will be an artist who has been hailed as part of the future of melodic songwriting. Forever evolving and adapting, and with unmatched guitar work, Gren Bartley is a modern day troubadour, using his influences from older folk and world music traditions, to create truly astounding records. He brings something new and unique to his audience. He is an artist not to be missed.

Tickets for the concert, which takes place at Christ Church Downend on Friday 19 June 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 7.00pm 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. Audience members are encouraged to bring their own glass/mug/tankard, as well as reusable bottles for water, as part of the drive to be more

environmentally aware; there is a 50p discount for those that do. There will also be sweet treats available at the bar courtesy of Radstock-based The Great Cake Company, as well as a prize draw, which helps to fund the support artists for each concert.

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

DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS REVIEW

THE SAM KELLY TRIO + LOU SHEPHERD

FRIDAY 17 APRIL 2026

WHAT'S the biggest mystery in the world? The building of the pyramids? Some kind of Bodmin Beast or Bristol crocodile? The continual, inexplicable voting in of morons? Or is it that Sam Kelly is not an absolutely massive superstar? As baffling as America's love of Trump is, I'm going with that last one.

Sam Kelly should be a proper pop star, adored by millions. Zillions, even.

As it is, he's won BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards, released four brilliant albums, collaborates with loads of great singers (Kate Rusby, Seth Lakeman, Katherine Priddy et al) and has the ability to hold a sold out Downend in the palm of his hand.

He jokes that the opening of his set is "slick", as he tears into a perfect pop/folk version of Little Sadie before sliding into the trad Irishness of Tinker's Poteen. Jamie Francis on banjo and Archie Churchill-Moss on accordion keeping him company, the three of them stirring up a groove that snags at the corner of every mouth in the place until huge smiles light up this April evening. Two songs in, and they are utterly irresistible.

Having visited American roots and traditional Ireland, The King's Shilling is from Scotland but it still has that heart-leap bounce; Churchill-Moss driving a stomp box and Francis getting dizzy on the banjo while Kelly tells a tale as

old as time. He is an extraordinary communicator, possessing the kind of voice that makes the oldest of stories relevant, makes you want to lean in as he gathers you towards him. There's warmth to it, a roughness around the edges, an effortless depth.

Across their two sets, Kelly, Francis and Churchill-Moss explore folk and roots to the fullest. There's a stopover in the Appalachian Mountains for Angeline The Baker, and a stroll across the border to Bonny Lass of Fyvie. Both are fabulous. They inspire sing-alongs, more smiling and the unshakable belief that music just doesn't get any better than this.

It's not all trad stuff and unearthed old songs though. Kelly writes a decent song too. The Old Deceiver, from the latest album Dreamers Dawn, is political, taking righteous aim at the rise of populism. If the full band version equates anger with noise then the acoustic version seethes with a gentle fury. Two guitars snap and bite while Kelly expresses bewilderment. Guiding Light is a love song that the Radio 2 masses could easily take to their hearts, it is pop/folk of the very highest order, as good as anything by those earnest young men that seem to sell loads of records. Kelly is quick to point out that it's not about God but it is simply heavenly.

If the songs belong to Kelly then Francis and Churchill-Moss take ownership of the tunes. The Burning Threads/Slip Through Your Fingers are stuffed with joy, forcing the tapping of feet and



more of those grins. Damien Mullane's Pop Polkas create a safe space for dancing, compelling the most English of hips to attempt a little shimmy. Banjo and accordion whirl about with total enjoyment, nothing stopping their unrestrained delight.

Kelly reckons that the latest album, Dreamers Dawn, was tricky to write yet it is on the title track that you feel that unmistakable heart-swell, that explosion in your soul. It's a song about the delight we find in music, in folk festivals, in dancing like lunatics. It sums up everything that is brilliant about The Sam Kelly Trio, the banjo, guitar and accordion dancing around a fearsome bass-y stomp while the words remind us of the wonder of this place, of this whole world. It is gloriously, perfectly uplifting.

It would take a seriously good support act to be remembered after that lot. Fortunately this evening was opened by Lou Shepherd and she is much better than "seriously good".

A Bristolian singer-songwriter, who is still to release her debut

EP, she brings shafts of Laurel Canyon sunlight to this bit of South Gloucestershire. There are hints of Joni Mitchell all over the place. West Winds is a gentle acoustic breeze, light and soft, while Mackerel Skies shimmers with a silvery stillness. There's the unmistakable sparkle of classic songwriting and her voice is, simply, the most beautiful thing.

Rambling 'til Sunrise has a lazy, freewheeling quality, as carefree as an Amsterdam bicycle wheel while Rise, the title track of that soon-to-be released EP, is full of Who-Knows-Where-the-Time-Goes goodness. There is no doubt that, as soon as the EP comes out, Shepherd will take her place as one of Bristol's "ones to watch" for 2026.

In a world which is, more often than you'd like, mightily confusing, it's so good to know that brilliant music will always be there to help us feel better. Now, all we need is for Sam Kelly and Lou Shepherd to be megastars.

Words: Gavin McNamara
Photos: Chris Dobson

Let's live in harmony

WHILST I tend to be a 'home bird' and happy to stay at home rather than travelling (we're a dying breed), one of the television programmes that we enjoy watching as a family is 'Race Across the World'.

If you have not seen the programme, five teams of two are tasked with travelling to an undisclosed destination via eight checkpoints. At each checkpoint they are given the location of the next checkpoint. This is done on a limited budget, without phones and without using flights.

Over the different series, we have seen races from Greenwich to Singapore, across South America, Canada, Asia and the current series from Italy to Mongolia.

These different 'races' have enabled us to travel to countries with amazing natural scenery along with historical buildings and culture. Sometimes I feel that I might like to travel to these countries!

However, whilst the programme is titled 'Race Across the World', it could equally be

titled 'Races Across the World', as throughout the 'race' the different teams have to rely on the generosity and kindness of different 'races' to help them, to feed them, to give them somewhere to stay and in the most recent episode that I watched the commentator said of one 'race' that 'strangers are welcomed with food and shelter.'

And whilst a 'home-bird' that is my experience of the different 'races' that I live alongside, I am made welcome. As a church we sing this song:

*Jesus taught us how to live in harmony;
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony;
Different face, different race, he made us one;
Jesus taught us how to live in harmony.*

However, there seems to be a growing tendency for people to be 'cross' with 'races' that are not like ours both locally, nationally and globally. Rather than harmony, there is 'crossness' which manifests itself in hatred, violence and war, where the value of some lives are viewed as less than others.

In Matthew 25 Jesus says:

*³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ³⁶ I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was ill and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.
³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him,*



*"Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink?
³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you ill or in prison and go to visit you?"*

⁴⁰ The King will reply, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

My hope locally, national and globally is that we will live in harmony.

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Band's 140th birthday

STAPLE Hill Salvation Army Band celebrates its 140th birthday during the weekend of June 13-14.

Formed in 1896, the band has grown steadily over the years, and currently has 45 members. Bandmaster Marc Willetts assumed leadership in 2020, and has established a regular series of concerts at the Salvation Army's Broad Street hall, as well as travelling around England and Wales presenting concerts and leading Christian worship at Salvation Army centres and other venues.

The band is heavily involved in the community, supporting several Remembrance services for the Royal British Legion and heading the annual march on Remembrance Sunday.

The band takes part each Sunday in the 10am 'All Age Worship' service, accompanying songs and hymns, and usually presenting a piece of music to enhance the worship.

A celebration concert on June 13 is open to the public, and will feature special guests Gavin and Stephanie Lamplough (cornet and vocal), who will also lead Sunday worship at 10am the next day. Tickets for the concert can be purchased from Ticketsource.com.

A special Sunday afternoon youth event is planned, featuring young musicians from across Bristol, culminating in a free concert programme that starts at 5pm.



The band leading the Staple Hill Remembrance parade

Communi-tea!



Enjoying the vintage china at Christ Church

MORE than 80 people came for a free community cream tea at Christ Church Downend.

They enjoyed scones with jam and cream, cakes, and cups of tea, all served using vintage china. Live music was provided by members of the congregation and friends at the event on Saturday, May 2.

Churchwarden and catering co-ordinator Maggie Nichols said: "We love seeing the church full of visitors enjoying themselves and feeling welcome – it's what it's all about."

"Using the vintage china does make a lot of work, but it's worth it because it makes people feel special, and we want them to know that they are special in God's eyes."

On the bank holiday Monday over 180 children and adults came for a fun afternoon with bouncy castle and barbecue, games and face painting.

Barbecue 'master' Andy and the team flipped burgers and sausages for a good two hours.

It was all worth it to see smiling faces and to know that families had a safe, free, happy place to be together for an afternoon.

Anita Dobson

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Hill House Park - what happens next?

WE have been working to secure Hill House Park for community use since 2020, taking a significant step forward with the establishment of the Friends' group.

Now, after years of careful work behind the scenes, the future of the site is starting to take shape — but there are still some important decisions to be made.

The good news is that South Gloucestershire Council has confirmed it wants to transfer the whole of Hill House Park — all four acres — to community ownership.

That is a significant commitment, and one the Friends of Hill House Park welcome.

The southern half of the field next to Mayflower Court, where tree planting and hedge work has been taking place, is already moving forward.

The council is in the process of transferring this two-acre section to Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council on a 100-year lease.

The northern section of the park fronting Hill House Road north of Burley Avenue, which includes the mature beech trees, is a different matter.

Because of potential value for development, the council is legally required to commission a formal, independent valuation of this part of the site before it can proceed.

This is not a choice, it is a requirement that applies whenever publicly owned land above a certain value is being considered for transfer.

The valuation figure matters enormously. If it comes in at under £2 million, South Glos can offer the parish council a 100-year lease on the same terms as the southern half.

If it comes in at over £2 million, however, the decision must be referred to the government.

The valuation has not yet been completed. Until it is, nobody knows which route this will take.

If the valuation does trigger a referral to the Secretary of State, the strength of local feeling about this green space will become more important than ever. Evidence that the community values the park — and actively uses it — will carry



The land below the red line is being transferred to the parish council

real weight.

That is why a public consultation by Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council, starting mid-May, matters so much. The more residents take part, the stronger the case will be for keeping this land in community hands.

Look out for the public consultation, which will be hosted on the parish council website, www.dbhparishcouncil.uk.

Every response helps build the case for keeping this green space in community hands.

Katie Cooper

Friends of Page Park

THANK you so much to everyone who helped on the stall, donated all things garden and bought plants at our plant sale on May 16.

A quick count of the takings showed we had made an incredible £1,195.95!

That's amazing, when you consider most of the plants we sell are around £2-£3 each.

It will make a real difference to our park, as all proceeds will boost our Plant Fund, to enable us to purchase plants and materials for the park and tools for our incredible volunteers.

When the sale began it was

cold and we also had showers. We didn't think many people would come out to the park to support the sale, but the response was fantastic - what a day!

As well as raising money, the sale was a great opportunity to talk to people, and share knowledge of plants and gardening.

We have some tomato plants left, selling at £1 each, and a few other plants for 50p. If you are interested, or are a charity or group who could sell them to raise funds, please email friendsofpageparkbs16@gmail.com

Thank you again to everyone who supported us.

*The final day for entries to our Page Park photo competition is

getting closer.

If you would like to have your photo in our 2027 calendar - and a chance of winning a top prize of £125 - you have until June 30 to send us an entry.

You can enter up to four landscape-shaped pictures, which can be enhanced to remove spots and scratches, and made brighter, but should not have colours manipulated.

They should not include any people, but can include wildlife in the park.

The competition is open to photographers of all ages and will be judged by a panel led by a professional photographer.

Full details of how to enter can be found on the friends' Facebook Page or website, www.friendsofpagepark.co.uk.

Steph Purser

Friends of King George V Park

AS promised, below are the winners of our Easter egg hunt.

It 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 and goody bags, 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.



The winners of the hamper and goody bags

June 1 & 5

■ **CRAFT AND CHAT** at St James Church, Mangotsfield, 10.30am-noon. Bring your latest project to work on over a coffee or just come along for a cuppa and company.

June 3

■ **MOTHERS UNION** meets at Christ Church Downend, 2.15pm. Talk from diocesan president about "God's calling." With worship, refreshments, fundraising, friendship.

June 6

■ **CONCERT BY THE NORTH AVON SINGERS**, St James Church, Mangotsfield, 7.30pm. Popular music with a theme. Tickets £10 including refreshments, from Ruth Oakley on 0782 631 2630. Proceeds to St James Church memorial garden restoration.

June 6

■ **PLANT AND CAKE SALE** at Mangotsfield Castle Green URC, Cossham Street, Mangotsfield, 10am-2pm, also with bric a brac, books and refreshments stalls. Proceeds to Jessie May Trust and Gympanzees.

June 6

■ **FUNDRAISING CONCERT FOR HAM FARM FESTIVAL**, Resound Church, Blackhorse Road, Emersons Green, 7.30pm. Eight musicians in complete mixture of chamber music combinations play varied programme including Bohemian Rhapsody and The Swan. More details at www.hamfarmfestival.com.

June 7

■ **MESSY CHURCH** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 4-6pm. Craft-based afternoon for all the family, including shared meal. No Need to book. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

June 9

■ **BEREAVEMENT GROUP** at

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

June 11

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

June 12

■ **CONCERT WITH GOLDEN TONES LADIES' CHOIR**, David Baker Room at the Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Oldbury Court, Fishponds. Concert 1-2pm. Refreshments on sale 12.30-1pm. Free entry - retiring collection.

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

June 13

■ **140 THE ANNIVERSARY CONCERT** by Staple Hill Salvation Army Band, 7pm, with special guests Gavin and Stephanie Lamplough (cornet and vocal). Tickets £5 from Ticketsource.com, or call the church office on 0117 956 9733.

June 14

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

June 15

■ **DOWNEND SENIOR FILM CLUB** at 2pm Where the Crawdads Sing (12) Based on the global best-selling book. Starring Daisy Edgar-Jones &

Taylor John Smith. Carers welcome, easy access Refreshments £4 Christ Church Hall, 57 North Street, Downend BS16 5SG For more information, please call 0117 435 0063.

June 18

■ **DEMENTIA CAFE** at Warm Space, Christ Church Downend, 11am-1.30pm. Full hot meal. Also hot meal on June 4. Live music from Music Train and soup & roll lunch on June 11 and 25. Free.

June 20

■ **COFFEE MORNING AND TABLETOP SALE** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 10am-noon. Coffee, cake or bacon roll also available. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

June 20

■ **ARMED FORCES DAY** at Page Park, Staple Hill, 10.30am-4pm. Starts with parade through Staple Hill High Street and Broad Street. Events in park include re-enactments, displays, interactive attractions and live music. Free.

June 20

■ **HEATHFEST FESTIVAL** at Bromley Heath Playing Fields, 11.30am-7pm. Live entertainment, family activities, food and fun for all ages. Tickets £2 adults, £1 children from ticketlab.app/series/2613.

June 21

■ **CAR BOOT SALE** at Mangotsfield School, Rodway Hill, 10am-1pm. Raising money for a new minibus for Mangotsfield School. £1 entry per adult - dads free this month! Sellers arrive from 9am - £5 per car, £10 per van. See Friends of Mangotsfield School Facebook page for more details.

June 23

■ **VINTAGE ADVENTURE** at Church Centre, Quakers Road, 1.45-3.30pm. Activities, refreshments,

friendship and a Christian message for the season, for seniors. All welcome.

July 24-26:

■ **HAM FARM FESTIVAL:** 3 Double-bill evenings of world-class concerts spanning classical, jazz, folk, world, and cabaret — all in an intimate setting surrounded by nature. Daytime events include free drop-in concerts, an interactive children's concert, a SEND-friendly concert, and a ceilidh. Magical live music for everyone! Tickets/info: www.hamfarmfestival.com.

June 26

■ **CURRY AND QUIZ NIGHT**, St James Parish Hall, Richmond Road, Mangotsfield. Bring teams of 6 or make up a team when you get there. £10pp including supper (gluten free, vegan and non-curry alternatives available). Bookings at elgalannash@gmail.com.

June 27

■ **CELEBRATE WITH ME FESTIVAL** in Page Park, 11am-4pm. Family-friendly event with global music and dance performances, hands-on craft activities, yoga sessions, international food stalls and artisan market. Free.

June 28

■ **FREE CONCERT** at Frenchay Parish Church, Beckspool Road, Frenchay, at 3pm. Music inspired by a walk along the River Frome performed by recorders, gemshorns and bamboo pipes. Afternoon tea available from 2-5pm. Retiring collection for church funds. More details: opus4recorders@gmail.com.

June 28

■ **PAGE PARK PRAISE** with Major Colin and Staple Hill Salvation Army Band, 3pm. Afternoon of music and worship - bring a chair, if you can.

June 29

■ **CAMEO CRAFT EVENING**, open to all, Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 8pm. Different crafts each month: make new friends.

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**

Whats On at Downend Library

Volunteers needed

South Gloucestershire Libraries are looking for friendly and enthusiastic volunteers to join the team running the Summer Reading Challenge 2026: Read to the Beat.

Volunteers will support primary school-aged children, talking with them about the books they're reading and helping at a range of activities. This is a great opportunity to develop skills, whilst having fun and making new friends.

Volunteers must be aged 14 or over and apply by June 21. For more information ask a member of staff or email libraryvolunteers@southglos.gov.uk.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

0117 957 3695 for details.

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

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

■ **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. For 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

Continued on next page

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

the hub on 01454 868374.

■ **KEEP FIT**, God's House International Centre, The Sanctuary, 55 High Street, Staple Hill, every Wednesday 10-11am, followed by cup of tea and a chat. For adults 50+. More information from Lin on 0770 707 6281 or email Lincolnish@hotmail.co.uk.

■ **SPROUTS**, free gardening and nature club for children aged 7-11, Staple Hill Hub every Wednesday, 4-6pm. Call 01454 868374 for further information. Thursday

■ **HOLY COMMUNION** at St James Church, Mangotsfield, from noon.

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

■ **BEECHWOOD READING GROUP** Meets at the Beechwood Club, Fishponds. Third Wed of the month 1.45pm to 3.15pm. New members welcome. Contact Carolyn at 07527 841443

■ **LADIES-ONLY KARATE GROUP**, 7pm Page Community Association Staple Hill. More information from www.zenkarate.club.

■ **HANHAM BRIDGE CLUB** Every Weds 7-10pm at Hanham Community Centre, new members welcome. See www.hanhambridgeclub.co.uk or call Graham 07790 491564

Thursday

■ **BARN BELLS** handbell ringers meet at Lincombe Barn, Downend, from 2-4pm weekly. Anyone who can read music is welcome to join.

■ **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

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.

■ **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.emersonsgreenchurch.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.

■ **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**



ASHLEIGH TEL 07948 602404

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



real food, real support, real results

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

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.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Giant leap for festival

EMERSONS Green's Earthfest is bigger than ever this year.

The annual celebration of our relationship with the planet is back for a sixth year, and features 18 different events, including a new "mass-participation story" called Giants Day.

Earthfest is organised by Emersons Green Town Council and the Friends of Emersons Green Park, and includes events led by locally-based naturalists, performers and experts from a wide variety of disciplines.

Among the new events in the month-long festival this year is Giant's Day in Emersons Green Park on June 20.

It is described as a mass-participation story centred on the Earth as a sleeping giant, who must not be woken up.

The giant will be represented by a willow model of the Earth and the story will feature dances and performances involving people who take part in a clowning workshop held the same day.

The story will be told,

accompanied by music with live percussion, by Michael Loader, who last year told stories as a druid at the event.

Story author Chris Sunderland, of the Friends of Emersons Green Park, said: "This multimedia, interactive story is a new departure for us and the audience can expect some surprises.

"We're really keen that local people book a place at the clowning workshop. Clowning is really not what people think it is. There will be no red noses and big feet - more spontaneous, evocative movement and surprise."

Earthfest includes a range of nature-focused events, starting with an Eco Day in Emersons Green Park on May 23 from 11am-3pm, a Garden Open Day on June 6 and events led by experts including naturalist Ed Drewitt and outdoor educator Steve England. There will also be "contemplative" events including Forest Bathing and Exploring Belonging.

Emersons and Lyde Community Energy (ELCoE) are putting on their first Home Energy Fair on June 13, featuring local installers of renewable energy and local householders who have retrofitted their homes with features including heat pumps and solar panels.

Following last year's popular

fine dining event, vegan chef Rachael Mills is putting on a 'Community Banquet' on June 18 at St James Church, Mangotsfield, with musical accompaniment from locally-based classical professionals Francisco Correa and Emily Andrews.

The festival concludes with another first for Emersons Green, the Produce and Flower Show to be held at Emersons Green Village Hall on June 27.

People are encouraged to enter a range of exhibits from flowers, fruit and veg to jam, cakes and needlework. Outside the show visitors will be taken back to the 19th century with music from the Brigstowe Village Band, in Thomas Hardy-themed costume.

The full programme can be found online at friendsofemersonsgreenpark.com.

Many smaller events need to be booked in advance.

MEET LOCAL INSTALLERS GET EXPERT ADVICE
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Join us on a stroll through time

DOWNEND'S high street is the place to be in July, when we are putting on a fun event where you can travel through time!

Join Downend Community History and Arts Project (CHAP) on Sunday July 12, between 11am and 3pm, to meet and interact with characters from various eras of history, such as WG Grace, a suffragette, Romans, medieval peasants, people from the two world wars, Victorians, our local highwayman, and others.

The Promenade Through Time is a fun and entertaining way to learn about who lived in our area in centuries gone by, and to find out about their times and ways of living.

CHAP encourages everyone to turn up in costume, whether that's from centuries gone by or more recently. For instance, were you a mod, a rocker, a hippy, goth or something else? Show off your previous look!

There will be plenty of opportunities for selfies with the characters and in our



Romans from the Legiiavg reenactment group will be in Downend

reproduction stocks, as well as hands-on activities and some intriguing surprises.

Local history maps and information about the characters depicted will be given out free in print and digital formats.

There will also be a food market on the day,

so you can tuck into all sorts of tasty goodies. CHAP has been awarded funding from South Gloucestershire Council's Creative High Streets Fund for this event, which aims to bring creativity and vibrancy to local high streets.

The event is suitable for all ages, abilities and interests, and is free of charge. Everybody's welcome!

CHAP needs volunteers and additional contributors to help out. Have you got a vintage vehicle you'd like to share on the day, are you a re-enactor, or can you help direct visitors for an hour or so?

Please contact CHAP Chair Janet Biggin at big.gin@yahoo.com.

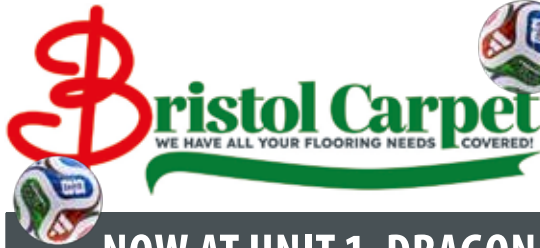
CHAP is a not-for-profit voluntary organisation that aims to create a coherent identity for Downend and Emersons Green, built around interesting or significant places, people and events from the past.

You can find out more at CHAP's website, www.downendchap.org, and can also contact us by writing to CHAP, 49 Overhill Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 5DS.

Funding for Creative High Streets has come from the West of England Combined Authority's Regional Recovery Fund.

Metro Mayor Helen Godwin said: "This regional funding is a great opportunity for communities to add even more character to their high streets and the ideas we have seen so far have been really inspiring." **Helen Rana**

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Holes safety risk

EMERSONS Green Town Council says holes up to 3ft deep being dug on bike trails at Rodway Common are a "serious safety risk"

The town council, which manages the common, has had to fill in some of the holes and is calling on young people who use the trails and their families to ensure they "enjoy the space responsibly".

In a social media post in May the council said: "The Town Council recognises and appreciates that the bike trails on Rodway Common are valued by the community in general. However, while there is clear support for the presence of the trails, recent instances of large holes being dug—some up to three feet deep—present a serious safety risk to all users of the Common. Filling this type of damage requires significant time and resources, which could otherwise be directed towards improving other community facilities."

Pub burglar avoids jail

A BURGLAR who raided three pubs in Downend and Stoke Gifford has avoided a jail sentence.

John Iles broke into the pubs between December and January, and also burgled a beauty business at the start of April.

He was arrested in April and admitted all four offences after police gathered CCTV and forensic evidence.

Iles, aged 45, from Bradley Stoke, was given a one-year suspended prison sentence and six-month curfew when he appeared at Bristol Magistrates Court later that month.

He was also ordered to pay £470 in compensation.

PC Joshua Millward said: "Commercial burglaries can cause significant hardship for businesses and we hope this result reassures people how seriously we treat these offences."

New town powers could fix transport

DECLARING an area from Filton to Emersons Green a 'new town' would bring extra funding and powers to help sort out transport problems, councillors have been told.

Recently the government decided to designate Brabazon and the West Innovation Arc as one of seven new towns across the country.

The area stretches from the old Filton Airfield, where thousands of homes and an indoor arena are being built, along the Avon Ring Road to the Bristol & Bath Science Park in Emersons Green.

Leading South Glos councillors said during a cabinet meeting in May that the designation should bring an end to the area's terrible congestion.

Cabinet member for planning, regeneration and infrastructure Chris Willmore said: "If you've ever been in the North Fringe in rush hour, you don't need to be told it's a traffic challenge.

"That's because generations of new housing and economic

growth have taken place without investing properly in infrastructure. And that has to stop now. It has to be a completely new start, in which we turn the tide on 50 years of neglect of the traffic and transport issues in the North Fringe."

Cllr Willmore (Lib Dem, Yate North) said investment in public transport is already paying off, with more buses and trains being introduced, including the new Brabazon railway station.

But she said: "At the end of the day we need a radical solution, something much more than the sum of those parts, if we're actually going to solve the problem."

The new town initiative could offer a solution, councillors believe, with extra funding and powers to construct buildings and infrastructure more quickly.

As well as resolving transport problems, council leaders hope the designation of a new town will create better paid jobs, "end the HMO nightmare" by building

more student flats, and lead to much more affordable housing too.

Behind the new town idea is the government wishing to identify locations where lots of housing can be built quickly, with infrastructure in place from the start.

New housing estates in South Gloucestershire, including Lyde Green and Bradley Stoke, have previously suffered with a shortage of schools and transport links being built in time for residents to move in.

To build infrastructure more quickly, a mayoral development corporation under Metro Mayor Helen Godwin could be introduced.

Opposition leader Cllr Liz Brennan (Con, Frenchay & Downend) warned that this would be less democratically accountable than the normal system of councillors on planning committees voting whether to permit contentious developments.

She said: "What we're

concerned about is the retention of democratic control over planning decisions, if the powers are transferred to the mayoral development corporation."

Details of the new towns programme are still being ironed out. A public consultation run by the government ended last month, and more information will be announced later about how the scheme will work. Early indications suggest the designation could include investing in rail and sustainable travel.

Transport planners are exploring "enhanced rail accessibility at Brabazon, stronger connections to Parkway Station, and the potential for a fast, reliable and high-capacity east-west and orbital public transport corridor broadly aligned with the A4174, supported by wider bus and active travel improvements", a cabinet report said. But details are not yet clear.

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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Defence spending supports skilled jobs

I RECENTLY welcomed Defence Minister Luke Pollard back to Rolls-Royce Filton to open the new 3D printing facility for aircraft engine components.

Further welcome news is that Boeing Defence UK won an £879 million contract to keep key British Army and RAF helicopters mission-ready – supporting around 700 skilled jobs, including locally. This is part of a record £270 billion defence investment over this Parliament.

I believe it's right that the Prime Minister stood up to pressure – including from



Claire Hazelgrove MP and Luke Pollard MP with the team at Rolls-Royce at the opening of a new 3D printing facility

President Trump – and kept Britain out of the US war with Iran.

This war has impacted the cost of living, so I fully support our government acting, including cutting energy bills by an average of £117.

There's more work to do, and I'll continue to push for this.

We have completed our first legislative session in Parliament since I was elected, where MPs work to deliver the bills set out in the King's Speech. I've helped shape and pass key laws, to lift 1,360 local children out of poverty, boost workplace rights - including paternity and bereavement leave - and help clean up our rivers, lakes and seas.

The Renters' Rights Act has also come into force, meaning 8,596 renters locally will benefit from greater security, including protection from unfair eviction.

As part of improvements to SEND support, South Gloucestershire Council will receive more than £2 million to launch a new 'Experts at Hand' service – giving families faster access to specialists without long waits. I know how difficult this has too often been.

Following my successful campaign for Patchway to have one of the very first Best Start Family Hubs in the country, I was glad to visit the team from Patchway Children's Centre



now running these services.

I was also pleased to see Hambrook junction fully reopen after seven years, now air quality meets legally safe limits, having worked with the council and government to help get the information needed to help this happen.

Last month, my team and I worked on 441 new cases from constituents.

I held my regular advice surgery in Winterbourne, knocked on doors to listen in Filton, and held this month's 'Coffee with Claire' event, on shaping proposals for the potential New Town status for an area from Brabazon to the Bristol and Bath Science Park, as mentioned in my column last month.

Thank you to everyone involved in spring community events. I always enjoy Winterbourne Down Village Carnival, seeing traditions like Maypole dancing passed down the generations, all in support of the fantastic Great Western Air Ambulance Charity.

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



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Downend School students in France

Students enjoy Riviera trip

GCSE students from Downend School put their language skills to real-life use on a five-day residential trip to the French Riviera.

A group of 62 Year 10 pupils had daily lessons at a language school before heading out on daily excursions to a beach, the medieval hilltop village of Eze, Monaco, Nice, Village des Fous adventure park and harbour town of Villefranche-sur-Mer.

Head of Languages Catherine Love said: "The exciting programme of excursions gave students the opportunity to put their French into practice in real-life situations while exploring some of the most beautiful locations on the Côte d'Azur.

"The evenings proved just as memorable as the excursions, with karaoke, quizzes, dancing, waffles and crêpes, helping to create what was described as 'the best energy and motivation ever'.

"As well as a memorable karaoke rendition of Billie Jean by one student that received a standing ovation, 2026 saw notable progress in French from all students, with 14 reaching the highest GCSE level standard (A2) in specific aural skills, as well as incredible levels of student engagement, motivation and support."

The pupils took part in team challenges and were awarded prizes for the best use of French language.

At the end of the trip they were given certificates recognising their achievements in French language studies.

Ms Love said: "It was an absolute delight to see students developing their language skills, broadening their horizons and discovering new things with such enthusiasm.

"Students lived out Downend School's PRIDE values of participation, respect, identity, determination and excellence throughout the visit.

"They embraced every aspect of the trip with motivation, positivity and maturity, making the Monaco GCSE French trip 2026 a resounding success."

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Hub welcomes Jackie

STAPLE Hill Community Hub is delighted to welcome a new member to the team.

Jackie Fudge joins in the role of internal operations officer, with an impressive background in the voluntary sector.

For over 13 years she worked at ERIC, the children's bowel and bladder charity. Jackie became part of the senior leadership team and headed up the charity's commercial operations, facilitated training programmes for healthcare professionals, and project managed major national conferences.



Jackie Fudge

This experience has given her a strong understanding of how effective charities operate and the importance of robust support systems behind the scenes.

Alongside her professional experience, Jackie is also a trustee for Joy of Learning, a charity she is passionate about. Her commitment to the voluntary sector clearly extends well beyond the working day.

In her new role at the Hub, Jackie will support the smooth day-to-day operation of our busy community centre.

Her responsibilities will include welcoming visitors, helping coordinate volunteers and supporting the delivery of our emergency food parcel service.

Her work will help strengthen the Hub's operations and support the wider team in continuing to deliver services to local residents.

The Hub serves some of the most vulnerable people in Staple Hill and Mangotsfield, and having strong operational support behind the scenes makes an enormous difference to the help we can offer our community. We are confident that Jackie's skills, experience and enthusiasm for the sector make her an excellent addition to the team.

If you visit the Hub, pop in and say hello — you'll receive a very warm welcome.

Katie Cooper

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Summer planting begins

I AM just going to say OMG!

Our daughter bought us a lovely birthday present recently which is a card which allows you to go into hundreds of gardens all around Britain on a 2 for 1 basis.

We have just returned from the first one we visited, which was Bowood Woodland Garden near Chippenham and what a spectacular show it was.

For only nine weeks they open the woodland to visitors to see their wonderful array of rhododendron, azalea and bluebells - and what a sight to behold.

The amazing mix of colour, from white to orange, light to deep pink, yellow to blue - wow! It was certainly a stunning backdrop; some of these bushes were over 20 feet tall and seemed to go on for miles.

I would advise anyone to go - the last day this year is June 7 but if you don't have time this month, go next year, as it is spectacular.

Back to In Bloom - hopefully summer is nearly here.

Our planting starts in the



A blaze of colour at Bowood

coming month and we have been removing the winter panolas from the planters. Although they have done us proud this year, many of the planters are drying out and so the plants are going over.

The recent dry spell is actually a blessing for us, as when we take

out the plants and compost, the waste bags are so much lighter if it is dry and the compost has not had a soaking.

We now also have a huge compost area at the Bee Garden as well, so all the plants and compost can go for mulching.

The plants that will soon be planted in the high street are our mix of petunia - blue and pink spotted, white, yellow and cerise - with the purple and white surfina, which will trail over the sides of the containers.

We will also have a deep blue salvia, which are the tall, statuesque plants in the middle of our big displays, purple pelargonium and a mix of coloured busy lizzie.

Hopefully with a mix of new compost, gel and feed, we will once again have a stunning display in the high street, which will please all of the community and anyone who is visiting Downend.

I know from talking to people that many bring friends and family to the high street for coffee and cake, and to look and admire the displays.

How proud we are of Downend!

To get involved visit our Facebook page or email dbhinbloom@gmail.com.

Jackie Baker

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Static bikes clock up £4,500

A COMMUNITY effort saw £4,500 raised over a weekend for two good causes.

Mangotsfield Community Association held its annual spin cycle fundraiser at the Red Lion pub in May 2 and 3.

Volunteers took to the saddle and cycled the 940 virtual miles from Mangotsfield to Lisbon to support St Peter's Hospice and Pancreatic Cancer UK.

The event was organised by

the MCA's Mike Heath, Karen Fox, and Matt and Sarah Proud, supported by the Red Lion team and Soul and Funky Disco.

Sponsors included CBS Consultants, Easter Compton Farm Shop, Dave the Baker from Patchway and the Window Hub.

Mangotsfield Residents Association chair Clive Heath said: "This annual event just gets better every year. It will be a great help for both charities that do so much for people."

"As well as the sponsors, the organisers would like to thank all those that took part in the spin cycle ride, the auction and the raffle."

"It was a brilliant, fun-filled bank holiday weekend - well done to our community for their support and generosity."



Fundraisers take their turn on the spin bikes

How Mangotsfield avoided the plague

A NEW study by Bristol historians has shown that people in Mangotsfield and other rural areas in the 17th century suffered less from the plague than their city counterparts.

Former Bristol University undergraduate Matthew Kilner carried out the study as part of his history dissertation, beginning his research during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Drawing on material in the Bristol Archives, he explored how the bubonic plague of 1603 spread to Bristol, going on to kill about 2,500 people - a fifth of the city's population at the time.

Matthew compared parish burial records for the centre of the city with then-rural parishes, including Mangotsfield, Brislington and Henbury.

His research has been published in the academic journal Local Population Studies.

Matthew found that, despite the city council in Bristol imposing quarantines on people travelling from infected cities,

disinfecting goods and forcing sick people to stay in their homes - known as 'locking up' - within months of the first outbreak in London, hundreds of people were dying in the city each week.

By contrast, in Mangotsfield and the other areas the records showed no effect from the plague at all, suggesting that rural communities were able to effectively isolate themselves, quarantining from the outside world.

Matthew, who is now a history teacher, said: "People often think of Plague as being a disease of the poor but that's not necessarily true. Rich areas and poor areas were hit."

By the time of 1665's Great Plague, Bristol had developed a stronger response, banning public gatherings and establishing isolation hospitals, which helped prevent another major outbreak.

Bristol University associate professor in economic history Dr Evan Jones, Matthew's dissertation supervisor, said: "The most

enduring legacy of Plague, which devastated Britain many times between 1348 and 1665, was that it set the conditions for how we deal with outbreaks.

"Students often remark on how similar the reaction to COVID-19 was to the reaction to Plague, but it's not a coincidence.

"While much has changed, in the face of a poorly understood disease and without effective treatments, the approach is still fundamentally the same: 'isolation, isolation, isolation'."

While Mangotsfield's residents managed to avoid the plague, they were not safe from disaster: Dr Jones said the worst year for deaths in the village over the period was 1597, which followed a failed harvest the previous year, and was probably due to famine.

Grain prices rose and rural communities suffered because they didn't have the money to buy enough food from elsewhere.

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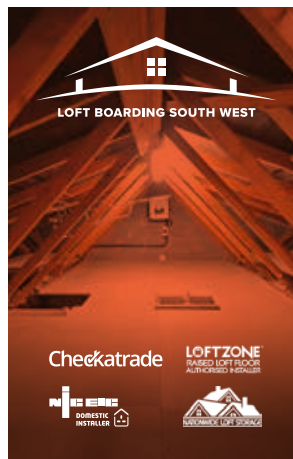
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■ **Bristol Cathedral** All pictures by Jackie Wethrell-King



■ **Aurora**



■ **Glacial Lake**

Whatever the weather

WHEN the weather is good, the motivation to get out and enjoy our surroundings comes easily. However when it's not so good, it's easy to stay indoors and watch it unfold from the safety and comfort of the sofa.

Weather, however, provides the perfect excuse to take the camera out and explore places we wouldn't ordinarily visit, both at home and when we're away.

Recent rain has made for gushing waterfalls and dramatic waves, while the fine weather at

the start of the year gave us some dramatic sunsets.

Nature also provides us with spectacular colours, from birds and autumnal trees to mountains and rocks.

Don't forget space weather: when the aurora makes an appearance, say no more!

Just getting out there gives us the chance to see things we weren't planning, such as an unexpected viewpoint, a rare animal or something that just makes us smile. Nature is full of surprises.

We are so lucky in Bristol to live in such close proximity to beaches, mountains and forests, as well as having access to a number of cities in the area that make for great architectural photos, making

it a great location from which to capture all different types of photography.

Not only is getting out in the fresh air good for the soul, taking a camera with you helps capture those moments to cherish forever.

Whether it be on a phone or purpose-built camera, we can take and share memories of special moments we have experienced, be it in the mid-summer heat, the chill of winter- or in the UK, all four seasons in one day!

I've learnt so much since joining

Downend Camera Club.

Everyone has been so welcoming and helpful and with a packed weekly programme, including guest photographers, competitions and more, it's helped me move out of 'auto' and enjoy getting out and about with my camera.

For more details visit www.downendcameraclub.org.uk or come along to the Assembly Hall, Salisbury Road, on Tuesdays at 7.45pm.

Jackie Wethrell-King

CHRISTINE'S COLUMN

Spitfire provides a birthday surprise

THE best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft a-gley, to quote Robbie Burns.

Mine certainly have, as my plan to move has been shelved.

In April it was Tony's 74th birthday, and Kirsty wanted to take her dad on a mystery trip.

As the day drew near we hoped for a warm sunny day, as it was an outdoor event. Luckily the weather was white clouds, with the odd sunny interval.

Tony sat in the front of the car along with

Kirsty while Logan, my eldest grandson, and I sat in the back. It was a pleasant drive through the countryside.

After about 40 minutes we arrived at our destination, Kemble airfield.

Tony was pleasantly surprised as we passed by the Bristol Britannia plane, round the corner to the cafe.

There were quite a number of people having something to eat or just viewing the planes. I wished I had brought my corduroy jacket, as out in the open the temperature was not as warm as it had been at home.

We decided to have a late lunch in the cafe. It was very busy, and the waiting time for food was 45 minutes, but it was very good.

We chatted aimlessly about things, and Tony

had a good view out of the cafe window.

After our meal, we ambled outside just in time to see a Spitfire getting ready to take off.

Tony has always marvelled at Spitfires. He would love to go up in one - but not at £3,000 for half an hour!

We watched it prepare to take flight and, after it had majestically reached the fluffy white clouds - the climax of the afternoon - we looked at the other aircraft on the ground, including the Britannia, which was open to the general public.

As we turned a corner, there was the Spitfire in all its glory, right in front of us, having landed some minutes before.

As we stood there in awe, I felt it was a fitting end to Tony's birthday.

Stretched resources

WE hear that our police beat, Number 201, has been reduced in staffing to a PC and PCSO.

We can only imagine how stretched they will be as a consequence.

We are stretched ourselves - this year we'll be unable to have a stall at Heathfest, as the volunteers don't exist to cover the day.

At our annual meeting and discussion evening, at the Sandringham pub in the autumn, we'll be considering how the Watch can best continue, taking this lack of volunteers into account, with no chairperson from then, too.

Of course, you may be the person to make a difference and contribute. If you'd like to find out more, contact us on 0117 956 3325 or drop us a line at contactus@bhnw.org.uk.

A warning for warmer summer days: while perhaps enjoying the back garden, do think about your security at the front, to stop the opportunist accessing an open window or door, in a quick in-and-out grab raid.

Think, too, at night, of window security at upper levels if there's easy access from an adjoining structure that someone up to no good can access.

Stay alert, too, to romance fraud.

Victims of this crime lost more than £102 million last year, as criminals continue to exploit online relationships to manipulate people into transferring money.

Analysis shows people aged 55 to 74 experienced the greatest financial losses, accounting for almost half of the total amount stolen.

Although men submitted a higher number of reports overall, women experienced higher individual losses, making up just over 40% of the total value reported.

Romance fraud is particularly linked to social media and dating sites, where offenders can create convincing false identities. Investigators are seeing increased use of AI-generated images and messages to support these profiles.

In many cases, it is also linked to fake investment opportunities, including cryptocurrency, increasing the financial risk to victims.

An awareness campaign is urging people to stay cautious when forming relationships online.

Warning signs include:

*People who develop relationships very quickly or express strong feelings early on.

*Excuses not to meet in person or to avoid live video calls.

*Requests linked to investments, medical emergencies or travel costs.

People are being urged:

*Never send money, cryptocurrency or gift cards to someone you have not met face-to-face.

*Speak to a trusted friend or family member if something feels unusual or pressured

If you think that you have been targeted, contact www.reportfraud.police.uk or call 0300 123 2040.

If money has already been transferred, contact your bank immediately.

Bill Crocker



Salon's big makeover



■ Renovation project, 1985



■ Love is in the Hair, 2025

Photographer Chris Bigg shares some of his collection of 2,000 pictures of Downend, taken decades apart

LIVING in Downend for 40 years - and taking pictures of the area throughout that time - gives a photographer the opportunity to highlight many interesting changes.

For our debut article last month I presented a picture of Wottons' red Bedford removal lorries, lined up in Dial Lane in 1985, along with the houses built recently on the same spot, in a photo taken last year.

This month's photos come from a location barely 100 metres away, and were taken the same 40 year distance apart in time.

Readers will recognise Love is in the Hair, a well-named hairdressing and beauty salon on the corner of Downend Road and Chestnut Road.

The business started in 2015 and recently won an award from the parish council for its window display.

The site was previously a florist called Stems and, for a short time, was a ladies' boutique.

In the 1985 photo, the same building is caught in the middle of renovation work, fenced off with a skip outside.

Notice the yellow old-style road sign to the left of the building.

Do you remember what the building was used for before the builders went in?

Enjoy your trip down memory lane!



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Putting the right help in the right place

At some point in our lives, most of us will either experience mental ill health ourselves or support someone close to us who does.

The mental health charity Mind estimates that one in four people will experience a mental health problem in any given year, making it clear how important it is that the right help is available when people reach crisis point.

The police are not always the right agency to respond to every incident: most of the time health professionals are far better placed to help. Recognising that - and building services around it - is essential to protecting people at their most vulnerable.

There are times when an emergency service response is necessary. That is why I am a co-commissioner, alongside the NHS and the fire service, of the Integrated Access Partnership (IAP). This model brings together mental health services, ambulance services and out-of-hours primary care to ensure that when emergency services are contacted, people receive the most appropriate and timely response to their mental health needs.

The IAP is delivered through a multidisciplinary team within Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, working alongside South Western Ambulance Service and BrisDoc.

In practice, this includes:

*The Mental Health Specialist Desk, where

mental health nurses review and triage 999 calls involving mental health needs, supporting decisions about the most appropriate response.

*Mental Health Response Vehicles, providing blue light responses directly to people in mental health crisis, led by specialist clinicians.

*The Emergency Services Professionals Line, giving police, fire and ambulance staff immediate access to expert clinical advice while responding to incidents.

A particularly important development has been the deployment of the Mental Health Response Vehicles. More people who trigger emergency call outs are now being supported and treated at the scene, rather than taken to hospital. This reduces distress for individuals and relieves pressure elsewhere in the system.

The Mental Health Specialist Desk has also been crucial in reducing unnecessary police attendance at mental health-related incidents. This has been strengthened by a dedicated police link officer role, based within the South Western Ambulance call centre.

Officers in this role work alongside clinicians on a 24/7 rota, supporting the triage of calls. Where the link officer is in place, police deployments to mental health incidents have reduced by 20 to 30%.

The IAP has calculated that for every £1 invested in this role, £3 is saved – a clear



Clare Moody A&SPCC

writes for the Voice

example of how doing the right thing for people also delivers better value for public money.

This approach means that, where appropriate, police officers and ambulances can be stood down and replaced by specialist support better suited to the situation. We avoid unnecessary trips to emergency departments, deploy clinicians directly to people in crisis, and free up emergency services to respond where there is an immediate risk of harm.

Police will always attend when there is a real and immediate threat to life. But protecting people also means getting them the right support, at the right time.

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WG Grace - master of lawn bowls



A plaque honouring WG Grace's role in bowling at Christ Church Downend

AS the summer sports season arrives it is worth noting that WG Grace, Downend's most famous son, was not only an exceptional cricketer: in his latter years he also represented England at the sport of lawn bowls.

WG Grace was born in 1848 in Downend House on North Street, when Downend was a fairly modest rural community.

In 1850 the family moved a couple of hundred yards across the road to another house called The Chestnuts, where the current BT building now stands.

When the family first moved in, there was an orchard in front to the house, much of which was removed by his father Henry Grace to create a cricket pitch, and it was here that WG honed his skills as a cricketer, on what is now the Co-op car park!

By the time he had reached his early 50s Grace had given up playing cricket for England and showed an increasing interest in lawn bowls.

He was instrumental in creating a bowling green next to his cricket club in Sydenham and established the London County Bowling Club.

He did much to formalise the game in England and, in 1903, set up the English Bowling Association, of which he became the first president.

This has evolved in recent years into Bowls England, the governing body for the sport of lawn bowls in this country.

Grace was appointed England captain in 1903 and so became one of those comparatively rare sportsmen who have represented their country in two sports.

There is a plaque in Christ Church recognising his contribution towards the sport and, across the road in the parish hall, the Downend Short Mat Bowls Club is continuing to keep the spirit of bowls alive in the very

heart of the community in which WG Grace grew up.

Mike Parsons

Card gives peace of mind

DO you look after a family member or friend who couldn't manage without your help?

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Make sure you're prepared for the unexpected: find out more at www.carersbsg.org.uk/CEC or call CarersLine on 0117 965 2200.

Adrian Robson
Carers Support (Bristol & South Gloucestershire)

Book's good cause

I HAVE had epilepsy since I was little, so understand the challenges it brings.

Willow is my seizure alert dog and gets lots of attention wherever we go.

I have just published my latest book about Willow, a cheeky but sweet Labradoodle.

It raises money for Tia's Treasures, a wonderful not-for-profit organisation that helps make learning about epilepsy engaging, supportive, and accessible for children and families, and for epilepsy awareness too.

I've been busy fundraising and making epilepsy information packs and donating them to local primary schools and libraries. One school was very grateful, as a child had just been diagnosed with epilepsy and could give the pack to her family.

The packs have the Willow book inside, as well as my eldest child's epilepsy book for kids, and lots of leaflets and stickers too.

You can buy the book by searching for 'Willow The Little Helper Dog' on Amazon.

Sarah Reid

Enjoy a concert

THIS year the Cleeve Singers' summer concert is on Saturday, July 4, at Lincombe Barn.

Starting at 7.30pm, our programme is light and happy, with songs from well-known past shows interspersed with favourites like Fats' Waller's Ain't Misbehavin'.

Tickets to the concert cost £6 and are available from Downend Card & Gifts (cash only), from Downend Folk House and on the door.

Tea, coffee and soft drinks will be available during the interval.

Patricia Holmes
Secretary

Visit our garden

THE beautiful gardens at St Peter's Hospice will open to the public this June.

Our annual Open Gardens Day, which last year sold out, is taking place on Sunday June 7, when you can enjoy the much-loved gardens

in bloom.

Refreshments will also be available including home-made cream teas.

Our gardens are created by our community, for our community. Volunteers, staff and supporters make them a welcoming, therapeutic space for patients and visitors.

Every ticket purchased and every donation made helps local patients and their families get the care they deserve. It's so important for patients and visitors to look out and see a beautiful environment, or to be able to come outside for some peaceful reflection. Events such as this make all the difference in helping us to provide that.

St Peter's Hospice is Bristol's only adult hospice providing in-patient care as well as community support to those with life-limiting illnesses.

For more information or to book tickets visit tinyurl.com/y2rhe672.

Anneke van Eijkern
Head gardener

NEWS: CONTACT US AT: NEWS@DOWNENDVOICE.CO.UK

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■ Stoke Park by Ed Shorney



■ Battery Point by Jeff McKinstry



■ Starlight on the Wye by Adam Wakefield

Dramatic landscapes close to home

MOST photographers have a favourite genre - close-ups, animals, still life and portraits come to mind – but landscapes are enjoyed by most.

Find a remote piece of countryside, draw out its beauty and capture it on camera. I know that I'm no exception: my main corridor is lined with photographs of Arctic Norway.

Exotic locations offer easy

reward, photographically, but can be difficult and expensive to get to, so what are the alternatives?

Well, there are plenty you can reach without involving expensive travel: they just require a little more thought to make them interesting.

Here are three recent examples from a competition in the club and none of them required travel to distant places.

The most easily accessible is shown in 'Stoke Park', by Ed Shorney. We've all seen it travelling on the M32 - the Dower House standing high above the valley, dominating the landscape - but less commonly from the park itself.

The eye is drawn immediately to the yellow of the Dower House but the Duchess Pond occupies the foreground. All looks so peaceful, but what's that little splash of blue in the upper right of the picture? Why, a motorway sign!

Jeff McKinstry went a little further afield with his photo 'Battery Point'. Seen as a great viewpoint across the Bristol Channel, Jeff has taken a different view.

Developed in dramatically-contrasted black and white, it looks storm-tossed and threatening: an example of the magic of photography.

Adam Wakefield has gone a little further afield with 'Starlight on the Wye'. Taken at night, this also has a watery foreground, but the eye is drawn to a dramatically star-filled sky.

To get a photo like this, you need to be away from light pollution and use a long exposure. But there, in the middle of the photograph, is a railway bridge with a train crossing and supplying an arrow of artificial light. What could have been intrusive actually serves to pull the top and bottom

together.

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 competitions, practical evenings, guest speakers and in-house critiques - a great way to improve your skills.

Your first visit is free, and Lincombe Barn is conveniently located on Overndale Road, with plenty of parking on-site.

For more details visit our website, www.lincombebarncameraclub.co.uk, or contact us at lincombe.barn@gmail.com.

Check out that landscape and get snapping. **Sid Stace**

BRISTOL u3a

Are you in touch with your creative side?

CAN you remember the last time you picked up a pen or pencil to draw something?

When was the last time that you picked up a paintbrush, apart from when you decided to give one of your rooms a facelift?

For plenty of us, including me, the answer to both questions would be: "When I was at school; a lifetime ago".

There are many scientific studies that demonstrate that creative expression has the potential to promote cognitive, emotional,

physical, and social well-being in people of all ages.

Bristol u3a has just set up a new informal group, Art in 15 Minutes, to encourage people to get creative. The idea is to grab a cuppa and then doodle, sketch or paint something in the time it takes you to drink your tea.

With no pressure to attend a special meeting or to use specialist equipment, this is something everybody can do at home. Members share their efforts on WhatsApp.

We're fortunate to have two more art and crafting groups that meet in our local area: Painting & Drawing, where members work on their current projects in a social atmosphere, and Eastside Crafters, where members join in a

suggested craft or work on their own project.

Why not come along to one of our café socials to find out more about Bristol u3a? All are scheduled from 2-4pm, and in June you'll find us at Orchard Coffee & Bakery in St George on the 5th, the Market Café and Lounge in Kingswood on the 9th, the Crafty Egg in Fishponds on the 17th, Mokka Downend on the 22nd and Hillfields Park Community Centre on the 25th.

Curious but can't make it to a social? Email me at learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk and I'll do my best to answer your questions. You can try "Bristol u3a groups" into your favourite search engine to see the full range of activities.

Lindsay Gough

New powers to make big decisions

THE WEST of England has secured new powers to make more decisions locally.

The landmark English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act is great news for our transport, strategic planning, economic development, and health services – just like the overnight visitor levy (or 'tourism tax') powers, which are similarly set to come our way.

Important decisions in these areas will be made for people who live and work here, by people who also live and work here.

We want the West to be somewhere everyone can grow and thrive. Our Child Poverty Action Plan is focused on reducing the cost of living for families, supporting children, connecting our young people and families to opportunity and services, and pioneering new approaches for children and families.

In May, I announced that Kids Go Free will return on our buses until 2029 for every summer, Christmas, and Easter school holiday. Journeys from low-income areas doubled year-on-year thanks to the offer. That is alongside our regional fare freeze, which will keep children's regular bus fares fixed at £1 until 2029.

Last month we launched our Child Poverty Partnership Board. Across our region 67,500 children are growing up in poverty - enough

to fill Ashton Gate, the Memorial Stadium, Twerton Park and the Bath Rec at the same time, and more.

These numbers will fall dramatically with the abolition of the two-child benefit cap, making families in our region £23 million better off.

We also have big ambitions to get our region moving. I visited the new Charfield station, which is under construction, in May; it will be so exciting to see passenger trains return to this part of South Gloucestershire for the first time in 60 years when it opens next spring. Bristol Brabazon is also taking shape and is set to open this autumn.

The contract for building new stations in Portishead and Pill was also signed recently - a historic moment for the whole of the West of England. Through this new £200 million train line, the West of England and North Somerset can connect more people to work, nature, and leisure.

It seems particularly fitting this should happen at the same time as North Somerset Council have voted to join the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

We already work closely together on so many projects, so this feels like a natural next step.

With our region's geography soon to match



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

the reality of life here, which doesn't stop at council boundaries, we are in a great position to secure even more funding and deliver more change than people can see and feel.

I'm thrilled to announce that Councillor Tony Dyer, the leader of Bristol City Council, is my new deputy mayor for the next 12 months - the first appointment of a Green Party politician as deputy mayor of any combined authority.

I'm very grateful for the support and dedication of Cllr Kevin Guy over the past year, and will continue to work with all our council leaders across our region as we start this new chapter, with the role rotating each year.

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Looking ahead with optimism

WE are now moving into 'summer fair' territory, which involves a good deal of planning in terms of ensuring that we have the right stock to bring along for you at this year's outdoor events.

We are going to attend four local fairs this year: the Refugee Festival in Page Park on June 27, Frenchay Flower Show on July 11, the King George V Anniversary Fair on August 16 and Lincombe Barn's early winter event, on a date to be announced.

These are all high-quality local events: if you've not been to any of them, then go for it!

We look forward to seeing you there, chatting about what we do, and maybe selling you one or two of our quality products, or taking an order for a bespoke item that you want us to build!



The Men in Sheds stall at last year's Frenchay Flower Show

Things are progressing nicely with our move to Cuckoo Lane.

The interior has been cleared. Project manager Chris and members have been building a communal work table, which will seat six members (and is looking great), and the building of the mezzanine floor is next on the list.

All of this comes at a cost, and it would be fair to say that we always knew that the move and

refurbishment at Unit 3 would be a financial challenge.

What we have done, as a group, was to seek out local support from charitable organisations in the hope that they might be able to help us in our transition.

Our faith in local support has borne fruit and, so far, we have had support from some tremendous local organisations, namely, the Triodos Foundation, the John

James Foundation and the Anchor Society.

Their invaluable support is enabling us to approach the next year or so with a heightened degree of confidence and optimism. We're not quite there yet, and we would appreciate any more support that is out there, but we are close!

Finally, there has been lots of positive feedback in relation to the Mangotsfield book exchange that we put up a few weeks ago.

The last I heard, the shelves were full, and there was even a bag of books alongside, so that counts as a great success.

On the back of the publicity from that (and other projects), we have had some interesting requests arriving from local communities for a range of projects - watch this space.

If you would like to know more about the Mensheds organisation, the national website can be found at mensheds.org.uk

If you're interested in joining us, contact dave.mensheds@gmail.com or downendmensheds@gmail.com.

Dave Alcock

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BROMLEY HEATH WI

THE evenings are getting warmer, and Bromley Heath WI have been taking advantage of this in their many recent trips.

There have been a number of exciting trips undertaken, including to Highgrove gardens followed by a lovely pub lunch, Six the musical at Bath Theatre Royal and The Greatest Showman at Bristol Hippodrome.

Our craft, supper, lunch and wine clubs all continue to thrive and meet regularly, giving the members a variety of social groups to join.

For the May WI meeting, the Bristol and Avon Rivers Trust came to discuss our local rivers.

Bromley Heath WI's meeting is usually on the second Thursday of the month at Bromley Heath Junior School, starting at 7.30pm.

If you would like to join us for an evening, please contact us through our email address bromleyheathwi@gmail.com - you would be very welcome.

Jane Hickey

DOWNEND WI

WITH spring now in full swing and brighter days ahead, it's been a wonderful time to come together and enjoy our recent activities.

In April, we were delighted to welcome Ashley Syms-Rees, who introduced us to the fun of line dancing. It was a wonderful evening, filled with laughter, friendship, and plenty of enthusiasm as we learned some new steps together.

At our next meeting on May 26, we'll be welcoming the Blood Bikes charity. They do incredible work across the South West, providing a free, out-of-hours emergency transport service for blood, medical supplies, and vital equipment.

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

Meetings coming up include a visit from Alan Toyne, author of Gorillas in Our Midst, on June 30 and Alison Bacon, sharing how old photographs inspired her book, on July 28.

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.

As a member, you're free to take part in as much or as little as you like. Our varied programme offers something for everyone, and it's a great way to meet new people and

try new experiences.

If you'd like to find out more about joining, please get in touch at downendwi@yahoo.co.uk. Guests are always welcome for a small fee of £3, which includes refreshments.

We look forward to welcoming you!

**Linda Russ
President**

FRENCHAY WI

COUNTRY Markets visited us in May, selling lots of home-made cakes and preserves, amongst other things.

We also enjoyed the wonderful presentation by our speaker Rob Foster on Acker Bilk, best known for his big hit Stranger on the Shore. It was a lovely evening.

It was time to vote on this year's two proposed resolutions to be discussed by the National Federation of WIs annual meeting - 'accessible public toilet facilities' and 'Action On Women's homelessness', which we thought were worthwhile subjects.

I'm pleased to say our speaker in June will be Angela Ryan, telling us all about folk and canal art.

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 the secretary at FrenchayWI@gmail.com.

Linda O'Carroll

STAPLE HILL WI

THE latest day out with our walking group occurred on one of the warmest days of the year so far.

Meeting at Vassalls Park, we made our way to Frenchay Common through fields and woodland.

It was hard to imagine we were only a few miles from Bristol city centre. The sights and scents of spring flowers, such as bluebells and tree blossoms, were wonderful.

Lunch at a local pub was enjoyed by all before we made our way back to the car park.

Our coffee mornings are as popular as ever, and are a particular boon for those who are experiencing loneliness or are just bogged down with life's problems.

There is a wealth of knowledge and experience to be shared amongst our WI friends in times of need and support.

At our next meeting our speaker will be telling us all about metal-detecting, which has been highlighted recently in the TV series, The Detectorists. It should be interesting.

Our regular monthly meetings are on the third Tuesday of each month, starting at 7.30pm, in Christ Church Parish Hall, North Street, Downend. There is plenty of parking.

Please come along and see what we are about or visit our website at staplehillwiweebly.com.

Anne Mealing

RODWAY RUBIES WI

OUR speaker at our April meeting was John Volanthen, who gave a memorable talk about his caving experiences.

He is best known as the first diver to locate and contact the missing Thai Wild Boar youth football team with his diving partner in 2018.

He also planned and participated in the boys' rescue, for which he received the George Medal.

It was a fascinating, inspiring and very well-presented talk.

Our May speakers' talk was about the Mercy Ships charity, their work and medical support around the world.

Our charity for this year is

BUST: volunteers supporting the Breast Care Centre at Southmead Hospital and the Avon Breast Screening Service.

We are holding a coffee morning on June 20 at the URC in Cosham Street, Mangotsfield to raise funds for them, and will be serving hot and cold drinks as well as cakes on the day between 10am and 1pm.

There will be plants and books for sale, as well as a raffle, and everyone is welcome to come and join us for coffee/tea and a chat.

Before that event we are going on a trip to Buckfast Abbey and Dartmouth on June 4, and hoping the weather is kind to us. Members are free to pursue their own agenda when they arrive at each place, whether shopping, dining or sight seeing.

Our trip to Buckingham Palace in October is already full and much anticipated, following glimpses of the exhibition contents on TV. We are also busy planning events for later in the year, including a jewellery workshop and another nearer Christmas, to craft festive decorations.

We meet at 7.30pm on the third Monday of each month at St James Church Hall in Richmond Road, Mangotsfield.

Jane Eldon

MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES

WE love to send our birthday wishes to our members each month, and in May one of our founder Dollies celebrated her 80th.

We have just had our meeting in the hall and our speaker presented a history of Bristol Zoo, with a slide presentation of black and white and colour photographs.

Some of you may remember Alfred the gorilla and many of the animals back in time: the monkey temple, Rosie the elephant, the many smaller species, Johnny Morris and the beautiful gardens. I remember myself being taken there as a little girl by my parents and remembering the old big pennies when you wanted to spend one.

It also seemed to coincide with Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday celebrations. We were all captivated for an hour and half, after which there were many questions our speaker was happy to answer over coffee and cake with us.

We were also delighted to receive eight visitors this time, who have now become Dollies.

June will commence with our visit to St Nicholas Market underground tour. We are going to congregate in the Commercial Rooms across the road at around 10.30am and meet up with our guide at 11am. The following week in the hall we have 'Gentle Moves' - more about this next time.

Our monthly pub lunch at the Lamb in Mangotsfield is, as always, very well supported: our thanks to Kate and her team.

For more information on our group email carol@applause.co.uk.

Carol Coombes

**Let us know your Community News
email news@downendvoice.co.uk**

Saints lift League Cup

DOWNEND Saints Under-18s marked the end of their youth football careers by lifting the Bristol Combination U18 League Cup.

It was one of two cup finals the team, which plays in the Bristol U18 Combination Division 1 after recent back-to-back promotions, played in May.

First they beat several teams who compete at a much higher level - including Manor Farm, AEK Boco and Longlevens - on their way to the Gloucestershire FA U18 Youth Shield final, also known as the County Cup.

The Saints were once again underdogs against Hallen, and lost 4-0 - but they went into the League Cup final three days later

as favourites.

Taking on Warmley at Yate Town's Lodge Road ground, Jonny Everett and Charlie Smith scored as the Saints won 2-0 to lift a trophy in their last ever game together as a team.

U18s manager Tom Magee, who has managed many of the players since U11 level, said: "We lifted it a little enthusiastically and the handle came off!"

"Almost the whole team are going on a lads holiday to Malia later in July, which shows the bond they share."

Saints chairman Steve Hunter said: "Many of these boys have been together since the age of four, representing either Bromley Heath or Downend Saints.

"When the teams came together in 2023 to form our first Under-18s side in many years, it quickly became clear that this was a special group with a strong bond and a shared commitment.



Downend Saints Under-18s raise the League Cup

"Under the leadership of coaches Tom, Tony, David, and Kevin, the team has flourished—not just in terms of results, but in the way they have carried themselves.

"Our core values of fair play and inclusivity are not just words; they are reflected in the

actions of these young men week in, week out.

"Many have given back to the club by coaching and refereeing younger age groups, setting a fantastic example and acting as true role models for those following in their footsteps."

Mangos honour season's stars

MANGOTSFIELD United celebrated the top performers of the 2025/26 season at its awards night.

The club hosted a three-course dinner at its Cossham Street ground in May to celebrate the men's team and women's team, as well as the people who keep the club running and its wider community.

Award winners included Archie Morris, who was voted the Players' Player of the Year, Josh Dempsey, who was the Manager's Player of the Year and Archie Morris, who was voted the Supporters' Player of the Year.

Lewis Powell was presented with the Golden Boot for the first team's top scorer and Frankie McKay was the Young Player of the Year.

Recognising work behind the scenes, Rich Iles won the Andy Milne Volunteer of the Year Award.

The club said: "We are grateful for the

teams we've had this season, the dedication they've put into the game and the attitude they keep, win or lose.

"Congratulations, and thank you to all our award winners.

"We thank all of our amazing supporters, sponsors, volunteers, staff, committee and anyone associated with Mangotsfield United.

"We also want to thank our current manager Ollie Price and previous manager Glyn Ashton, for all their continued hard work around the team and the club."

Flyers celebrate a successful season

DOWNEND Flyers are celebrating a season of success for teams across the women's and girls' football club.

The women's First Team secured their place in the South West Regional Women's Football League with an impressive 2-0 home victory over Gloucester City Reserves, ensuring the side will continue competing at regional level next season.

The women's Reserve Team also had plenty to celebrate following a fantastic 6-1 win against Cinderford

Town, securing an excellent fourth-place finish in the Gloucestershire County Division 2. It has been a hugely positive season for the squad under the guidance of Matt Smith, in his first season coaching women's football. His leadership and ability to bring the team together has been evident throughout the year.

There was more success for the Women's A Team, who ended their season in style with a remarkable 12-0 victory over Ashton Keynes. The result secured a solid mid-table finish and highlighted the strength and depth developing throughout the club.

The Under-15s Harriers enjoyed another memorable campaign, narrowly missing out on back-to-back Division A titles. Despite battling hard and showing tremendous sportsmanship and dignity throughout, the side lost a top-of-the-table clash 3-1 away at



The U7s Crows at St Nicholas football tournament in Chipping Sodbury

Hutton, confirmed the title for the hosts.

There is no doubt the team will return even stronger next year.

Tournament season is now underway and the club has already enjoyed a hugely successful start, securing no fewer than six pieces of silverware during the opening weekend.

Younger age groups continue to enjoy the fun, friendship and non-competitive spirit that tournament football brings.

Good luck to all Flyers teams taking part in tournaments over the coming weeks: the club's own annual tournament takes place on June 27 and 28, and is always one of the highlights of the local football calendar.

Steve Poole

School hosts youth boxing tournament

MANGOTSFIELD School was the venue for a tournament showcasing young boxing talent from across the region.

A large audience enjoyed 13 bouts of high-quality boxing at the event, organised by Downend Boxing Club.

The afternoon included the debut of 14-year-old Dylan Powell, who took part in a skills contest against Charlie Butcher of Synwell Boxing Club, Wotton-under-Edge.

Dylan's father, Matt, boxed for Downend 25 years ago, and is now one of the club's volunteer coaches, making it a proud family moment.

Another Downend coach also had a proud day, as his son competed for the 11th time.

Miley Conors, 13, faced Bradley Fisher of Worcester Boxing Club in an exciting contest, with both boxers giving everything.

Sharp boxing and accurate long shots earned Miley a well-deserved points victory, much to the pride of his father, Jimmy.

Making his first competitive appearance was Louis Stevens, 14, who boxed Henry Davis of Warminster.

Louis made a strong, fast start, taking the contest to his opponent, before the final two rounds developed into a toe-to-toe battle. Henry claimed the points verdict, but it was a valuable learning experience and a positive debut for Louis.

Next, Kael King faced Stuart Hope of Worcester in a tough, all-action bout. The more experienced Worcester boxer stayed the busier throughout, to secure a points decision.

UWE student Morgan Horne, 21, boxed Jake Rodd of Barum Boxing Club, who came determined to fight. Clever movement and well-timed changes of pace earned Morgan a clear unanimous points victory.

Also making his debut was Flaviu Juravle, 19, who faced Muhammed Ibrahim of Grange Boxing Club, Cardiff. The strong Welsh boxer started aggressively and forced a referee's protection count. Flaviu showed great resilience and skill, boxing intelligently, and although he lost on points, it was an impressive first performance.

Bristol University student Louis D'Abreo, 19, had his second contest against Abdul Wardak of Barum Boxing Club. Wardak displayed exceptional fitness and strength, but Louis countered effectively with slick counter-punching and smart shot selection to take a unanimous decision.

Other Downend boxers in action were Paddy Connors, who lost on points to Harrison Hopkins of Penhill, and Ollie Mitchell, who lost on points to Lee Litherland of Yeovil.

An excellent afternoon of boxing



Coach Jimmy Conors with his son, Miley

concluded with Bristol University student Alex Richardson, 20, against Obi Cridland of Watchet Boxing Club. After an even opening round, Alex settled into his rhythm, landing fast, straight punches that brought a standing protection count for his opponent. Alex secured a unanimous points victory.

Every boxer gave 100%, and it was fantastic to see the generations coming through the club, from father to son.

Craig Turner, Head Coach

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Seb's Team GB call

DOWNEND kickboxer Sebastian Heyes has won a call-up to Team GB to fight in the sport's World Championships.

Seb, aged 14, fought in the GB Nationals in Barnsley in April and won his place on the national squad with a silver medal in the Kick Light under-57kg category.

He was taking part in his first GB squad training session in Birmingham in May, before another two squad training sessions and a weekend at Lilleshall National Sports Centre, ahead of the Wako World Youth Kickboxing Championships in Italy in September.

Mum Kate Menear said: "We are all so incredibly proud of Seb. His passion and determination to reach this point has been inspiring."

Seb needs sponsorship to help fund his journey to the world championships - businesses or individuals interested in helping should email k84u@hotmail.co.uk.



Seb Heyes

Ruby's international step

DOWNEND padel player Ruby Mathias has entered the International Padel Federation's junior competition, pitting her against Europe's best players.

Ruby, 13, picked up her first points on the tour at a tournament in Ghent, Belgium, where she narrowly missed out on a semi-final place after a final set tie-break in which she had three match points, having fought back from 6-1 and 5-2 down, in a quarter final played in front of a packed crowd.

Ruby will compete in tournaments in England and Europe over the summer, and is in the UK top ten for her age.

Early silverware to start cricket season

THE first Carsons & Mangotsfield side to take the field in anger this year were the Under-19s, who finally got to play their rain-delayed 2025 Gloucestershire Youth Cricket League U19 Development Cup final.

Batting first, they made up for lost time with a commanding 171-5 from 20 overs, Ollie Catton's unbeaten 50 and Harry Ravenscroft's 46 setting the tone.

The job wasn't done, but regular wickets kept opponents Stoke Bishop in check.

The Buckingham brothers led the squeeze: Max with 2-23, Isaac miserly with 1-13, as the reply stalled at 133-5.

A deserved win and a trophy in the bag - not a bad way to open the season!

Having spent game week one as unpaid Met Office consultants - poring and pondering over perpetually poised precipitation - the senior sides finally put the weather apps away and enjoyed a full weekend's cricket in game week two.



The 1st XI set the tone with a commanding seven-wicket win over Winterbourne.

Craig Woodland was the pick of the bowlers, with a superb 4-8 as Winterbourne could only muster 93 all out.

Kieran Gallagher then eased through the chase with an unbeaten 52: a fine start to life in Division 3.

The 2nd XI followed suit, seeing off Whitechurch by 32 runs. Harry Ravenscroft's

a stylish 54 to go with his earlier two wickets.

The Sunday XI wrapped the weekend up with a convincing 127-run win over Hampset, the Woodland duo stealing the show: Jack's 4-9 narrowly outshining dad Craig's 4-16. Household bragging rights may be lively this summer!

This year marks a milestone with the launch of the CMCC Women's team: softball cricket for all experience levels.

Four friendlies and several festivals are already lined up; training is Wednesdays, 6.30-7.30pm, with informal Saturday nets.

Whether you're brand new or returning to the game, come down and get involved in the club's first ever all-female cricket team!

If you want to be part of a growing, family club, contact info.carsonsandmangotsfield@gmail.com or follow us on our social media pages.

Jake Lane

captain's knock of 102 set things up before a middle-order wobble left them on 209-8.

A disciplined bowling effort finished the job, with George Clatworthy's 4-33 the standout from a young and promising attack.

The 3rd XI endured a tougher afternoon in their local derby, losing to newly-promoted Bristol Aces.

However, the evergreen Mike Norris rolled back the years with

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Don't let gardening give you growing pains

THERE'S something magical about this time of year. The sun comes out, the grass starts growing at what feels like double speed and suddenly the garden you've been politely ignoring all winter is calling your name.

Like clockwork, as if we're in tune with the changing seasons, we see the same thing every year in clinic... a rush of patients on Monday morning with sore backs after a weekend of "just a bit of gardening."

Before we go any further, it's worth saying this clearly, we love gardening as a form of exercise. It's one of the best things you can do for your body and your mind. You're outside in the fresh air, moving in lots of different ways, building strength, improving flexibility and getting that sense of achievement that only comes from seeing the results of your own hard work. Done well, it's brilliant for keeping you active and resilient.

The reality? Gardening rarely amounts to just "a bit." It usually involves three weeks of digging, lifting, pruning and hauling, squeezed into one ambitious weekend. Sound familiar?

The good news is you don't need to choose between a beautiful garden and a happy back. With a few smart habits, you can enjoy the whole process and the fruits of your labour.

Gardening is a marathon, not a sprint

It's tempting to go all in when the weather turns, but your body is sometimes not quite as enthusiastic as your ambitious gardening plans.

Pace yourself

Break down jobs into manageable chunks and spread them over several days. Set a timer if you have to – you'll find that 25 to 30 minutes of work followed by a short break works wonders. Not only will your back thank you, you will also enjoy it more.

Little and often wins the race

Long, continuous periods of bending and lifting are what really aggravate the back.

Instead, consider taking regular breaks before you feel you need one, change positions frequently and mix heavier jobs with lighter tasks. Think of it like training for a marathon – you wouldn't go from zero to running 20 miles in one go would you?

Work smarter, not lower

If you have ever watched Monty Don on Gardeners' World, you will notice he does a lot of prep work at waist height. There's a reason for that.

Use potting tables or benches, raised beds, long handled tools and kneeling pads or garden stools. The less time you spend bent over, the happier your back and hamstrings will be.

Bend your knees, not your back

A classic mistake is bending from the waist for prolonged periods. That is when we start to see not just back pain, but tight, sore hamstrings too.

Instead, squat or kneel where possible, keep the load close to your body and use your legs to do the work. Your back is brilliant, but it's not designed to do everything alone.

Share the load

If you're tackling heavier jobs, such as lifting pots, shifting soil, or moving sleepers, don't attempt to go solo.

Grab a friend, rope in family members, or hire a bit of help. Splitting the load doesn't just halve the effort, it massively reduces your risk of injury. It's also a lot more enjoyable.

Warm up like you mean it

We often forget that gardening is exercise.

Before you start, take a few minutes to loosen up. Gentle stretches for your back, hips and hamstrings, along with a few squats or lunges, can make a big difference.

And when you finish, a quick stretch down helps your body recover ready for the next day.

Listen to your body

This might be the most important one.

If your back starts to ache, pay attention. If pain creeps above a 2 or 3 out of 10, that is your cue to stop, rest and reassess. When it comes to looking after your body, pushing through rarely ends well.

A good rule of thumb is that if it feels worse the next morning, you probably did a bit too much.

Dress the part

Gardening might not feel like extreme sport, but the right kit still matters. Wear gloves to protect your hands, supportive footwear for stability and eye protection if you're cutting or strimming. And on sunny days, don't forget a hat.

I admit it... when it comes to garden headwear, I have gone for the full Monty Don look. Would I wear it out? Absolutely not. But in the garden, it does the job perfectly.

Enjoy the process

Remember, gardening is one of the best things you can do for both your physical and mental health. Fresh air, movement and a real sense of achievement – it ticks all the boxes.

So slow it down, take your time and make sure you enjoy it. Your goal should be not just to create a perfect garden, but to be able to enjoy it pain free when the job is done.

However, if your back does decide to protest despite your best efforts, we're always here to help. But, as ever, prevention is better than cure.

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Play off defeat ends Cleve's outstanding season

CLEVE RFC's promotion campaign ended with defeat in their second Regional 2 Severn play-off away to Chippenham.

Following a hard-fought win over Keynsham, the match was played in bright sunshine in front of a large and boisterous crowd.

Play followed a similar pattern to the two league games, with both sides playing attractive attacking rugby, with very physical defence.

Cleve opened the scoring on five minutes, with a try from Henry Williams after a Chippenham attack broke down just outside their 22; Matt Jarvis converted.

The home side quickly struck back, with a converted try from a driving maul following a lineout. Following pressure from Cleve, Matt Lane scored a try wide out, with the conversion missed.

Chippenham then scored a converted try following a penalty on Cleve's 5m line and quickly followed this with another converted try on 20 minutes. The next try was scored and converted by Matt Jarvis, after excellent interplay by Cleve forwards and backs.

After 30 minutes the score was 21-19 to Chippenham and the game was very competitive and close.

However the home side then scored three converted tries before half-time, to build up a 42-19 lead and leave Cleve facing a huge task



Matt Lane scored in Cleve's defeat at Chippenham

in the second half.

Cleve attacked from the kick-off and put the home side under pressure. Josh Davis and Theo Garnett scored tries and Matt

Jarvis converted both, bringing the score after 55 minutes to 42-33 and all to play for.

However it was not to be Cleve's day: Chippenham scored a further two tries and a conversion, plus a penalty, to make the score 57-33 after 68 minutes.

Cleve then scored a push over try from their dominant pack, which Jarvis converted, but Chippenham had the final say with an unconverted try to end the game with a 62-40 win. They went on to beat Tiverton in the next round before losing the final to Chew Valley.

This has been an outstanding season for a relatively young Cleve side, who gained promotion to this league last season and achieved success against established clubs, finishing third and losing just four games all season, with two of those against runaway league winners Trowbridge.

On the way, huge wins of 93-0, 110-5 and 113-7 were the standout results, helping Cleve become top scorers in the league with a massive 1,109 points and only 418 conceded.

Matthew Jarvis's kicking was outstanding all season, scoring a record 329 points from only 20 games.

Massive thanks to the coaches, players and supporters. We can look forward to next season - onward and upward!

Lyn Smith

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