

downendvoice

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August 2026, Issue 158



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



These students from Downend and Mangotsfield Sixth Form are preparing to start university courses, apprenticeships and careers after achieving what school leaders described as "an excellent set of A-level and vocational results" *Exam results: Pages 8-15*

Bring back the banks

NEW attempts are being made to bring banking services back to Downend's high street after the closure of its post office.

Councillors have made fresh applications to set up a banking hub, which would provide in-person services from the

country's major high street banks in a shared base.

And the area's MP has set up a meeting with a government minister to discuss the loss of the post office counter, which closed in August when Morrisons shut its convenience store in

Downend Road.

A previous bid for a banking hub was turned down last year - but since then not only the post office but also the two closest 'big four' banks, in Fishponds, have closed.

Turn to Page 3



Eclipse watching

Readers have sent us photos of how they watched the biggest solar eclipse over England since 1999. This one is by Kate Yapp.

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Tree rescue bid

People have been organising to water young trees in parks to try and keep them alive through drought conditions.

PAGE 5

Wait to see GP

More than half of patients are waiting longer than a week for appointments at surgeries in the Downend area.

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Screen blocked

Plans for a digital advertising screen in front of a church have been refused.

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Craig Anthonys

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Growing healthy kids – the Chiro connection



Matt Sutton

Children are wonderfully resilient

They run, climb, skate, tumble, dance — and throw themselves wholeheartedly into the things they love. Along the way, they collect the usual knocks, bumps and strains, most of which pass without much fuss.

But sometimes, just like with adults, the effects can linger — particularly in posture and movement patterns.

At a young age, the body is still learning how to balance, stack and move efficiently. Small postural habits or unresolved niggles don't have to become "just the way they are". A gentle check-in at the right time can make a real difference.

I often share this next part with children when they come into the practice.

As a child, I loved skating. I'd have stay out all day — falling over, getting back up, and heading straight back for more. One fall left me with a small, nagging problem that didn't quite settle. Nothing dramatic — but my mum noticed I looked a bit wonky.

She took me to see our local Chiropractor, and after a few gentle sessions, everything resolved. I went straight back to doing what I loved — and I didn't carry



that issue forward as I grew. In fact he became a pivotal person in my life, inspired me to take up Martial Arts which eventually lead to me representing Great Britain internationally!

That experience really stayed with me.

It's one of the reasons

I care so deeply about supporting children here at Sutton Chiropractic. We love helping young people continue doing what they enjoy — without small issues quietly shaping posture, movement or confidence over time.

Our Kids Posture Clinic

is a free, friendly posture screening designed to:

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- Spot small imbalances that could be easily corrected for the future
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There's no treatment on the day, no pressure, and no obligation. It's simply a relaxed opportunity to make sure everything is moving as well as it can during these important, formative years.

We're very happy to care for all members of the family — and to support children in doing what they love for longer.

If you'd like to book your child in for a free posture screening, contact our reception team.

Warm regards,

Dr. Matt

Registered Doctor of Chiropractic

Sutton Chiropractic

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Pavilion celebrates first birthday

DOWNEND & Bromley Heath Parish Council celebrated the anniversary of the opening of the King George V Pavilion with a fun day attended by hundreds of people.

There were 40 stalls on the playing fields off Sutherland Avenue, with activities including yoga and drama taster sessions, an obstacle course for dogs and bubble making, plus attractions including tethered hot air balloon rides and bouncy castles.



Tethered hot air balloons and bouncy castles were among the attractions

The event on August 16 was the second outdoor celebration held at the pavilion, following an official opening party last summer.

Parish council chair Janet Biggin said: "The weather was



Families at the celebration

perfect - dry and sunny with a little bit of a breeze and not too hot.

"The first year of the pavilion has gone very well.

"As a parish council we've worked well together as a team and clubs and voluntary

groups are using it for meetings, as well as bookings for parties and anniversaries.

"The word is getting round that we're a local hub, but there are still a few people who don't know we're here."

Cash access is 'essential' for Downend

From page 1

Morrisons said it closed the shop after a review of "loss-making" former McColl's stores.

It refused to say how many staff worked at the shop and whether any had been made redundant.

The closure leaves residents without anywhere in the high street to send parcels, collect pensions, apply for passports or vehicle tax, deposit cash and cheques or pay bills.

Frenchay & Downend ward South Gloucestershire councillor Raj Sood has made a new application for a banking hub for the area.

Banking hubs offer counter services to private and business customers of all major banks and building societies, operated by Post Office Ltd.

They also host 'community bankers' from the big-four banks, who visit on a rota basis to offer face-to-face advice.

Hubs are owned by Cash Access UK, a non-profit company funded by the banks.

A previous application by Cllr Sood for a hub was turned down last year after an assessment by

cash machine network operator LINK.

He said: "Link turned us down on the basis that Downend still had a post office and that residents could go to Fishponds or Kingswood for their banking.

"Since that assessment, NatWest and Lloyds have closed their Fishponds Road branches, and with the loss of the post office Downend's case for a hub is considerably stronger now.

"I'm resubmitting our application because the facts on the ground have completely changed.

"A banking hub isn't a nice-to-have - it's essential for pensioners, small businesses and anyone who relies on cash, and for the future of Downend high street as a place people actually come to."

Cllr Liz Brennan has also applied to LINK to request a banking hub.

She said: "It is more important than ever that we do everything we can to retain access to essential banking and cash services locally.

"I will continue pressing for both a replacement post office and improved banking services



The post office inside Morrisons Daily closed in August

for our community."

Filton & Bradley Stoke MP Claire Hazelgrove is gathering residents' views to help make the case for a new post office.

She said: "I've already raised concerns with Morrisons and senior Post Office representatives directly.

"I've also spoken to the relevant government minister, who has agreed to meet with me on this."

Post Office Ltd says it is "working through" bids to host a replacement Downend branch.

A spokesperson said: "We

fully recognise the inconvenience the closure will cause our customers and small businesses who rely on our banking and parcel services in particular, so we want to open a replacement branch as soon as possible.

"The vacancy has been advertised. We have received expressions of interest from some retailers and we are currently working through the proposals put forward looking at the applicants and premises.

"In the interim, alternative branches are Staple Hill and Mangotsfield."

downendvoice

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Letters to the publication can be sent to the above e-mail address.
The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

DEADLINE

Our October edition deadline is September 16.

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general enquiries: 101
Emergency: 999

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www.avonfire.gov.uk
General enquiries: 0117 926 2061
Emergency: 999
NHS 111

Safer Stronger team
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Anti social behaviour team
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Streetcare/litter/vandalism etc
streetcare@southglos.gov.uk

Environment/trading standards
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COMPLAINTS

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



'No one else involved' in river death



Luis Piovesana

AN inquest has been told there is no evidence anyone else was involved in the death of a Frenchman whose body was found in the River Frome.

Luis Piovesana went missing after getting out of a taxi on the M32 near Eastville on February 28 last year.

The engineer's body was found in the river at Eastville three days later, following a search by police and his family, friends and other volunteers.

Luis, aged 26, had been at the Jam Jar venue in St Jude's, in central Bristol, before getting into a taxi. He got out of the taxi soon afterwards after leaving a message for his girlfriend, apparently in distress and feeling that he was in danger.

Luis then called police to tell them he was on the M32, and another member of the public also called to report a pedestrian on the motorway.

The inquest into his death in August heard Luis had taken psychedelic magic mushrooms and alcohol before he disappeared - something he had done before without incident.

Police told the hearing at Avon Coroner's Court that CCTV footage taken in Eastgate Retail Park, near to where his body was found, showed Luis moving erratically and clearly "intoxicated".

No one else could be seen in the footage and officers said they had ruled out anyone else being involved, but it wasn't clear where and how Luis ended up in the water.

Coroner Dr Peter Harrowing recorded a narrative conclusion at Luis's inquest, saying: "How he came to the water has not been established."

After the inquest Luis's sister Lulu, who attended the hearing, told ITV the family had been left with "more questions" after the hearing, adding: "We'll never know what happened that night."

Extra path patrols after stabbing

POLICE are carrying out extra patrols along the length of the Bristol & Bath Railway Path after a man was stabbed.

Two teenagers have been arrested after the attack, which took place in Bitton at about 8pm on August 11.

Avon & Somerset police said the injured man, who is in his 30s, was taken to hospital with what police described as "non-life-threatening injuries". He was wounded on a section of the path near the Avon Valley Railway's Bitton station, which was sealed off after the incident while forensic investigations took place.

A police spokesperson said one teenage boy was arrested on the night of the incident and a second the following afternoon. Both were released on bail while enquiries continue, with conditions including not entering the railway path and an overnight curfew.

Inspector Barny Mabbett said: "Uniformed officers are conducting patrols along the railway path to provide reassurance, because we recognise an incident like this does inevitably cause concern. We encourage anyone with concerns to please speak to those officers."

"We would ask anyone who encounters any antisocial behaviour or criminality to report it to us, as this allows us to target our resources in the most effective areas where they are most needed. Our investigation into what happened is ongoing; we are also working with other organisations around making sure the path is a safe place for people to enjoy and use both in the short-term and long-term."

South Gloucestershire Council was due to finish work to install 20 permanent CCTV cameras on the path between Staple Hill Tunnel and the former Mangotsfield Station during August.

Police are urging anyone who does report an incident to give the precise location using an app like What3Words to locate it.

Anyone with information about the assault should call the police on 101 and quote the incident number 5226 226 130.

Effort to rescue trees as drought bites

PEOPLE have been pulling together to try to keep young trees alive as the Downend area's parks and open spaces struggle through drought conditions.

Council workers have been watering street trees and recently-planted woodlands, as the region's water supplier urges residents to use water "wisely" and firefighters warn about the risks of lighting any open flames outdoors.

A drought was officially declared in the region by the Environment Agency at the end of July, after the Bristol area received only 1% of its expected average monthly rainfall.

As the hot, dry conditions continued into August, the Downend area's green spaces turned yellow, with plant life showing the effects of the heat.

Among the trees struggling are more than 20, including limes and beech, planted in Hill House Park last year.

Leaves on some turned brown, while others responded to watering - but even some of the older, more established trees in the park had yellowing leaves by the middle of August.

Friends of Hill House Park members organised an effort to water the trees, with some neighbours offering the use of taps and containers to the volunteers.

Friends secretary Tracey Horton said: "We have been doing what we can, regularly taking water to the park and giving the newest planting some much-needed attention.

"We're seeing encouraging signs. Dandelions and other growth are appearing around some of the trees we've been watering - a small reminder that every drop counts.

"But Hill House Park is a big space, and we need more helping hands. If you're walking the park, why not bring a bottle or watering can and give a young tree or hedge a drink? It takes just a few minutes and could make all the difference."

Tracey said the park's trees and hedges will need care "for years to come". The group is looking for more people to help look after them - anyone interested can contact friendsofhillhousepark@gmail.com.

com.

Trees have also started to turn yellow in nearby Page Park, where a group of around seven volunteers has been watering the sensory garden over the summer.

Friends of Page Park vice-chair Steph Purser said: "Some trees are struggling, and not just in the park.

"When people see a new tree outside their house it would be lovely if they could take a bit of responsibility and put some water on it.

"We've had to up our watering rota. We don't waste it - we just want to keep the plants alive.

"It has been interesting to see some plants in the sensory garden thriving - we'll be looking in future to see what will and won't grow in these conditions."

The Friends of Page Park are also looking for volunteers. Email friendsofpageparkbs16@gmail.com to get involved.

Other usually-green spaces, including King George V playing fields and Rodway Common, have also turned yellow.

A South Gloucestershire Council spokesperson said: "Due to the prolonged periods of extremely hot weather this summer, our StreetCare team has increased the frequency of watering flower beds, planters and hanging baskets across our parks, open spaces and town centres.

"We have had to undertake additional watering of some street trees planted two or more years ago and have also started watering at recently planted woodland sites, due to the extremely dry conditions.

"The hot weather has also slowed grass growth, with many sports pitches and grassland areas becoming dormant until wetter conditions return."

Use water wisely

After the drought was declared, Bristol Water called on residents to help reduce domestic water usage by: taking "four-minute" showers; turning off taps while brushing teeth; only using washing machines and dishwashers with full loads;



Even more-established trees in Hill House Park were turning yellow in mid-August

using watering cans instead of hoses; watering gardens in the early morning or late evening; keeping a jug of drinking water in the fridge instead of running the tap until it's cold; checking for drips or leaks around the home.

The company has not introduced a hosepipe ban but says there is "exceptionally high demand" for around 40 million litres of extra drinking water per day across the region.

General manager of drinking water services Richard Stanbrook said: "Our teams are working around the clock to move water around the area, bring in supplies from areas under less pressure, and maximise production at our treatment works.

"We all need to use water wisely in these extreme conditions, and small changes can make a big difference."

As the government banned the sale of disposable barbecues in August, Avon Fire & Rescue Service issued advice to avoid the risk of sparking fires outside.

A spokesperson said firefighters had attended 397 fires involving grassland, woodland or crops since the start of June, 111 of them in South Gloucestershire.

Some have started accidentally while others, including two on the Oldbury Court estate in Fishponds on July 31 and August 10, were



One of the trees planted last year is struggling

started deliberately.

The service is advising people to avoid lighting any open fires or flames during the dry spell, not to throw lit cigarettes from cars or into grass and to keep lighters and matches away from vegetation.

Area manager Steve Quinton said: "With the hot and dry conditions we're experiencing, even the smallest spark can lead to a fast spreading fire."

Follow us on online at www.downendvoice.co.uk

'Half-hour free' boosts car park use

MORE motorists are using car parks in Staple Hill and Mangotsfield since South Gloucestershire Council made the first half hour of parking free.

But a traders' group says the change has made little difference to business.

The council introduced free half-hour stays on June 29 for all spaces in the four Staple Hill car parks where it charges - Byron Place, Haynes Lane and two in Page Road - as well as the St James Street car park in Mangotsfield.

Figures released to the Voice show the number of recorded stays in July was up in all five car parks compared with July last year, while takings were down in all but one.

In Byron Place, opposite

Tesco, there were 470 free half-hour stays and 1,223 paid stays this July - a total of 1,693. That compared with 1,303 last July.

The council made £1,372 from charges in July - down from £3,008 last year.

At the main Page Road car park, next to Soundwell Road, there were 2,115 stays, (586 free, 1,529 paid) and the council made £2,089. Last year it made £2,545 from 2,000 stays in July.

At Page Road/Kendall Road, there were 1,926 stays (485 free, 1,441 paid) and the council made £2,283. That compares with 1,917 last July, costing drivers £4,944.

In Haynes Lane, off Pendennis Road, there were 467 visits (88 free, 379 paid) making the council £782.40. Last July, 311 drivers paid £1,028 to park.

In St James Street, there were 1,123 visits (289 free, 834 paid), compared with 895 last July. It was the only local car park where council takings this July were higher, up from £1,386.70 to £1,505.10.

When charges were introduced in May last year



Byron Place car park July this year

Byron Place, Haynes Lane and the Page Road/Kendall Road car park were long stay-only, with a minimum £3 charge and no free spaces.

The main Page Road car park was short stay-only, and St James Street had a mix of short and long stay places. Both had a small number of free 30-minute spaces, and the figures don't show how many drivers used those spaces free, as they didn't have to use the ticket machine to record free stays until this year.

A council spokesperson said: "It is good to see that these improvements have had

a positive impact. The increase in use of the car parks will help support South Gloucestershire's high streets and local businesses."

But Staple Hill Chamber of Trade chair George Georgiou said the change had made "no difference at all" to traders.

He said: "We've seen zero change in footfall or trade so far."

"Half an hour isn't enough for people to park, visit more than one shop and a cafe - it needs to be at least an hour. On the High Street spaces they've got two hours."

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Tesco parking restrictions

SUPERMARKET Tesco has brought in restrictions in the car park of its Staple Hill store for the first time.

The car park off Byron Place has become busier since charges were introduced in the council car park opposite, and Tesco has put up posters telling shoppers the changes are being made "to ensure you can find a space".

The supermarket has introduced a new camera-controlled parking system, with vehicle number plates recorded on entry and exit.

Drivers who want to stay for longer than 30 minutes will now have to spend more than £5 in store and collect a parking voucher at the checkout, then scan a validation machine and enter their registration.

A maximum stay of two hours has also been introduced during store opening times, with a 30-minute maximum when the shop is closed. Tesco says the changes will help it to better manage spaces. It says parking marshals will be on site during the transition period to explain the changes, and customers will have the right to appeal charges to operator Horizon Parking.

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PEOPLE across the Downend area found different ways to watch the biggest solar eclipse over England since 1999.

Across parks and open spaces, in gardens and out of upstairs windows, people took advantage of the clear skies on the evening of August 12 to experience an astronomical phenomenon.

With the Moon covering 93% of the Sun in Bristol, anyone wanting to see the eclipse needed either a pair of special eclipse glasses - which block out all ultraviolet and infrared light, and more than 99% of visible light - or find a way to watch it indirectly.

Some made pinhole cameras, used special filters on cameras, or tried using colanders to project an image of the sun onto a wall, the ground or a piece of card - with mixed results.

One resident even experienced a natural way of projecting the sun's image, through gaps in the leaves of trees.

Suzzie Belcher said: "I was sat in my garden watching the light changing when I noticed lots of half-moon shapes being shone onto our garden store. I had never seen such a thing, then realised that a tree was filtering the eclipse onto the wall! I had no idea this could happen."

To see a total eclipse people needed to visit Spain or Iceland.

The next solar eclipse visible from Bristol will be on August 2 next year - but the Moon will only cover around half of the Sun here, with the line of totality crossing the far south of Spain, North Africa and parts of Saudi Arabia.

How we watched the eclipse



Olivia and Zac Bence with eclipse glasses on Rodway Common, Mangotsfield



Annette Linton sent this picture of cereal box pinhole cameras being used to watch the eclipse



How not to use a colander, by Nat Peters



Kellie Fisher's son Kai took this picture of the eclipse from their back garden in Staple Hill



Suzzie Belcher captured this natural lens effect created by the sun shining through gaps in tree leaves



A garden eclipse-watching gathering, sent by Sharon Starkie



Ann Dunn captured the eclipse through a colander in her Downend garden

Downend School celebrates 'excellent' results

DOWNEND and Mangotsfield Sixth Form students achieved "an excellent set of A-level and vocational results" this year.

The combined sixth form for the area's two secondary schools, based at Downend School, reported that 44% of A-levels sat by students had grades at A*-B and 39% of vocational qualifications received Distinction or Distinction* grades.

Overall, 95% of A-level grades were awarded at A* to E.

Head of Downend and Mangotsfield Sixth Form Kate Long said: "This is an excellent set of A-level and vocational results, marking the culmination of two years of commitment, resilience, and ambition.

"These outcomes highlight the continued strength of our sixth form provision and the determination shown by our students throughout their studies.

"Many have secured outstanding grades and are now progressing to university,

degree-level apprenticeships, and other exciting next steps.

"We are delighted with what our students have accomplished.

"Their results reflect determination, high-quality teaching, and the strong sense of community within our Sixth Form.

"They have grown into capable, confident young adults who contribute positively to those around them.

"As they take their next steps — whether university, apprenticeships, or other exciting routes — they do so ready to succeed and make their mark.

"Congratulations to all our students — your success is richly deserved."

The sixth formers were among more than 320,000 across England who sat A-levels this summer, with a total of 835,950 results published in August.

Nationally, 78.1% of grades awarded were at C or above, up 0.4% on last year and 2.7%

above 2019, before the pandemic affected several years of exams.

The proportion of A or A* grades was 28.3%, up 0.2% on 2025.

The Department for Education said this year was a "strong year for maths," adding: "The highest ever number of students received A-level maths results (up 3.7% on 2025) and more A and A* grades were awarded in this subject (up 0.6%)."

"This year also saw more students taking up A-level subjects in science, technology, engineering and maths (up 3.7%)."

More students applying for universities and colleges were accepted onto a higher education course this year (up 2% on last year) and 194,800 English 18-year-olds were accepted into their first choice of university (up 1%).

Nationally, a total of 221,095 vocational and technical qualifications at pass or above were awarded.

Phoebe Burden, of Downend, is planning to apply for an apprenticeship in finance and accounting after achieving a top Distinction* grade in her

Cambridge Technicals business qualification, along with Bs in sociology and criminology. She plans to take a year off first. Phoebe said: "I'm relieved. It was a lot of hard work. "I think sociology was extremely hard - that was the one I was worrying most about."



This included almost 20,000 students taking T-levels, a technical qualification equivalent to three A-levels, a 65% increase on last year's figure, with a pass rate of over 90%.

*GCSE results were announced after the *Voice* was published - a report will appear in our October edition.



Downend School Open Evening

Thursday 10th
September 2026
5:30pm – 7.30pm

For further information and tickets for the headteacher's talk, please visit our website www.downend.com



Error sees uni offers cancelled

A BLUNDER by an examination board saw A-level history students at Downend School having university offers

Ashleigh Serle, of Downend, plans to apply for a scholarship with the Royal Navy after achieving an A in psychology and Bs in chemistry and biology. She has an offer of a place at Reading University next year, and hopes eventually to work in biomedical science.

Ashleigh said: "The results were what I needed so I'm really happy with them. "During the exam season I was sat on the same chair in the common room and wouldn't move while I was working. The wait for results was excruciating - it seemed so long."



Evelina Steinart, of Downend, is heading to Nottingham University to study sport and exercise science after achieving a Distinction* in sport, an A in psychology and C in maths. She hopes to work in sports psychology after her degree.

Evelina said: "The results were what I expected and I got into my first-choice university - that's what I'm most excited about. "It has been a lot of work and revision but it was worth it in the end."



Lola Forsey, of Downend, achieved an A* in A-level art, with a C in psychology and a D in maths. She is planning to take a gap

year before heading to Falmouth University to study illustration. Lola said: "I was expecting an A in art, so I'm really happy to get an A*. "It was a lot of hard work but I'm proud of myself!"



withdrawn.

The mistake by Cambridge OCR led to students wrongly being given an 'X' grade, which is usually only given to candidates who have missed part of an exam, despite the board also giving them correct marks for all individual parts of the course.

The school became aware of the problem before results day. It immediately contacted OCR, and was "assured" the error would be rectified in time

- but the incorrect grades had already been sent by the board to universities, and were not corrected.

After "continuous contact" between the school and board, the correct grades were issued late in the evening of results day, but students had to contact their preferred universities and appeal the rejections in the meantime.

One said: "It was a complete shock to find out I'd been rejected from both universities

who had made offers, along with most of the people in my class, and then to find out it was because of an administrative error.

"Hopefully things will all be resolved, but it was quite a dampener on what should have been a day of celebration."

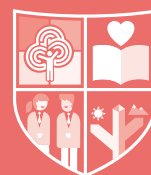
A Cambridge OCR spokesperson said it is working with the school to resolve the issue, adding: "Our focus is on helping the students affected."

Mangotsfield School Open Evening



Come and join us!

Thursday 24th September 2026
5:00 pm to 7:45pm



Mangotsfield School is "highly inclusive" with a "broad and ambitious curriculum and assiduous leadership." (Ofsted 2026)

Headteacher's talks: 5:00pm, 5:45pm and 6:30pm.
Please book via the school website.

Open Morning tours available by appointment only.
To book an appointment, please email man-info@cset.co.uk adding 'Open Morning' in the subject line.



Mrs Hetty Blackmore
(Headteacher)

mangotsfieldschool.org.uk

Mangotsfield School
Rodway Hill
Mangotsfield
Bristol
BS16 9LH

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today**

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School**



**Open Evening
Friday 2 October**

STUDENTS at SGS Sixth performed above national benchmarks in a number of subjects in this summer's A-levels.

The sixth form, based in Filton, draws students from across the region and is part of the wider SGS College with campuses from Stroud to Bristol.

The college said that SGS Sixth students sat a total of 595 A-levels, with a 96% pass rate and 205 (34.5%) grades at A-B*, including 70 (11.8%) at A* or A.

A spokesperson said: "Biology, psychology, criminology and core maths all performed above their respective national achievement benchmarks.

"Biology was a particular standout, with a 100% pass rate, achievement 10.2% above its national benchmark, and 46% of grades at A*-B.

"Year 2 criminology performed 12.8% above its national achievement benchmark, while psychology recorded a 100% pass rate.

"Mathematics also achieved a 100% pass rate, with 44% of grades at A*-B."

SGS interim director of sixth

'Special moment' at SGS Sixth

form Hazel Budd said: "Results day is such a special moment, because you see plans students have talked about for months turning into something tangible.

"Across SGS Sixth there have been celebrations, relief, hugs, calls home and plenty of conversations about the future.

"Students are celebrating A Level results today, with university places confirmed, new opportunities opening up and months of planning turning into decisions about the future.

"We are incredibly proud of their results, but also of the confidence, independence and determination they have developed during their time with us.

"Behind every grade is an ambition, a next step and, often, a story of what it took to get there."

One SGS Sixth student is heading to Bristol University to study law after achieving A* grades in law and her Extended Project Qualification, along with As in psychology and sociology.



High-achieving SGS students show off their grades

Another is planning to study dentistry at Liverpool University after taking a gap year, after achieving three As.

Another SGS Sixth student overcame back surgery and family illnesses to win a place at the University of the West of

England to study physiotherapy, after achieving three Bs.

Vice principal for teaching, learning and assessment Alex Gaiger said: "It's about journeys and opportunities, and there are so many students that are going on brilliant things."



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Collegiate School **Open Morning** Saturday 26th September

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Students' academic and apprenticeship moves

THE college with the most university applicants in the region is also celebrating the success of students choosing apprenticeships.

More than 500 A-level candidates at St Brendan's Sixth Form College, which has many students from the Downend area, applied to university this year, and the college says the majority will be taking up places at their first-choice institution.

St Brendan's is the biggest education provider exclusively for students aged 16 to 19, with around 1,800 students drawn from across the region, including many from the Downend area.

Leaders at the college in Brislington say A-level students achieved a pass rate of 97.6%, including 796 "high-grade" passes.

Students sitting Level 3 BTEC and Applied General vocational courses achieved a combined total of 299 grades at either Distinction or Distinction*, although the college has not said what percentage of grades this

represents.

The college says 191 students achieved high grades in all subjects they studied.

They include one student who will study Philosophy, Politics and Economics at Oxford University, after a gap year, after achieving an A* and two A grades in graphic communications, history and physics respectively, plus an A* Extended Project Qualification (EPQ).

Another student is heading to Durham University to study theology after achieving three Bs, while another is set to study business management at Bristol University.

The college says it has seen "significant success" in higher and degree apprenticeship applications, with students have securing opportunities with employers including finance firms KPMG and Deloitte, lawyers Osborne Clarke and aircraft builder Airbus.

Principal Marian Curran said: "I could not be prouder of our students.



Students at St Brendan's Sixth Form College are heading for academic courses and apprenticeships

"These results reflect their resilience, ambition and sheer hard work, and they have earned every grade.

"But a results day at St Brendan's is about far more than numbers - it is about the confident, thoughtful and well-rounded young people who leave us ready for whatever comes next.

"My thanks go to our dedicated staff, whose commitment makes days like

this possible, and to the families who have supported these young people every step of the way.

"The success we celebrate today belongs to our whole college community.

"With the largest A Level cohort in the region, the College is celebrating the achievements of a diverse and ambitious group of students as they take their next steps towards university, degree apprenticeships and rewarding careers."



www.mangotsfieldprimary.org

Starting school in September 2027?

Come and see what we have to offer on Team Mango.

Headteacher talk and short tours: Tuesday 22nd September at 9:30am, Thursday 22nd October at 9:30am or 6:30pm, Monday 23rd November at 9:30am and Friday 8th January at 9:30am.

Open morning: Saturday 7th November from 9:30am until 11:30am.

Scan the QR code or email: admin@mangoschool.org to book your place.



"I am proud to be a member of Team Mango; our values help us to be the best version of ourselves."

Learner comment, 2026

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



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BGS Sixth Form

**Bristol
Grammar
School**

Sixth Form Open Evening
Monday 12 October



Hard work pays off at Winterbourne

LEADERS at Winterbourne Academy have hailed the "brilliant outcomes" achieved by A-level and vocational course students this summer.

The school, which has many young people from Downend, Frenchay, Emersons Green and Lyde Green among its pupils, said 22% of A-level grades were A* or A, while 72% were at A*-C.

On vocational courses, 72% of grades were Distinction* or Distinction.

Overall there was a 98% pass rate, and the school highlighted strong results in A-level drama, where 100% of grades were at A* to B, Spanish (78% A*-B) business (73%), religious studies (67%), and physics (63%).

In vocational courses, 100% of BTEC engineering students achieved Distinction* or Distinction grades, with 83% doing so in CTEC Media and 77% in CTEC Sport.

Among those whose achievements have been highlighted by the school are Isaac Ahmed, who is deciding whether to continue his studies at university or join the RAF after achieving an A* in maths, an A in physics and Bs in computer science and further maths.

Michelle Chan will study accounting and finance at Exeter University after achieving As in business, maths and psychology.

Stephen Coney will start an engineering apprenticeship with Rolls-Royce after achieving a Distinction* in engineering, A* in

physics and A in maths.

Alice Gregory will study computer science at Southampton University after achieving an A* in maths, As in computer science and physics, and a B in further maths.

Harry Kerslake, with As in business and economics and a B in Maths, is starting an accounting apprenticeship with PK Francis, while Sienna King will start a legal apprenticeship with Burges Salmon, after achieving As in law and psychology and a B in Spanish.

Erica Masters will study politics and international relations at Birmingham University, after achieving an A* in business and As in psychology and Spanish.

Dulcie Phillips is deciding whether to continue her studies at Oxford or Cardiff after achieving three As in biology, history and maths and a B in French.

Sam Richer-Coward will study chemistry at Bristol University after gaining A*s in biology, chemistry and maths.

Head teacher Jenny Cartwright said: "I know that the students and the amazing teachers and pastoral staff at Winterbourne have worked so hard together to make these possible.

"We are proud of all of the results across our sixth form – behind each grade is a story of a young person who has striven hard, sometimes in challenging circumstances, to



Sam Richer-Coward picks up his results

gain their outcomes and secure their next steps, and they should feel proud of what they have achieved."

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Welcome to The Core!

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Mobility/Seated Exercise: Fridays 10.30
Men's Class: Thursday 24th September 18.30
Soul Sister Circle: Tuesday 8th September 19.00

The Core is an Instructor owned, independent studio with small classes focussing on individual feedback so you can get the most out of each class whether you are new or experienced.

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TURNER'S VISION

New beginnings...

Whew... what a summer!

I hope you've enjoyed yours, wherever life has taken you, and that at some point you managed to become at least partially acclimated to the seemingly persistent heat!

There's something about the end of summer that always feels like a time for new beginnings. For some it's a new school, a new term or perhaps a new job. For others, it's simply returning to the familiar routines that somehow disappeared somewhere around July.

For us at Turners, it's a little bit of both.

Our Henleaze practice continues to grow, perhaps more steadily than I'd like, simply because I still feel there are so many local people who've yet to experience a visit to Turners Opticians and the World Class Eye Care we aim to provide to every patient.

For us, that means taking the time to listen, understand how you use your eyes and vision, and provide reassuringly thorough eye care rather than simply checking

whether you can read the bottom line of an eye chart.

And, when glasses are needed, we believe they should be rather special too. Great eyewear shouldn't simply help you see better. The right pair should feel wonderful to wear, complement who you are and perhaps even attract the occasional "I love your glasses - where did you get those?"

Meanwhile, on the other side of Bristol, we've experienced a rather bigger new beginning.

Our move from Fishponds to our new Downend practice actually went remarkably smoothly, all things considered!

Having the same base for around 50 years does, however, mean accumulating an extraordinary amount of history, as well as a certain amount of generational baggage.

Who'd have thought, for example, that during the clear-out I'd discover a windsurfing sail?

Windsurfing was my Dad Philip's passion before he had children. That would, of course, make me partly

responsible for putting an end to all that fun!

I'd like to think, and the photographic evidence appears to support me, that I brought a rather different kind of fun into his life.

Sadly, Dad is no longer with us, and neither is the sail. After 32 years tucked away in a dry bag it had completely perished, so there was definitely no pretending it was a treasured Turner family heirloom!

But perhaps that's the lovely thing about new beginnings.

You don't have to leave everything from the past behind. You take the best bits with you.

So, as children head into new classrooms, teenagers start new adventures and the rest of us return to something resembling normality, perhaps September is a good opportunity to look forward with a little confidence and optimism.

And if clear, comfortable, effortless vision would help with whatever your own new beginning might be, we'd love to help.

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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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Charity ride on a bicycle built for three

AN engineer from Mangotsfield shared a bike with two colleagues as they rode for 500 miles to raise money for charity.

Scott Baker is a member of the Engineering & Maintenance team at Oldbury Power Station, near Thornbury.

Along with colleagues Andy Smart, from Yate, and Nigel Reed, from Keynsham, cycled from the power station, which is being decommissioned, to another nuclear plant at Sizewell in Suffolk, and back again.

They did it on a three-seater 'triplet' bike they named Scarlett, towing a trailer, called Bob, behind them.

The trio did the ride in July to raise money for JIGSAW Thornbury, which works with children and young people aged under 25 who have additional needs or disabilities.

Andy, who has worked at Oldbury for 37 years and is currently head of maintenance, said: "Like all good plans, it was hatched over a curry and pint.

"I've never cycled to the

Sizewell site, so it seemed like a good idea.

"JIGSAW is the chosen site charity this year. It's a fantastic opportunity to support the wonderful work they do.

"During the ride we were regularly checking the amount of donations that were being made and seeing people's generosity was a huge motivator for us."

Scott, a senior system engineer, said: "We chose to take Scarlett and Bob on this 'coast to coast' ride as we thought it would provide an unusual challenge.

"Although the three of us are experienced solo cyclists, riding Scarlett was physically challenging, especially when going up hills.

"We were also extremely fortunate to have great weather and no punctures.

"After a total of just over three days on the road, we arrived back at Oldbury site to the most incredible reception."

On route, the trio caused a stir going past Buckingham Palace.



Scott Baker, Andy Smart and Nigel Reed with the three-person bike

Nigel, the plant's engineering section head, said: "The sight of three people on one bike, with a trailer in tow, generated huge amounts of interest wherever we travelled, especially in London."

The 'coast-to-coast' return trip took the team just over three days to complete, and had raised more than £4,700 as the Voice went to print.

The donation page is still open at bit.ly/4hjSSNp.

Nuclear Restoration Services staff and JIGSAW representatives cheered them to the finishing line at Oldbury.

JIGSAW spokesperson Bonnie Rayment said: "I have been astounded by the teamwork and determination of Andy, Nigel and Scott."

TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

Have you heard? We've moved to Downend!



After around 50 years in Fishponds, Turners Opticians has moved just up the road to our lovely new practice in Downend, and we've brought our ear wax removal clinic with us!

While the surroundings may be new, the friendly, professional hearing care remains exactly the same.

One of the most common reasons people come to see me is because their hearing suddenly doesn't seem quite right. Perhaps one ear feels blocked, sounds seem muffled, the television has mysteriously become quieter, or conversations are becoming harder to follow.

Sometimes the answer can be surprisingly simple: ear wax.

Ear wax is completely natural and actually plays an important role in protecting and keeping our ears healthy. Usually, it gradually works its own way out of the ear canal. Occasionally, however, it builds up and becomes impacted, causing a blocked sensation, reduced hearing, discomfort, tinnitus or sometimes even dizziness.

That's where I can help.

At our new Downend practice, I can carefully examine your ears using video otoscopy, which means you can even see inside your own ears too! If wax is causing the problem, I can safely remove it using modern microsuction equipment.

And if your ears are beautifully clear but your hearing still isn't quite what it should be, we can advise you on the appropriate next step.

So, if you've been turning the television up lately or saying "Pardon?" rather more often than you used to...

Perhaps it's time to find out what's going on.

I look forward to welcoming you to our new home in Downend.

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.

Love Clear Hearing This September




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Dog owner ordered to pay £800 over mess

A DOWNEND man has been ordered to pay more than £800 for letting his dog foul the pavement in front of a row of shops.

Mason Lupton, of Cleeve Wood Road, was prosecuted for failing to clean up after his terrier when it fouled the area outside the shops on the same street.

A South Gloucestershire Council spokesperson said the authority received reports of an increase in mess in the area in February, and in the period up to early March three incidents were captured on CCTV, involving the same dog.

The council has a public space protection order (PSPO) that makes it a crime to leave dog waste in public and gives

it the power to hand out on-the-spot fines known as fixed penalty notices to owners who don't clear up after their animals or carry poo bags.

Environmental enforcement officers identified the dog and, on visiting Lupton's home, he confirmed the dog belonged to him and his wife.

He was advised that he would be sent a penalty notice for breaching the PSPO, which was posted to his address.

After he failed to pay it, council officers made three further visits to Lupton's home in March and April, but no-one answered the door.

A final reminder was left in the letterbox and when Lupton failed to pay, he was prosecuted.

He appeared at Bristol Magistrates' Court in August and pleaded guilty to failing to comply with the PSPO to clean up his dog's waste.

He was fined £266, ordered to pay costs of £450 and a victim surcharge of £106 - a total of £822.

The council said that if he had paid the original penalty within ten days, it would have

cost him £75.

Council cabinet member for environmental enforcement John Bradbury said: "Dog fouling is not only unpleasant and unsightly, but it can also pose a health risk and in extreme cases can even cause blindness.

"This man made no effort to clear up his dog's mess, which impacted local residents and businesses and ultimately used council resources to clear up.

"I'm really pleased to see this case come to a successful conclusion and hope it acts as a deterrent to other irresponsible dog owners in the area."

The council is encouraging anyone who sees a waste-related offence to report it to its StreetCare helpdesk on 01454 868000, email streetcare@southglos.gov.uk or visit www.southglos.gov.uk/flytipping.

Drivers arrested

POLICE say almost a quarter of motorists stopped during a

road safety operation during the World Cup were arrested on suspicion of drink or drug driving.

The Operation Limit campaign included a combination of "proactive patrols" centred around England fixtures, "intelligence-led" stops after public tip-offs and activations of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras.

Of 465 motorists stopped on proactive patrols, 113 were arrested: 82 on suspicion of drug-driving and 31 on suspicion of drink-driving.

A spokesperson said 85% of drivers arrested were male, 57% were aged between 25 and 40, and 25% were aged between 41 and 60.

Another 21 arrests followed tip-offs; 13 resulted from ANPR alerts.

Roads Policing Inspector Matt Boiles said: "While drink driving remains a significant concern, the results from this operation show that drug driving continues to be an increasingly prevalent issue on our roads."



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Show goes on through the heat

DOWNEND Horticultural Society members took on heatwave conditions - both through the summer and on the night - to hold their annual flower show.

The event at the Assembly Hall in Salisbury Road was attended by members and visitors, who were able to vote for the best entries in each of the show's six categories.

The society was founded in 1943, and first held a flower show in 1948.

Society chairman Andrea Cross said: "Despite the challenging weather this year, our members managed to capitalise on those plants which did grow, and put on a good cross section of produce from our gardens displayed for us all to see.

"We had 18 entries this year, although attendance was down owing to the heat."

The star exhibitor was Yvonne Swinney, who won the Single Bloom category with a single stem from an achillea plant, the Flower Arrangement section with crocosmia and other decorative plants, and the Houseplant prize with a sempervivum (houseleek).

The other winners were Jackie Kite, who won the Fruit section for her plate of passion flower fruit, John Parker, who won the Vegetable category with a matched plate of tomatoes, and Andrea herself, who won the Home-cooked Produce section with her chilli and apple jelly.

Julie Thorn won the show's garden-related quiz.



The winning fruit entry



Members of Downend Horticultural Society with some of the exhibits



The winning flower arrangement

Patients say they wait too long to see a GP

MORE than half of patients are waiting longer than a week for appointments at surgeries in the Downend area.

Around 650,000 people across the country took part in this year's NHS GP Patient Survey, sharing their experiences of booking and attending appointments at their local practice.

They included 114 patients of Downend Health Group, which runs Christchurch Family Medical Centre and the Willow Surgery, and 103 from Leap Valley Medical Centre.

At Downend Health Group, same-day appointments were offered to 13% of patients - up from 9% last year but lower than the national average of 27%.

Another 5% were seen the next day, but 57% waited a week or more, up from 49% in 2025.

Others were either seen within a week or couldn't remember how long they waited.

Nationally, 32% of patients waited a week or longer (down from 34%).

A choice of time or day was offered to 52% of Downend Health Group patients - up from 28% in 2025 but against a national average of 57% - and 51% felt they waited too long (up from 39%).

At Leap Valley, 63% of patients had to wait a week or more, down from 70% last year, and 62% felt they waited too long.

Only 6% were seen on the same day (up from 4%) and 6% the next day; 34% of patients were offered a choice of time or day (up from 29%).

Most patients still have problems contacting practices on the phone, although the numbers who find it easy are rising - and more people now find it easy to get in touch online.

At Downend Health Group, 27% of patients found it easy to get through on the phone - up from 18% in 2025 but against a national average of 57%. More than half (55%) said it was difficult.

The number finding it easy to

get in touch online was up from 45% to 51%, with 41% of patients saying they found using the mobile phone app easy (down from 56%).

At Leap Valley Medical Centre, 23% found it easy to get through by phone - up from 15% last year - and 42% found it easy to contact the surgery online (up from 29%), while 28% said it was easy to use the app (down from 33%).

More than two thirds (68%) said it was difficult to get through on the phone, and 45% had problems with online access.

Once seen, 95% of Downend Health Group patients said they had confidence in the professional who dealt with them - above the national average of 93%. At Leap Valley the proportion was 92%.

Overall, 68% of Downend Health Group patients said their experience of the practice was good - the same proportion as last year but below the national average of 77%.

At Leap Valley the proportion

was unchanged on last year, at 51%.

NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board, which is in charge of funding surgeries, said overall patient experience was "very good" across the region.

Deputy chief medical officer Dr Geeta Iyer said: "Surgery teams deserve huge recognition for their dedication to patient care and their focus on making it easier for people to get help quickly, including same-day care where needed.

"However, we know that not all patients report a positive experience.

"The high levels of need are putting sustained pressure on services, and practices are balancing the need to offer quick access to appointments with maintaining continuity of care, particularly for people with long-term conditions."

MOT fraudster must hand over £15,000

A FORMER vehicle tester who carried out a "dangerous" MOT fraud with a colleague has been ordered to hand over £15,000 by a court.

Owain Shaw and co-defendant Jamie Lee were given suspended prison sentences in January after issuing MOT certificates for 223 "potentially unsafe vehicles" that had never been brought to the business they had worked for, Staple Hill MOT Centre.

They were also ordered to carry out unpaid community work by a judge at Bristol Crown Court.

During the summer they were brought back to court in two separate hearings under the Proceeds of Crime Act, where they were ordered to pay compensation and forfeit any remaining profits from their

crimes.

Shaw was found to have made a total of £14,971.71 from his crimes and have assets available totalling £15,000.

He was ordered to pay the garage £494.05 in compensation and hand over the remaining £14,505.95 to the courts; the money will go towards funding policing, courts and community safety initiatives.

Shaw was given three months to pay or face an eight-month prison sentence.

He was also told to pay the £250 costs of the proceedings.

Lee was ordered to pay £500 Compensation to Staple Hill MOT Centre within a year. There was no confiscation or costs order, as he was not found to have any assets.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency said Shaw, an MOT tester and Lee, who worked at the Broad Street garage as a mechanic, set up a system to avoid carrying out the tests, which are intended to ensure a vehicle's brakes, lights, tyres, steering and other vital systems are safe.

Lee would send Shaw vehicle registration numbers and Shaw would then issue pass certificates without ever seeing the vehicles, a fraud known as 'ghost' MOT testing.

They had carried out the fraud without the knowledge of the garage's owners, with Shaw issuing the MOT certificates via a

mobile phone at his home.

Before they were sentenced, Shaw admitted 44 counts of fraud, with a further 199 offences taken into consideration by the judge. He was given a two-year suspended jail sentence and told to carry out 300 hours of unpaid work.

Lee was given a two-year suspended sentence and told to carry out 250 hours of unpaid work after being found guilty of helping to run the fraudulent operation.

DVSA investigators externally monitoring the garage's MOT system in September 2023 detected Shaw issuing an MOT certificate in less than a minute, to a vehicle that was "nowhere to be seen at the MOT centre".

Further investigation showed multiple MOT tests being completed in "unrealistically short time periods".

The DVSA said the fraudulent certificates were immediately cancelled once the scam was uncovered, with the vehicle owners contacted.

Earlier this year Abigail Ollis, one of the directors of the family-run garage, told the Voice the two men had breached the trust of the business, which had paid for their training, and "tarnished" its reputation.

The DVSA says it is trying out a new system where MOT testers must photograph vehicles during testing and upload the images to its computer systems.

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YOUR Community NEWS

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**DOWNEND & BROMLEY
HEATH PARISH COUNCIL**

Bromley Heath Tennis & Pickle Ball Courts Now Open



Bromley Heath Playing Fields was buzzing on Saturday 8 August as around 150 local residents came along to celebrate the opening of the newly renovated Tennis and Pickleball courts.

Visitors had the chance to try both sports through free taster sessions, with plenty of friendly advice from local volunteers and coaches. It was great to see familiar faces alongside residents

discovering the new facilities for the first time.

The facility includes two Tennis courts and four Pickleball courts. Whether you're an experienced player or have never picked up a racket before, there's now an opportunity to get involved locally.

Court hire costs just £3.50 per court, per hour, including use of Tennis and Pickleball equipment. Booking income will be reinvested into maintaining the courts and equipment for the benefit of the community.

Have a go! Local resident Rose Sinclair is coordinating free Pickleball taster sessions for anyone keen to try this fast-growing sport. To book, email fm@dbhparishcouncil.co.uk.

We're also working with local resident and LTA Level 2 Tennis Coach Claire Nutt, who is offering free Tennis sessions and courses through the new ClubSpark booking system.

The launch was a fantastic example of local community support, and we hope the courts will become a well-used and much-loved facility for Bromley



Heath residents. Thank you to everyone involved in this refurbishment!

For facilities, booking information and upcoming sessions, visit the Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council website and select Sports Facilities. You can also scan the QR codes below to register and book.

We look forward to seeing you on court!



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DOWNEND & BROMLEY HEATH PARISH COUNCILLORS

Downend Ward

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Councillor Stephen Pick

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Clerk to the Council

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

www.dbhparishcouncil.uk



Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council

Digital ads in front of church rejected

A NEW digital advertising screen that would have blocked the pavement in front of a church in Staple Hill has been refused planning permission.

Communications giant BT applied to install the 'street hub' on the pavement in Broad Street, in front of the Salvation Army.

But a ward councillor warned that putting it there would lead to wedding and funeral processions turning into "some sort of Benny Hill ending" as people tried to move around the hub.

Street hubs provide a free way for people to access the internet and make calls, but take up

space on the pavement and show adverts.

The church objected to the plans, which were refused by South Gloucestershire Council's development management committee in late July.

Paul Campbell, from the Salvation Army, said: "The proposed location of the unit, we feel, will restrict access at the road frontage for weddings and funerals at our church.

"The location will also cause

congestion when we use the street frontage that is within our ownership before services and at community events."

The Salvation Army band plays on the pavement outside during events like Christmas on the Hill, when it can become congested for passers-by.

Mr Campbell said access for emergency services was another concern, and the nearby greengrocer also uses space in front of its building to display fruit and veg, further restricting space for pedestrians.

Staple Hill & Mangotsfield ward councillor Ian Boulton said: "That pavement can become extremely busy. To have this piece of street furniture here is a genuine concern.

"Absolutely, we would love to have a hub somewhere, it's just not necessarily at this location that they seem determined to go for.

"Trying to get a coffin and the attendees during a funeral to slalom around this is something that I wouldn't want to see.

"We have weddings and funerals, and having people going round like some sort of Benny Hill ending, where people are all going around in a snake-like attempt to get to the entrance, is something I think we would want to avoid."

As well as two digital advertising screens, BT said the street hub would provide free public WiFi, free UK telephone calls, USB charging, public information and emergency messages.

Street hubs have been popping up on high streets across the country, with BT providing them instead of phone boxes.

Nobody from BT attended the committee, but in planning documents its architects said: "BT is continuing to move forward with public connectivity and benefits, in which Street Hubs will provide a sleek and modern answer to the demands of a digitally-connected society.

"Street Hubs will help future-proof the high street making them smarter, safer, and more sustainable."

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service



DOWNEND FOLK & ROOTS

AUTUMN/WINTER PROGRAMME 2026



FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

RANAGRI

+ NIC JANAWAY & SARAH OWEN
CHRIST CHURCH DOWNEND

£15 ADVANCE / £17 ON THE DOOR

FRIDAY 16 OCTOBER
TARREN

+ RHONA MACFARLANE
CHRIST CHURCH DOWNEND
£15 ADVANCE / £17 ON THE DOOR



FRIDAY 20 NOVEMBER

SHAER, MOSS & WARNOCK

+ ERIN MANSFIELD

CHRIST CHURCH DOWNEND

£15 ADVANCE / £17 ON THE DOOR



FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER
THE WILDERNESS YET

+ HEARTWOOD CHORUS
CHRIST CHURCH DOWNEND
£15 ADVANCE / £17 ON THE DOOR



DOWNENDFOLKANDROOTS.COM



**RANAGRI +
NIC JANAWAY &
SARAH OWEN**

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2026

DOWNEND'S popular concert series have revealed their programme for Autumn/Winter 2026, and they've managed to bring a couple of long-term targets to South Gloucestershire, as well as rounding off the season with their now-famous festive concert.

Ranagri's Say Hello Tour heralds a bold new era for this award-winning indie folk band, bringing their signature cinematic, prog-infused folk music to venues up and down the UK this Autumn.

With five studio albums under their belt, a wealth of international touring experience, and standout appearances at major festivals, Ranagri have built a formidable reputation on the global stage, captivating audiences from across Europe to Australia, Montreal and New Orleans. Now, they turn inward, reconnecting with their roots for what promises to be their most evocative and personal tour to date.

Steeped in stories of Ranagri - the farmland in rural Ireland from

which the band takes its name - their new album explores themes of migration, identity, and the enduring search for the meaning of home. It is a work of depth and resonance, shaped by lived experiences and a profound sense of place.

Renowned for their commanding live performances, the band delivers a sound that is both intricate and expansive. Soaring vocals, rich harmonies, and driving rhythmic energy intertwine with masterful instrumentation - flutes, whistles, harp, bodhrán, hammered dulcimer, percussion and guitars - forming a virtuosic and immersive soundscape around lead singer Dónal Rogers. The result is a musical experience that feels at once intimate, powerful, and unmistakably anthemic.

Opening the evening will be Nic Janaway & Sarah Owen. Award-winning alternative folk duo Nic Janaway & Sarah Owen perform with a powerful, resonant live energy, coaxing listeners deeply into the hearts of traditionally-rooted songs, through daring and wayward recompositions. Nic & Sarah are currently in a season of performing in acoustic mode (voices, piano, guitar



and percussion) filling spaces with vocal harmonies and rich, minimalism-inspired interlocking instrumental work.

Tickets for the concert, which takes place at Christ Church Downend on Friday 18 September 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.

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Upcoming therapy group for miscarriage & IVF loss

Miscarriage & IVF loss are such painful, isolating experiences. "I found the whole thing quite traumatic", says Zöe. "And what made it harder was having little to no emotional support at the time. I felt totally cut off from friends and seemingly everyone around me. It was an incredibly painful time!"

The therapy programme that Zöe & Melanie will be running is for people who have been through either miscarriage or IVF loss, or *both* - whether recent, or further ago in the past.

Zöe adds: "Even though my experience began 18 years ago, I still feel it, and am still processing layers of the grief".

Whether your journey of miscarriage/IVF led you to being a parent, or not, you are welcome to this group. Maybe you are still on that journey of trying to have a child, or maybe you are navigating the difficult decision of letting go of that hope.

The stories may be different, but there will be a shared understanding of your grief and a space to honour and process through sharing, creativity, meditation & ritual.

We welcome people from all life phases and ages.

The first programme is running on:

**Tuesdays 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th
September at 1 - 2.30pm.**

And beyond that, Melanie & Zöe hope to run them ongoingly every term. Visit their websites for updated information on the next programme/s:

www.naturalfootstepscounselling.co.uk

www.melaniegriffiths.uk

Frenchay Quaker Meeting House, Bristol BS16 1NT



**Miscarriage & IVF Loss
Group**

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& Melanie Griffiths**

For more details, please see our websites:

www.naturalfootstepscounselling.co.uk
www.melaniegriffiths.uk

School's 'culture of high expectations' is praised

INSPECTORS have praised Winterbourne Academy's culture of high expectations and clear sense of community.

Ofsted inspected the school, which has 1,783 students aged from 11 to 18, in April - its first visit in nearly four years.

It was the first inspection of the school, which draws many of its pupils from Frenchay, Downend, Emersons Green and Lyde Green, under the regulator's new, more complex assessment system, brought in after overall judgements were scrapped.

In their report, published in July, the team of six inspectors said the school had met Ofsted's expected standard in all areas: achievement; attendance and behaviour; curriculum and teaching; inclusion; leadership and governance; personal development and well-being; and post-16 provision.

The inspectors said: "Pupils enjoy being part of Winterbourne Academy.

"They generally behave

well in lessons and are keen to learn. Sixth-form students act as positive role models for younger pupils, showing self-discipline and maturity."

The report said pupil achievement is improving over time and is above national averages at GCSE in many subjects. Post-16 achievement is in line with national averages.

The inspectors said: "The curriculum is broad and ambitious. Leaders have carefully set out what pupils will learn so that they build their knowledge and understanding.

"Leaders, including those responsible for governance, ensure a culture of high expectations at the school.

"They make sure the interests of pupils and their families are at the forefront of every decision taken at Winterbourne Academy."

The school's "effective action" to further improve attendance was highlighted in the report.

The inspectors said: "Leaders have created a sense

of belonging, so that most pupils want to attend, and they understand the importance of coming to school.

"Leaders prioritise actions to ensure that all pupils feel part of Winterbourne Academy."

Attention to individual educational and pastoral needs of pupils includes a 'well-being hub' and a wide range of other support to help pupils look after their mental health.

The "well-designed" post-16 study programme includes a range of vocational and academic courses delivered in partnership with two other schools.

The inspectors said: "The courses are carefully matched to students' individual needs and aspirations."

Head teacher Jenny Cartwright said: "We are very pleased with the report and how the inspection team have noted and praised aspects of our school that are central to our aims and purpose, in particular a sense of belonging, care and community, coupled with high expectations

and breadth of provision.

"We are proud to be meeting the expected standard in all areas - a standard the government defines as 'a high standard, to make sure your children are receiving everything they need and deserve'.

"Throughout the whole report there are statements that reflect positively on the whole community at Winterbourne, staff, governors and students, as well as on the relationship with stakeholders beyond the school gates.

"There are always next steps after an Ofsted report and recommendations. Ours are to make

sure that the best opportunities are always available to every single child all of the time, so that

all barriers to learning and to attendance are consistently removed for every young person - and this indeed is our aim going forwards and our mission as a school."

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Fireworks return for 55th anniversary

DOWNEND Round Table has confirmed the return of this year's annual charity fireworks display at King George V Playing Fields in November.

The volunteer group will stage the 55th anniversary event in its traditional slot on the first Friday of the month, which this year will be November 6.

The show will stick to its established format of two displays: a quieter early one for younger children followed by the spectacular main event.

Award-winning pyrotechnicians SkyBurst will again provide the fireworks, which will be choreographed to music and incorporate a light show and G-Flame fire effects.

The traditional bonfire, built using 100% recycled wooden pallets, and a display of model hot air balloons will also help to light up the night.

There will be live entertainment including a foam party from Party Peeps, a fairground, food and licensed bar, a wide selection of food stalls, and a family fairground.

Last year's event attracted more than 10,000 people and raised a record-breaking £61,000 for charities and local good causes, from tickets and on-site sales of quality glow-in-the-dark toys.

Downend Round Table spokesman Dan Upton-Arkless said: "We're proud to once again be running this beloved community event, which has been a local staple of the Bonfire Night period for many years now.

"The team are hard at work preparing for its return, and it's shaping up to be bigger and brighter



Last year's display raised a record £61,000

than ever!

"We couldn't do this every year without the amazing support from the public, and of course the many volunteers working behind the scenes to make sure everything runs smoothly.

"Every ticket we sell contributes to supporting some amazing local charities."

Tickets for this year's display go on sale in October, with a limited number at "early bird" prices - more details in next month's Voice.

Downend Round Table is a social and voluntary organisation for men aged 18 to 45; for more information email hello@downendrt.co.uk.

Singing with heart

ON My Own, Secret Love, Phantom of the Opera – there are so many popular tunes from the musicals.

Add to that the more recent musicals such as Six and Hamilton, and you have a very entertaining evening!

On September 19 at 7pm in Christ Church Downend, performers from the church and community will singing in our Songs from the Shows concert.

The event aims to be an enjoyable evening for the whole community of all ages, and also to raise money for church roof repairs, plus a local charity, the Alfie Nick Foundation, set up to help disadvantaged children with opportunities in England and Wales.

Tickets (£7 for adults, £3 for under 18's) include a drink in the interval. They are available by calling 07753 233950 or emailing the parish office at parishadmin@christchurchdownend.com.

There will even be the chance to join in the odd number!

Anita Dobson



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Happy birthday, Isambard!

THE UK's most powerful artificial intelligence supercomputer has celebrated its first year of operation.

Since being switched on last summer at the Bristol & Bath Science Park in Emersons Green, Isambard-AI has helped researchers tackle some major challenges, including:

- *Improving understanding of Alzheimer's disease using AI trained on NHS data

- *Building large language models - AI systems trained on huge amounts of text - to support languages including Welsh, Scottish Gaelic and Cornish

- *Creating air pollution models to improve public health

- *Accelerating research into heart disease and cancer

The computer cost £225 million to develop and build, but can work at speeds

100,000 times faster than the average laptop, according to Bristol University, which runs the Bristol Centre for Supercomputing (BriCS).

In its first year, Isambard-AI has supported around 1,000 research projects involving more than 4,000 people.

BriCS director Professor Simon McIntosh-Smith said: "One year ago, we switched on a national capability that gives UK researchers the computing power to tackle problems at a completely different scale. In 12 months we've seen extraordinary demand and, more importantly, extraordinary impact. From healthcare and climate science to farming and AI safety, researchers are using Isambard-AI to make discoveries that simply weren't possible before."

"This is what investing in sovereign AI infrastructure looks like: world-class research, economic opportunity and real benefits for society."

Among the Bristol University projects benefiting from Isambard-AI is research led by Professor Andrew Dowsey at Bristol Veterinary School, which is using video data to improve



Supercomputer Isambard-AI

the health and welfare of dairy cattle, training AI models to recognise small behavioural changes that can indicate illness long before the symptoms become obvious to people.

Prof Dowsey said: "No farmer can watch every animal every minute of every day, but AI can. "Isambard-AI gives us the computing power to spot the earliest signs of disease before they're visible to the human eye, helping us intervene sooner, improve animal welfare and reduce the impact of disease on farms."

"Our ambition is to turn this research into an affordable tool that supports farmers across

the UK while helping build a healthier, more sustainable future for livestock farming."

Isambard-AI is the world's fastest university supercomputer. Ranked 13th most powerful in the world, including commercial supercomputers, it is the seventh most powerful in Europe and fourth greenest globally, on the basis of its use of renewable electricity and its energy efficiency.

BriCS is now planning its next phase, including the Bristol AI Data Facility (BRAID), a massive data storage unit next to Isambard-AI which the university says will "unlock the supercomputer's full potential".

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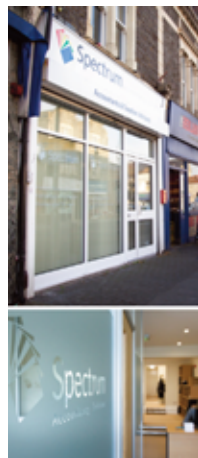
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September 2

■ **MOTHERS UNION** at Christ Church Downend, 2.15pm. Talk: A Trip to Kumi, Uganda. Worship, refreshments, fundraising and friendship. Accessible building and toilets.

September 5

■ **EMERGENCY SERVICES FUN DAY** at Page Park, Staple Hill from 11am-3pm. Free event bringing together emergency services, community groups, charities and other groups to offer information, advice, demonstrations and activities. Meet local policing teams and try out kit. All welcome.

September 5

■ **BRISTOL & WEST HOCKEY CLUB** open day at Mangotsfield School, Rodway Hill, 10am-3pm. Friendly games, BBQ and bake sale - free to new members. Junior tournament 10-11.45am, adult tournament 11.45am-3pm. All welcome.

September 6

■ **BACK TO SCHOOL SUNDAY**, all

age worship at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 10am. Followed by Page Park Praise at 3pm with Staple Hill Salvation Army Band, afternoon of music and worship - bring a chair if you can.

September 8

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

September 12

■ **FRENCHAY CHURCH BELL TOWER** open to visitors from 10am-noon. See and hear the bells, learn about bell ringing heritage and how to ring. No need to book, just turn up. Part of Heritage Open Days.

September 13

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

September 13

■ **MESSY CHURCH** at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 4-6pm. Craft-based afternoon for all the family, including shared meal. Call 0117 956 9733 for more details.

September 17

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

September 19

■ **SONGS FROM THE SHOWS CONCERT**, Christ Church Downend, 7pm. Raising money for the church roof and the Alfie Nick Foundation. Tickets: £7 adults, £3 under-18s, available from parish

office, by email at parishadmin@christchurchdownend.com or from Anita on 07753 233950. Accessible building and toilets.

September 19-20

■ **MASSIVE** sale of pre-loved tools in aid of charity Tools for Self Reliance, Kingswood Heritage Museum, Tower Lane, Warmley, 11am-4pm each day. Bargain price tools for DIY, building, carpentry, engineering and gardening, plus lots of hardware - all electrical items PAT tested.

September 21

■ **DOWNEND SENIOR FILM CLUB** at 2pm The Choral (12) A choral society's male members enlist in World War I, leaving the demanding Dr. Guthrie to recruit teenagers. Together, they experience the joy of singing while the young boys grapple with their impending conscription into the army. Written by Alan Bennett and starring Ralph Fiennes, Allun Armstrong and Mark Addy. Carers welcome, easy access Refreshments £4 Christ Church Hall, 57 North Street, Downend BS16 5SG For more information, please call 0117 435 0063.

September 24

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

September 24

■ **VINTAGE ADVENTURE** at the Church Centre, Quakers Road, 1.45pm-3.30pm. Activities, refreshments, friendship and a Christian message for the season, for seniors. All welcome.

September 26

■ **COFFEE MORNING** at Staple

Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 10am-noon. Drop in for breakfast, coffee, cakes, and a chat.

September 28

■ **CAMEO RELAXED CRAFT EVENING** open to anyone at Staple Hill Salvation Army, Broad Street, 8pm. Different crafts each month and a chance to 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 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

Downend Library

Adult Activities

Mondays 10-12 Knitter Natter - come along and join this friendly group for a cuppa, a natter and some knitting!

Fridays 10.30 - 11.30 Coffee Morning - come along to the library for a chat and a cuppa!

Children's Activities

Mondays - Term Time Only - 15.30 - 16.30 Crafternoon for primary school age children Pop along after school for a free, fun crafting session!

Wednesdays 10.30 - 11.00 Rhymetime for pre school children

Come along for a free, fun filled session with lots of singing and bubbles!

Wednesdays 11.00 - 11.30 Mini Builders for pre school children

Stay after Rhyme Time for a free play session with Duplo, train sets and much more!

Lego Club - for children 4+

Once a month on a Saturday, 10.30 - 11.30 Free

Join us for a story and Lego building session and see your Lego creation displayed in the library!

U3a Display

Advertising their organisation from 21st Sept until 5th Oct.

Please contact the library for dates

Downend.library@southglos.gov.uk

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

■ ARTS AND CRAFTS GROUP

Every Monday, 10am -12.30 pm . Page Hall, Staple Hill. Bring your own arts and crafts project materials, and enjoy a relaxed, friendly space to work alongside like-minded people. No experience necessary. £5 per session, including a hot drink and biscuits. For more information, please call 07944550442.

Tuesday

■ DOWNEND GARDENING IN RETIREMENT CLUB

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

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

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

■ 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

■ **BRISTOL MILITARY WIVES CHOIR** meets at Mangotsfield and Castle Green United Reformed Church, Cossham Street, every Tuesday 7-9pm. Open to women with a military connection. No audition or experience needed. Cake and tea/coffee provided. More details from bristol@militarywiveschoirs.org.

■ 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: davidhjrjan@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. 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



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Bea.Lush@averyhealthcare.co.uk
07749 432772
339 Badminton Road, Downend,
Bristol, BS36 1AJ

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

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 the hub on 01454 868374.

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

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

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

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

■ BEECHWOOD READING

GROUP Meets at the Beechwood Club, Fishponds. Third Wed of the month 1.45pm to 3.15pm. New members welcome. Contact Carolyn on 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

■ ST JOHN'S BADMINTON CLUB

plays at Kingswood Leisure Centre, Church Road, Soundwell every Wednesday, 8-10pm. New members welcome - more details from Sue on 07715 738131.

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

History Hiding in Plain Sight

by
Frenchay Village Museum

Saturday 12 September
1:30 PM - 4:30 PM
1 Begbrook Park, Frenchay,
BS16 1SZ



Discover the untold stories and hidden gems of history right around you!

Frenchay Village Museum, Frenchay Unitarian Chapel and Frenchay Quaker Meeting invite you to spend an afternoon exploring local history on your doorstep.

1.30pm – Museum opens The Museum opens and acts as a gathering point. Early arrivals are welcome to look around the Museum.

2.00pm – Welcome and introduction Welcome and introduction by Hugh Whatley, Chair of Museum.

2.15pm – First walking group departs The first walking group leaves the Museum, taking the longer route to arrive at the Chapel by 2.45pm. Led by Carol Thorne, former Headteacher at Frenchay School

2.30pm – Second walking group departs If there is sufficient demand, a second group will leave the Museum and take the shorter route directly to the Chapel, arriving at approximately 2.45pm. Led by Peter Bruce.

2.45pm – Both groups arrive at the Frenchay Chapel A short talk by Peter Bruce, one of the leading volunteers, followed by an opportunity to look around the Chapel.

3.15pm – Walk to the Quaker Meeting House Depart the Chapel and walk along Beckspool Road to the Quaker Meeting House, arriving at approximately 3.30pm.

3.30pm – Visit to Quaker Meeting House Short talk by Roger Angerson, very long standing member of the Local Meeting, followed by a tour of the house and grounds.

4.00pm – Light refreshments Tea, cake and light refreshments will be served. Donations are warmly welcomed.

Walk back from the last location is approximately 0.7 miles/15 min.

WHAT'S ON LOCALLY

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.emersonsgreenchurch.org or 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 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.

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12,000 waste collections a week missed

MORE than 71,000 bin and recycling collections across South Gloucestershire were missed over just six weeks this summer – an average of almost 12,000 households a week.

Opposition Conservatives have accused the council's Lib Dem/Labour ruling coalition of running a waste service in "chaos" since introducing three-weekly black bin days in May.

In the authority's latest briefing to councillors, based on data from mid-June to the end of July, officers told members there had been 71,000 recorded missed collections.

If spread evenly among the 118,000 homes in the district, that represents 60% of households missing one collection – but many have missed more than one, while others have not been affected.

The council says a combination of factors, including extreme heat, had caused the issues.

In July, the council fined its kerbside collections contractor Suez for its 'appalling' service,



A bin lorry leaves Mangotsfield's Sort It centre

and said the company was in breach of its contract.

Successive heatwaves over the summer, which forced crews to work more slowly and finish early before temperatures became unbearable, combined with new collection routes and reduced black bin collections, have caused confusion and missed bin days.

Tory group leader and Frenchay & Downend ward councillor Liz Brennan said: "Residents have endured a summer of chaos."

"The administration has failed to deliver even the basic services people pay for."

"Residents have been asked to pay more for less by accepting

these changes, and now they will not receive any kind of remuneration for not receiving the basic service their council tax pays for.

"The situation is completely unacceptable."

The Tories are urging the coalition to conduct a full review of the waste service changes and provide transparency on contractor performance.

A council spokesperson said the "vast majority" of waste and recycling collections went ahead on the correct day, but successive heatwaves had a significant impact.

Black bin, hygiene and nappy waste collections were prioritised over weekly recycling collections.

The spokesperson said: "Recovering these collections took time, as delayed recycling often results in larger volumes being presented the following week, increasing collection times, and placing additional pressure on vehicles and crews."

"Just as services were recovering from one period of disruption, further hot weather led to additional delays and extended the recovery period."

The spokesperson said the move to three-weekly black bin collections had increased the resources available for recycling collections, to manage increased amounts of recyclable material, and four dedicated hygiene and nappy waste vehicles had also been introduced.

The spokesperson added: "We recognise that some residents have experienced missed or delayed collections and apologise for the disruption caused."

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Fridge and freezer pick-ups suspended

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council has stopped accepting fridges or freezers for disposal at recycling centres.

The council will also not collect the appliances through its bulky item service, unless the collection was booked before August 5.

Announcing the temporary change, the authority said it was because of "a national shortage of recycling capacity".

Earlier in the year the council had warned that fridge and freezer recycling might have to be suspended for the same reason.

It has advised residents whose old fridge or freezer is still in working order to consider selling it, giving it away or offering to donate it to a charity or community group.

Anyone who is buying a new appliance is being urged to check whether the retailer can dispose of their old one, or to store the old one safely until recycling can resume.

The council said: "We will provide an update as soon as the situation changes."

An earlier suspension of accepting lead acid batteries, such as car batteries, at Sort It centres has now been relaxed.

The council temporarily stopped accepting them while changes to storage arrangements were made.



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A SURGEON from Emersons Green has rowed his way into the record books as part of a crew racing around the coast of Great Britain.

Stefano Capella, his brother Marco and three other members of Team Rowmads became the first and fastest crew of five to complete the GB Row Challenge unsupported, finishing the 2,000-mile journey in 32 days, 30 minutes and 58 seconds in July.

Stef is a Royal Navy trauma and orthopaedic surgeon, who has lived in Emersons Green for just over two years.

When he is not on deployment he works at hospitals across the region, including Southmead, treating bone and muscle injuries for the NHS.

He and his teammates spent three years planning for the epic row, which started and finished at Tower Bridge in London and took them around the coast.

Each rower spent two hours on and one hour off the oars for 18 hours a day, then two hours on and four hours off overnight.

Rowing unsupported meant they relied on a solar-powered

Stef rows into record books



Stefano Capella (right) with brother Marco, first mate Felix Wood, skipper Mike Eager and Sam Gibbons

Picture: GB Row Challenge

desalination machine to provide drinking water, and cloudy weather during the leg around the Scottish coast meant it stopped working - leaving them close to the end of their 100 litre reserve by the time the sun emerged again.

They also lost the power to their speakers and radios, so had to make their own entertainment

until it returned in time for them to recharge the batteries - and catch up on England's World Cup campaign.

Stef said: "The biggest highlight was seeing just how extraordinary our country is from the water. We had dolphins following the boat, and saw otters, whales and incredible stretches of coastline.

"There were some brutally hard moments, like being on the oars at two in the morning for the fifth night in a row, rationing water and dealing with no power. But morale stayed remarkably high because we had such a fantastic team."

Each team member was raising money for a charity - Stef was supporting a specialist charity for trauma patients called DayOneTrauma Support.

As the Voice went to print the team had raised £8,750 of their £10,000 target and their fundraising page is still open at tinyurl.com/yxth3sji.

The team also carried out research monitoring the health of the seas around Britain, using hydrophone monitoring, twice-daily environmental DNA readings and daily microplastic sampling.

They also collected a wealth of biomedical data on themselves to aid research projects into sleep, bone health, human metabolism, and small team psychology.



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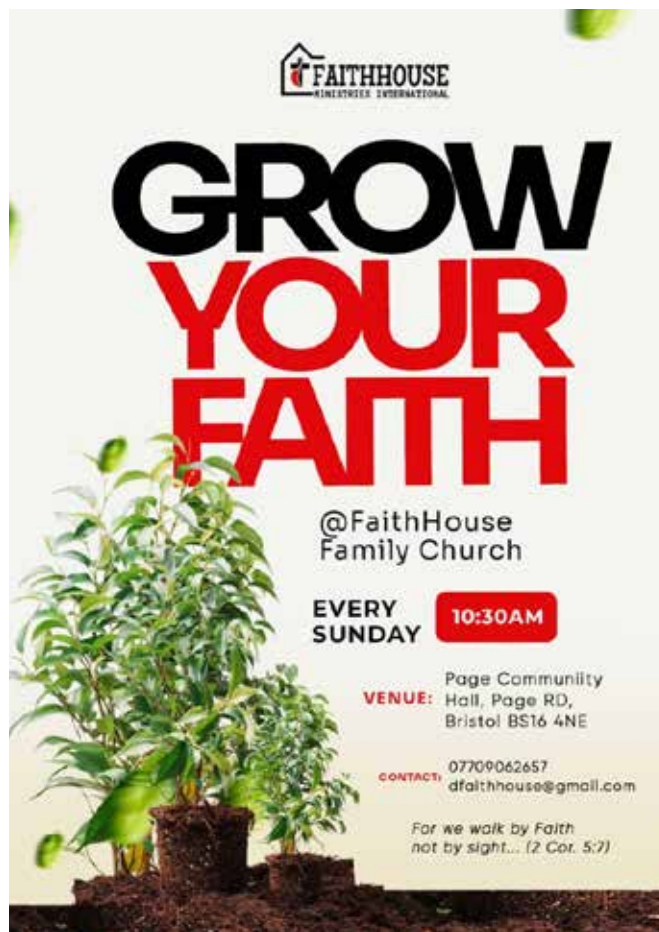
@FaithHouse
Family Church

EVERY SUNDAY **10:30AM**

VENUE: Page Community
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Bristol BS16 4NE

CONTACT: 07709062657
dfalithhouse@gmail.com

For we walk by Faith
not by sight... (2 Cor. 5:7)

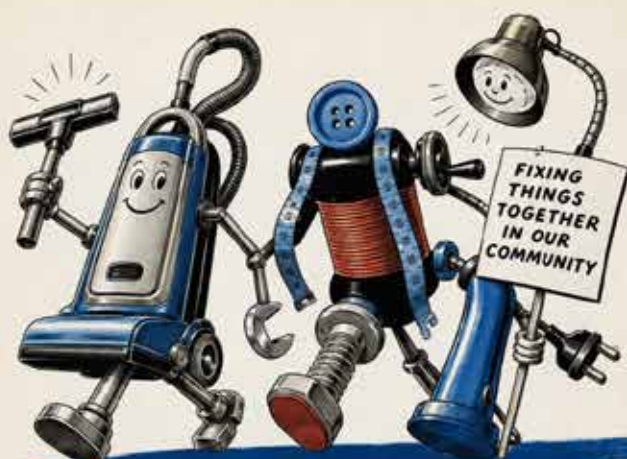


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Don't Bin It – Repair It! Free Repairs by Local Volunteers

10am – 12pm
The Second Saturday of each month.
Town Council Building – BS16 7AN
(Accessed via the Wetherspoons car park)

clerk@emersonsgreen-tc.gov.uk

Arrest after cars attacked

POLICE arrested a man after car windows were smashed in Downend.

Officers were alerted to an incident in Queensholm Drive, Bromley Heath, at about 7.15pm on August 9 when four windows of a grey Renault Clio were smashed by "an unknown male who fled the scene".

The offender was described as being white, around 5ft 9in tall and in his mid to late-20s, with short blond hair and wearing a white T-shirt.

Just over an hour later a window of a black Audi was smashed in Badminton Road. Police arrested a man in his 40s on suspicion of criminal damage, common assault of an emergency worker and theft.

He was later released while the investigation continues.

Officers have called on anyone with dashcam or CCTV footage from the time of the first incident in Queensholm Drive to call 101 and quote the crime reference number 5226 223 879.

Anybody with information about the second incident should quote reference number 5226 223 913.

Information can also be given online via the police website.

Ebikes and scooters in park

POLICE say they are patrolling in and around Page Park after reports of antisocial behaviour including the use of e-bikes and e-scooters.

The South Gloucestershire Neighbourhood Policing team said in late July that people had reported the illegal use of Sur-Ron motorbike-style electric bikes in the area.

They said: "Neighbourhood officers continue to patrol the area. We are also working closely with our roads policing colleagues, as we've seen an increase in reports of this type of behaviour across South Gloucestershire in recent weeks.

"If you witness dangerous riding, anti-social behaviour, or any criminal activity, please report it. "Information such as descriptions, CCTV, dashcam footage, and mobile phone videos can be invaluable in helping us identify those involved."

Car ban for school run

PLANS to ban motor traffic from the streets around Frenchay C of E Primary School at pick-up and drop-off times have been unveiled.

South Gloucestershire Council wants to create a 'School Street' around the school to make travel by bike, scooter or on foot more attractive to pupils and their families.

The scheme would see motor vehicles banned from driving through Alexander Road and Belsey Road, east of Caseley Crescent, between 8.20am and 9.05am, and between 3pm and 4pm on school days.

A 'pedestrian and cycle' zone would be created outside the school by using a legal Experimental Traffic Regulation Order.

It would be enforced using automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) traffic cameras, with signs to warn drivers on Old Gloucester Road, Beckspool Road, Begbrook Park, Frenchay Park Road and Bristol Road.

South Gloucestershire Council, which is proposing the scheme, said: "This will help influence driver behaviour by ensuring that the scheme can be appropriately enforced without requiring police attendance or physical barriers."

The consultation runs until January 4 next year and can be found online at tinyurl.com/yt2an8t5.

People who are not online can call the council's Department for Place on 01454 868000 to find out how to have a say.

The plan ties in with efforts by the school to promote 'active travel' among pupils.

Deputy head teacher Michael Backett said: "We have run a number of initiatives to encourage people to ditch the car and walk, scoot or cycle to school."

Schemes include a 'Park and Stride' scheme for parents to leave cars at Frenchay Museum and then walk through the park to school, travel trackers for children to earn badges by walking, scooting or cycling to school and a 'golden lock' prize awarded to pupils who park bikes or scooters at school.

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New schools ready to welcome pupils

TWO new schools are preparing to welcome their first ever pupils after a £58.3 million building project was completed - four years later than originally intended.

Lyde Green Community School will welcome around 150 Year 7 pupils to its site in Honeysuckle Road, Lyde Green, in September.

The school will eventually have a capacity of 900 pupils aged 11 to 16, and is run by the Olympus Trust, which also runs Winterbourne Academy.

Its opening will ease the pressure on other oversubscribed schools locally, including Downend School.

Head teacher Tom Hill said around a third of the first intake of 11-year-old pupils are from Lyde Green itself, with the rest from Emersons Green, Pucklechurch and the wider area.

The new pupils and members of the local community have already visited the school, and Mr Hill said everyone who stepped inside had been "gushing with praise".

Next door, a primary school with a capacity for 420 pupils will welcome its first 21 Reception children.

It is being run in tandem with the existing Lyde Green Primary School in Willowherb Road by the Castle School Education Trust, which also runs Downend School.

Primary school head teacher Tom



Head teacher Tom Hill at the main entrance to Lyde Green Community School

Hutchings said the new building will also host all three of its twin school's Year 6 classes, around 80 pupils, who are being moved to Honeysuckle Road partly to

support their transition to the secondary school and also to relieve crowding at the oversubscribed Willowherb Road site.

The opening of the schools follows decades of campaigning for a secondary school to serve the Emersons Green area.

Funding was first secured in early 2021 and the schools had originally been due to open the following year, but the project was hit by a series of delays.

In the meantime, neighbouring secondary schools had to increase capacity, hosting extra classes to accommodate the demand.

The new schools are the largest in England to have been built to eco-friendly Passivhaus standards, which will ensure they are carbon neutral, warmer in winter, cooler in summer, and cheaper to run.

Around £34.3m of funding came from the Department for Education, with £24m from South Gloucestershire Council.

Council cabinet member for schools Ian Boulton said: "Long-promised and now delivered, these state-of-the-art schools will serve the Lyde Green community for generations.

"Getting this project moving after years of delays was a key priority for this administration. It's just one of many developments for our children and young people that will make a real difference to families in South Gloucestershire."

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Share your views on NHS dentists

I HOPE you've had a good summer and been able to have a bit of a break.

Summer can be a great time to make lifelong memories, but it can also be expensive and not always easy to know what support is available.

To help, I brought local organisations together in one room at my free Community Advice Drop-in, held at Patchway's Coniston Community Centre.

I'm grateful to North Bristol Advice Centre, Avon & Somerset Police, Severn Wye Energy Agency, Wessex Water and DWP for joining this impactful event, and to all the local



Claire Hazelgrove with group librarian Neil Weston at Emersons Green Library

people who came by.

I also visited Emerson's Green Library to see how they are supporting our younger residents with this year's Summer Reading Challenge: it was great to see so many names on the progress board!

Thank you to everyone working in our fantastic local libraries – the joy of reading and exploring different worlds through books is such an important one for every generation to be able to discover.

I joined the Filton Twinning Association at the end of a week's exchange visit from residents from St Vallier-sur-Rhône in France and Witzenhausen in Germany. These links and friendships were forged during the Concorde years, and it is good to see them still going strong.

It was useful to meet with the North Bristol and South Glos Foodbank team again, to hear about their latest priorities, how long-term donations help, and to talk about recent action to help ease the cost of living, including the return of £2 capped bus fares and removal of VAT on energy bills. More long-term support is needed, and I will always push for this for our community.

Before I was elected, I ran a survey on local experiences of accessing NHS dentists, given



how hard this had become.

I've used your responses to push for change and shared your experiences in the Commons and with health ministers.

Two years on, there are more urgent appointments locally, and changes are being made to encourage more dentists to stay in the NHS.

I'm running a new survey to find out what has improved and what hasn't, so I can keep pushing for what we need.

Please share your experiences at tinyurl.com/ycxcvd6k.

This month, my small team and I worked on 747 new cases supporting local people. I held my regular advice surgery, this time in Downend, and knocked on doors to listen to fellow residents in Stoke Gifford.

As Parliament returns, I look forward to continuing to be a strong voice for us in Westminster.

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

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France's displays delight

I HAVE been travelling through France on holiday in August.

We have done a lot of driving and have visited some very beautiful towns, where they certainly know how to create some stunning floral displays.

They seem to use a mix of bedding and perennial plants, in an array of colours.

It is different however, as it seems the commune (council) does the planting, looking after and watering of the displays.

We did have a great find as we were driving north from Annecy, along a very quiet road with little traffic and lots of countryside.

We suddenly came across a small village, which had a lake, and next to the lake was a beautiful garden.

It was in sections, and each section had a display from each of the surrounding regions. There were little model houses, windmills, bridges and animals, and they were full of every plant you could imagine.

The blooms were so colourful, it reminded me of a small Chelsea Flower Show - but empty of people, and completely free! Certainly a great find, especially for our lunch stop.

When we get back we are looking forward to seeing how our displays have been doing. We have been looking at the Bristol weather and seeing how hot it has been.

Luckily we spent a lot of the time in the mountains, so much cooler, and saw the eclipse from the top of a mountain, which was quite exciting.

We will be thinking about the winter panolas when we get back - In Bloom never stops changing!

Contact us at dbhinbloom@gmail.com or on Facebook. **Jackie Baker**



French village flower display

'Little library' for Frenchay

A CARE home in Frenchay is sharing its residents' love of reading with the community by setting up a free book swap station.

The Little Library at Manor Cottage in Beckspool Road is for local children and adults to bring along a book they have enjoyed, leave it for somebody else and choose another one to take home.

Residents helped to build the wooden cabinet for the exchange and sort through a collection of children's and adult books ready for a launch celebration attended by South Gloucestershire ward councillor Liz Brennan.

The home's manager, Rayna Powell, said: "Reading is something many of our residents really value, so it has been lovely to see them involved in creating a facility that can be enjoyed by the wider community."

"Our Little Library is open to everyone. We hope local children, families and adults will stop by, choose a book and leave one for somebody else to discover."

"It is a simple idea, but one that can bring different generations together and help more people experience the joy of getting lost in a good book."

The project also supports the National Year of Reading, which aims to encourage people of all ages to make more time for reading and enjoy the benefits it can bring for well-being, literacy and social connection.



The Little Library at Manor Cottage

Memory Lane

"It's hard losing someone. The pain doesn't really ever go away. But the setting here is so lovely and green, calm and peaceful, it helps. We can't bring them back but when we're among those trees they feel less far away."

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Making our roads safer

LAST year, an average of two people per day were seriously injured or killed on Avon and Somerset roads. Tragically, there were 44 fatalities.

This year, at the time of writing, 34 lives have already been lost.

Behind each statistic is a person – someone loved, and a family whose lives will never be the same again.

Road safety is one of the top issues that people raise with me, in person, in meetings and through emails.

I hear directly from communities, from the outstanding volunteers in community watch schemes, and from the families and friends who have lost loved ones.

Their stories stay with me, as a constant reminder that all of us who use the roads have a responsibility.

Motorcyclists are among the most vulnerable of our road users. Shockingly, 39% of fatal or serious injury collisions in our region last year involved two-wheeled vehicles, despite accounting for less than 2% of road users nationally.

Over the summer, Avon and Somerset Police ran an operation to engage this

community, including patrols of high-risk routes and rural roads, the seizure of illegal e-bikes or e-scooters, targeted enforcement, and providing advice and education.

I also shared advice about motorcycle safety, because education is a key part of prevention. Careless driving, whether by car drivers or bikers, is one of the leading causes of serious injury and death on our roads.

Too often, the collisions that cause the greatest harm come down to a lack of awareness or a moment of inattention.

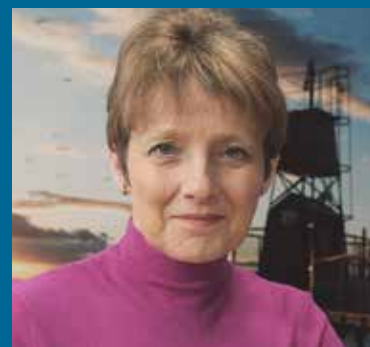
This may be the distraction of looking at a mobile phone or the failure to check rear-view or wing mirrors.

Other common causes include not wearing a seatbelt, speeding, or aggressive and inconsiderate actions like tailgating.

The awful truth is, so many of the tragedies on our roads are preventable.

That includes drink or drug driving; a contributing factor to around a quarter of fatal collisions on Avon and Somerset roads last year.

It's an entirely avoidable crime. Despite this, Avon and Somerset Police officers made almost one arrest for every four vehicles



Clare Moody A&SPCC
writes for the Voice

stopped during 'Operation Limit', when they conducted roadside tests for drink and drug driving throughout the World Cup tournament.

Roads policing operations run year-round, but this is not just a policing issue. It is a shared responsibility.

The police are responsible for enforcement, but it is far better to focus on prevention.

We all want to get home safely. We all want our loved ones to get home safely.

So please, remember to show care for those around you – and for yourself. We all have a duty to do what we can to save lives, prevent tragedy and make our roads safer.



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Volunteers from the Friends of Page Park met a judge from South West in Bloom to show him around the park's sensory garden at the end of July. Volunteers said the judge was "very impressed" with the garden - results of the competition will be announced in October.

Friends of Page Park

PAGE Park will host its fourth Emergency Services Fun Day in September.

The community event, organised by the Avon & Somerset Police Outreach Team, aims to bring together emergency services, agencies, community groups, charities and the public to build trust and encourage engagement.

Visitors will have a chance to meet the police, try out some kit and find out more information about the work of the emergency services at information stalls.

Demonstrations and activities are also planned for people to learn more about services

available across South Gloucestershire at the family-friendly event.

This year's fun day takes place on Saturday September 5 from 11am to 3pm.

As well as the police, Avon Fire & Rescue Service and Great Western Air Ambulance, a variety of community groups and organisations will attend.

The event takes place during South Asian Heritage Month and will include representatives from non-profit group South Asian Voices.

It will also be the first opportunity for people to buy the 2027 Friends of Page Park calendar.

The calendar features 12 pictures from local photographers, chosen after a competition held earlier this year, and is the main fundraiser for the Friends.

This year all proceeds from the sale of calendars will go towards the Friends' restoration fund, supporting a project to improve play areas and sports facilities.

Calendars will cost £6 per copy, and will be on sale at events and local shops.

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Fiona Konteh



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Facing our final meeting?

At the time of writing, we're holding our last committee meeting before the Bromley Heath Neighbourhood Watch annual meeting and discussion evening in the autumn. We'll let you know when that is in the next edition.

The meeting will be our last. Our chair stands down, numbers on the committee have reduced and no new volunteers have come forward to take the watch forward, despite our best endeavours.

It's not too late though, if you can make that difference. Get in touch at contactus@bhnw.org.uk or call 0117 956 3325 for a chat, with no commitment. It will be a shame to become virtual-only.

Our main concern recently has been how dry it is, and the high potential for fire unless we remain vigilant and engaged. Caution, please, with BBQs, cigarette ends, sparks from works, etc.

A new national Neighbourhood Watch Network podcast has been launched. The podcast brings together well-known guests, powerful personal stories and insightful conversations about crime, community and the places that shape us. Hosted by Alfie Moore, a former copper turned award-winning comedian, there's a new episode each week at tinyurl.com/3jf5wtyn.

Network chief executive John Hayward-Cripps said: "Almost everyone has been a victim of crime at some point; it can be traumatic, but it is also a near-universal experience.

"These conversations are fascinating and insightful, spanning the full spectrum of human emotion. We hope the show will help our members, and many others, feel part of our community."

To close, neighbourhoods matter: maybe we don't have to change the world - maybe we start by improving the places that matter most to us.

Neighbourhood Watch is about people coming together to make the places we call home safer, friendlier, and more connected.

Because when communities are stronger, they're safer too.

If you care about your community and want to be part of something positive, join us.

Bill Crocker

Outstanding in his field!

OUTDOOR educator and naturalist Steve England has been awarded an honorary degree by the University of the West of England in recognition of his work.

Steve, who works with schools, community and youth groups across the Bristol area to help people of all ages learn about the natural world around them, was made an Honorary Master of Science at a UWE Bristol graduation day in July.

UWE said the degree was bestowed in recognition of Steve's services to protecting local environment and championing the heritage of Wallscourt Farm, which stood on the site now occupied by the university's Frenchay Campus.

Steve, of Lockleaze, grew up exploring the fields and woodlands of nearby Stoke Park, as well as Wallscourt Farm.

He runs outdoor learning courses and hosts activities on subjects from foraging to bat and ghost walks for community groups in local green spaces, including in the Frome valley at Snuff Mills.

Steve has been a regular host for events at Emersons Green's Earthfest nature festival and even showed TV presenter John Craven around Eastville Park when BBC Countryfile made a film about its wildlife in 2019.

Swapping his academic cap for his trademark beanie hat during his acceptance speech, Steve said: "May we all continue to protect our natural world and inspire those who follow today and for generations to come."

To find out more about his work, visit www.steveengland.co.uk.



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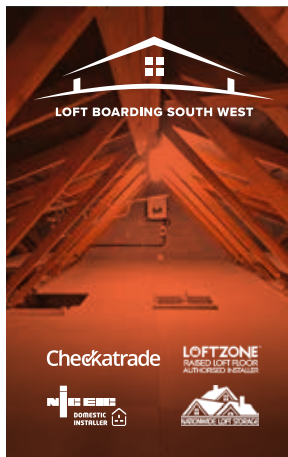
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Food banks need your help



Food bank warehouses are running low on supplies

"I'VE never seen it this empty" is what our logistics manager said to me recently.

He was talking about the warehouse that keeps nine food bank outlets stocked, and supplies at the lowest levels he has personally seen.

While food bank use eased across the UK last year, North Bristol & South Gloucestershire Foodbank's didn't, and we are now buying more of our own stock than ever to keep our nine outlets supplied.

We are appealing for donations of 11 specific items, after a year in which local need held steady while donations fell behind it, leaving stock low this summer.

It's part of a pattern we have watched build over the past year.

Nationally, food bank parcels fell by 12% last year as inflation eased. Locally, that fall didn't happen: North Bristol & South Gloucestershire Foodbank handed out 15,045 parcels across 2025, 58% above 2019 levels and above the England average.

Every week I see what it takes to keep nine outlets stocked, including at Resound in Blackhorse Road, and this year that's meant reaching into our charity's own funds more than ever before.

Last year we had to buy a record one in every four items we gave out, because donations alone weren't enough.

That's money that should be funding advice services and support, going instead into holding our stock together.

This community has shown up for us many times before, and I believe it will again.

Harvest and Christmas take care of themselves, but it's right now when donations dry up.

The following items are what our warehouse needs first, in order of urgency:

1. Tinned fruit
2. Desserts (not chilled)
3. Fruit juices and squashes
4. Cereals
5. UHT milk
6. Tinned tomatoes and cooking sauces
7. Laundry detergent (small boxes)
8. Washing-up liquid
9. Hair care (shampoo and conditioner)
10. Baby food (not formula)
11. Tinned halal meat

You can help in three ways: dropping items at a collection point at a local supermarket or at the food bank's office - locations are listed at tinyurl.com/3zkpef8h - order directly from an online shop that delivers to the warehouse or donate money.

You can find out more at nbsg.foodbank.org.uk

Ellen Wood
Chief Executive

North Bristol & South Gloucestershire Foodbank

Not all kids are the same



Litter collected on Rodway Common

I'VE just been collecting litter at Rodway Common's Southside cycle jump track.

I'm all in favour of kids out enjoying themselves, however I have to question the parenting of some, and would challenge many of the parents of kids knowingly using the area to get down there and clear up the mess their children leave behind - it's a disgrace.

However, one positive was that two Year 6 boys stopped and helped me clear the bags containing plastic pop bottles and sweet wrappers - thank you.

Rob Higgins

You don't have to be a wife



Military Wives Choir Bristol performing in Page Park

WHEN people hear the name Military Wives Choir, they often make a few assumptions.

The biggest is that you have to be a wife. Next, that you need to be able to sing.

Neither is true.

Military Wives Choir Bristol welcomes women from across the military community - whether you're serving, a veteran, a reservist, a partner,

mum, daughter, sister, widow or work in support of the Armed Forces.

If military life has been part of your story, you'll find a warm welcome.

Another common misconception is that everyone already knows each other. In reality, many of our members walked through the door for the first time knowing no one at all.

Before long, they found themselves chatting over a cup of tea, sampling someone's homemade cake and discovering that choir night is about far more than singing.

We'll be starting rehearsals for our Christmas concert when we return, but there's no pressure to perform.

Some members love taking part in concerts, while others simply enjoy coming along each week for the music, the company and a chance to switch off for a couple of hours.

There's no audition, no need to read music and no expectation that you'll have a perfect voice.

If you enjoy singing in the car, in the shower or around the house, that's all the experience you need.

If you've ever wondered whether our choir might be for you, come along and see for yourself - we meet every Tuesday from 7-9pm at Mangotsfield United Reformed Church, starting again on September 8.

For more information or to arrange a free taster session, email bristol@militarywiveschoirs.org.

Military Wives Choir Bristol

Spare a thought for recycling crews

I'D like to say a few words of praise for the hard work that our refuse collection workers do for us.

It is not a job that many of us would want to do, especially in the heat waves we have had recently.

Christine Broadway

Save tools from scrap

WE are inviting as many people as possible to come to a massive sale of pre-loved tools at Kingswood Heritage Museum.

The tools have been donated to our charity, which supports people in Africa and the UK to build sustainable livelihoods by providing skills training and quality tools, but are surplus to requirements.

We want to save the tools from going to the scrapyard - they are in such good condition.

There are tools for all your DIY, building, carpentry, engineering and gardening needs, plus lots of hardware - all electrical items are PAT tested and everything is at bargain prices.

The sale takes place on September 19 and 20, from 11am to 4pm at the museum at Tower Lane, Warmley.

We want to make it a big fund-raising success.

Sarah Townsend
Volunteer
Tools for self-Reliance



■ **Eight plus One by Bruce Gibbs**



■ **Struggle by Sid Stace**



■ **Waterfall Country by Owen Richards**

Water, water, everywhere

WHAT a summer we've had!

Week after week of hot sunny days, and not a drop of rain for us or our gardens.

Like most of us, I enjoy the sun and warmth, but you can have too much of a good thing.

The increasingly parched countryside makes one long for rain to restore the green, and the attractions of water become ever greater.

During this period I, and several other Lincombe Barn Camera Club members, made a trip to Bath where, in the glistening waters of the Avon, was a group of kayakers, practising

rough water work on the Pulteney weir.

Hard work but definitely cool, as river water splashed over them. Naturally, out came the cameras.

My own contribution is 'Struggle', as a kayaker fights to stay upright in the water rushing over the weir. Tough work to keep cool.

The only difficult thing I had to do in comparison was to find the right camera speed to freeze the swirling waters and the struggling kayaker.

Owen Richards' photo, 'Waterfall Country', shows us someone apparently going to extreme lengths to find water and fight the heat as they stand in front of Sgwd Isaf Clun Gwyn in the Brecon Beacons, or Bannau Brycheiniog as they are now officially called.

If you've never been up there, do so - it's a most beautiful part of the world.

Finally, Bruce Gibbs found a group who

were prepared to use the water as an excuse to undertake some very hard work. In 'Eight plus One', a ladies' rowing crew look suitably exhausted after a work-out on the river. Several of them don't look too pleased at being photographed!

Whatever subjects 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. We have regular outings during the summer, so there's always something interesting to do.

We restart the year on September 8 with a review of our summer photographs and last year's competition images. It will be an excellent occasion to come and introduce yourself. You will be very welcome - your first visit is free.

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

Lincombe Barn is on Overndale Road, Downend, with plenty of parking on-site.

More details are on our website at www.lincombebarncameraclub.co.uk, or contact us on lincombe.barn@gmail.com.

Joining us could be the coolest move you make this year!

Sid Stace

BRISTOL U3A

It's more fun to do things together

BEING a member of Bristol u3a doesn't just enable you to attend some of the 215 interest groups running across the area.

Once you're a member, you'll also find that there are plenty of things to do informally as well.

Working on the principle that it's usually more fun to do something in company than on your own, a monthly local area

email newsletter, supported by a members' WhatsApp group, enables members to suggest one-off activities.

Recently these have included: a summer garden party in a member's home; early evening pub meets and skittles evenings.

We've seen the formation of small groups to go to outdoor events such as Pizza in the Park (Page Park) and Redcatch Park Big Picnic.

There are also semi-regular informal groups that go to live music events, quiz nights and fringe theatre shows.

Every month, members of Bristol u3a run café socials around the East and North-East of greater Bristol.

Non-members are welcome to come along and join in, meet existing members and find out more about u3a in general.

This month you'll find us at: Turners in Fishponds (previously known as Grounded, flat access) on September 8; the Crafty Egg in Fishponds (ramp) on the 16th; Hillfields Community Centre (flat access) on the 17th and Mokka Downend (flat access) on the 28th.

Becoming a member of Bristol u3a is remarkable value: £20 a year for individuals, with discounts for two members sharing an address, or for members of other local u3as.

Email me at learnlaughlive@bristol3a.org.uk to find out more.

Lindsay Gough

WHEN Downend Men in Sheds found a new home after closure of the Pavilion on Bromley Heath playing fields, we knew a lot of work needed to be done.

The unit at the old Heritage Fencing site on Cuckoo Lane, Winterbourne Down, needed worktables, dust extraction and lighting.

We also recognised at the outset that a mezzanine deck could increase the size of the unit by 40%, and provide desperately-needed space.

This would require substantial planning and considerable effort from all members, the majority in advanced years.

The committee realised that this work would require oversight, and so the position of Project Manager was born.

When a volunteer was requested, I drew the short straw!

I have managed many tasks similar to this and much larger, but with staff that were trained, young, and unable to refuse an order! However, I could not turn my back on the exciting challenge of working with mates, whilst building a workshop for the future.

A plan of action was presented and suggestions incorporated, where practical.

The initial task was to clear all redundant fixed furniture left by the previous occupants, which took much longer than expected, as the benches were built to last using an obscene number of nails and screws!

Once completed, all walls were given two coats of emulsion paint, to provide an empty dismal building with a bright blank canvas. A substantial amount of timber was ordered and collected, and construction of the mezzanine deck and work benches commenced.

One of the most challenging areas was organising the members into a cohesive working unit.

Skills range from those who had a good level of practical skills to those who had very little, but were enthusiastic.

Painting was a good example: there were high, mid and low-level painters, depending on who could climb ladders or bend down to the floor. I also had to consider holidays, sickness, hospital, family requirements and physical fitness.

That said, the project is proceeding exceedingly well as a result of members' enthusiasm. An added bonus is that many members have acquired new skills

Rising to the challenge



Fitting the dust extractor

whilst enjoying the friendship, repartee and company of like-minded personnel - ultimately what DMI is all about.

Construction is ongoing, and members can look forward to a practically-designed and illuminated workshop, capable of accommodating up to 20 working personnel at any one time, depending on size of items to be manufactured.

We have a dust extraction unit, with fixed ducting to most machinery, plus an additional air filtration unit, oil filled radiators for winter comfort and industrial fans in the summer, to augment the insulation.

Sturdy fixed safe stairs, with a comfortable rise, will lead to a mezzanine deck providing much-needed additional space for storage of materials and completed items ready for sale.

I'm delighted with progress to date, and simultaneously have some concerns looking forward, the challenge of funding being one.

That said, I'm truly excited and motivated to lead this project and be accepted as Project Manager by the team.

Chris Beckett

The extractor connected to ducts next to the new mezzanine



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New chair takes the helm

STAPLE Hill Community Hub is delighted to welcome Tim Rawling as its new chair of trustees.

Tim takes over from William Lee, who steps down after many years of dedicated service.

William isn't going far, though — he remains closely involved as Treasurer, helping ensure a smooth handover.

Originally from Yorkshire, Tim has made Staple Hill his home since 2001 and has spent much of that time getting stuck into local life.

He was chair of governors at Staple Hill Primary School from 2008 to 2018, and spent years as event director of the Page Park junior parkrun.

The hub plays a vital part in local life, bringing people together, helping build confidence and skills and making sure no one has to face hard times alone.

Last year it directly supported 783 people, thanks to a small staff team, its trustees and 42 volunteers who gave over 1,800 hours between them.

Tim said: "There's a lot to be proud of here already, and I'm keen to build on that."

My job as chair is to support the staff and volunteers who do the real work, day in, day out, and help set the Hub up for a strong future."

Tim is looking forward to working alongside trustees, staff, volunteers and community partners to build on the strong foundations already in place, and making sure the Hub continues to be a warm, welcoming space for everyone in Staple Hill.

Katie Cooper



Tim Rawling

Game, set and match



■ The Downend & Frenchay Tennis Club courts in the early 2000s



■ Cleeve Mews, 2026

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

THIS month's pictures feature the Downend & Frenchay Tennis Club on Cleeve Hill.

Previously the Downend & Fishponds Tennis Club, it was established in 1906 on grass courts at the bottom of Overhill Road and is one of Bristol's oldest tennis clubs.

During the 1950s the club moved to land adjoining 67 Cleeve Hill, and had two floodlit hard courts and a small clubhouse.

The club's most famous member was Paul Hutchins, a former Davis Cup captain (1975-1987).

In 2015 the club was forced to move, following the landlord's decision not to renew the lease on the land, which was then redeveloped as housing.

Cleeve Mews was built on the site of the tennis courts in 2019 by White House Homes, and comprises seven houses and two apartments, laid out in a cul-de-sac at right angles to Cleeve Hill.

The club relocated to the Frenchay Cricket Club grounds at Hambrook. Cleeve Hill was unusual in having two tennis clubs, separated by only six houses on the same side of the road.

The other one, Cleeve Hill Tennis Club, remains to this day.

Chris Bigg

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**BROKEN
DOWN AND
MISTED GLASS
REPLACED**

Changes could rewrite council tax bills

A HANDOVER of services to town and parish councils could change the way council tax bills are added up in the future.

South Gloucestershire Council's cabinet has agreed a policy that opens the way for the smaller councils to take over management and in some cases ownership of assets such as parks, open spaces, play areas and public toilets.

It would mean town and parish councils charge for the services their council tax precept rather than the provision being funded by South Gloucestershire.

The move is part of a drive to end the charge on council tax bills for 'special expenses', services provided on a parish level by South Gloucestershire.

The authority says transferring funding for these 'discretionary' services would improve fairness, promote choice and give local people more control.

However, following many concerns raised by town and parish councils, the transition will now take place over three years.

South Gloucestershire says that during this time, town and parish councils, in consultation with local people, will decide what level of services they want, when they are ready to take on management of those services, and how they want to run them.

The hope is that the move will help protect services, which South Gloucestershire is not legally obliged to provide, at a time of increasing financial pressures.

The unitary authority has a limit on the amount by which it is allowed to increase council tax, while town and parish councils do not, which means they would be able to pass on above-inflation cost increases more easily.

A South Gloucestershire Council spokesperson said:

"As each town and parish council is unique, with a wide range of existing services, responsibilities and capacities, over the coming months and years we will work with each of them individually to help aid the transition."

Cabinet councillor Adam Monk said: "The cost to taxpayers of any changes will be minimal, as while local council precepts will likely rise, the special expenses charges will fall."

Downend & Bromley Heath Parish Council has said it is waiting for more information about what services it would be expected to take on before taking a view, as details of how the handover would work have been lacking so far.

Siston Parish Council sought further information from South Gloucestershire Council under a Freedom of Information request to find out what the plans could mean for

its residents.

It said in a statement: "No decision has been made on what we can manage locally yet."

Pucklechurch Parish Council chair Gail Boyle said: "Pucklechurch Parish Council opposed this policy on the grounds that it is an inequitable, cost-shifting exercise that lacks financial transparency, places an unfair administrative burden on small local councils, and forces an uncapped tax burden onto Pucklechurch residents.

"Whilst I welcome the changes introduced to allow for a better-informed, phased approach, it must be acknowledged that not all town and parish councils start from the same position.

"For a smaller council like Pucklechurch, with limited staffing and a low tax base, taking on these services is no simple transfer."



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BROMLEY HEATH WI

THIS summer has been a record-breaking one with all the heat.

We hope you have all stayed well, and enjoyed it.

We are looking forward to a memorable walk around Downend with John from history group CHAP.

No doubt we will be learning some nuggets of historical information about the local area, and then enjoying a cool beverage in the pub!

In September we are being joined by a choir master and in October it will be turn of Country Markets to visit us.

If you are interested in joining the Bromley Heath WI, please contact us via email at bromleyheathwi@gmail.com.

We meet on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm in Bromley Heath Junior School hall.

Jane Hickey

DOWNEND WI

WHAT a summer it's been — truly glorious!

We hope you're feeling refreshed, recharged, and ready to step into the golden days of autumn.

In July, Downend WI enjoyed a wonderful evening at the University of Bristol Botanic Gardens.

Our guided tour was packed with fascinating insights, and the gardens themselves were breathtaking, showcasing plant collections from across the globe.

August (25th) brings a real treat: we'll welcome acclaimed historical author Alison Bacon, known for 'In the Blink of an Eye' and 'The Absent Heart'. Alison will be sharing the story of the birth of photography, along with tales of the historical figures she encountered while researching In the Blink of an Eye. It promises to be a captivating evening.

September sees us getting crafty, with Amy Grimsby showing us how to create beautiful handmade cards. It's sure to be a relaxed, friendly night full of creativity and conversation.

Later in the year we have our AGM, Quiz and Fizz on October 27 and Christmas Crafts on November 24.

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 in 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 programme is wonderfully varied, with something for everyone — and it's a great way to meet new people and try new experiences.

To find out more about joining us, please get in touch at downendwi@yahoo.co.uk. Guests are welcome for a small charge of £3, which includes refreshments.

We look forward to welcoming you!

**Linda Russ
President**

FRENCHAY WI

I HOPE you are coping with the heatwaves.

Regardless of the weather, we have had a very busy time in August, even though we did not have our regular meeting.

Our members enjoyed a scrumptious afternoon tea in a lovely air-conditioned room at Chipping Sodbury Golf Club, where we didn't stop chatting all afternoon.

A week later, some of our members joined forces with other Avon Group WI's for a visit to Westonbirt School and another afternoon tea.

Our speaker on September 21 is Fiona Warin, who will tell us all she knows about Land Girls.

A number of us will also be attending the Avon Federation of WIs Annual Meeting at the Winter Gardens, Weston-super-Mare, later in the month.

We have lots of interesting speakers and events lined up in the future, 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.

On national level the WI organisation has introduced a lottery. You don't have to be a WI member to take part - just search online.

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

WE took a break in August from our usual meeting but on our return in September we will be welcoming Liana Sommers, who will be talking about the work of the Children's Hospice South West.

Despite the very hot weather, our various member groups have had a busy time with our regular and popular coffee mornings at Wetherspoons, an interesting walk around the Harbourside with lunch at The Lounge and a Sunday lunch at Vino & Pane in Lyde Green.

We have also continued with our visits to local garden centres. This time we visited Kemps, in Westerleigh, and the visit, of course, included coffee and good conversation.

We have some interesting meetings lined up for the coming months, so if you would like to come along and join us you will be very welcome.

Our regular friendly 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 staplehillwi.weebly.com

Linda Stephens

RODWAY RUBIES WI

OUR July meeting was entertained by Andrew Stocker, who has a long association with the Bristol Old Vic and its theatre school.

Established in 1776, it is the oldest theatre in the country still operating. There have been refurbishments and updates to the auditorium, social and performance areas, but the theatre is very much as it was in my school days, with better seating but still a Georgian gem.

Many famous actors have trodden the boards and gone through the theatre school.

Andrew had us guessing names of some very young faces making their acting debuts on the stage in Bristol.

We didn't meet in August but our committee is busy preparing for our Country and Western evening on September 18 at Lincombe Barn in Downend.

If any local WI members are interested we still have a few tickets left. They cost £12, include supper and can be obtained via rodwayrubies@gmail.com.

Our September speaker is Emily Koch, a Bristol-based award-winning novelist. Her latest book is called 'What July knew', and is a moving mystery about family secrets, grief and growing up.

This should be a treat for all of those who like a good whodunnit, and also give an insight into the way a crime writer comes up with ideas and then pulls all the threads together.

We meet on the third Monday of each month at 7.30pm, at St James Church Hall on Richmond Road, Mangotsfield.

Jane Eldon

MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES

ALTHOUGH we didn't meet in the hall in August we were still busy with our pub lunch at the Lamb, which is always good fun.

On the 6th a few of us caught the bus into Bristol for our History of Chocolate in Bristol walk. We met at the Hotel du Vin at noon, with a few invited friends from South Glos Wine Circle and Warmley Jazz Club.

A very nice lunch was had at the hotel; it is a beautiful venue. Then at two o'clock we met our guide Duncan at the bottom of Christmas steps. As we had had a couple of cancellations, there weren't enough of us for the chocolate tour, so Duncan kindly added us on to the Bristol Blitz one. It worked well, as most of our party had not done this before.

On the 10th we went to the Cinnamon Tree in Burley Grove for our curry night. As always, the staff are very good to us, the food excellent and, of course, it is local.

In September our meeting in the hall will be an informal evening, catching up with everybody, over tea, coffee and cake.

We have our visit to Glenside Hospital Museum on the 15th. We were due to go in August but due to building works at the museum we had to re-arrange.

Subs will also be due, and we'll start planning for the winter months and 2027.

For more information about Mangotsfield Dolly Mixtures, email carol@applause.co.uk.

Carol Coombs

**Let us know your Community News
email news@downendvoice.co.uk**



Still life in a home studio

CREATING striking low-light still life photographs doesn't require a large professional studio—just thoughtful setup, careful control of light, and a bit of creativity.

In fact, small home studios often provide the intimacy and control that low-light scenes thrive on. Here's how to get started:

Begin by selecting a compact, uncluttered space where you can control ambient light.

A corner of a spare room, a table near a wall, or even a cleared desk can become your working area.

Block out stray natural light with blackout curtains or foam boards so you can build your lighting from scratch.

Low-light photography is all about intentional illumination, so the darker your starting point, the better.

Next, choose a single light source. A small LED panel, desk lamp, or even a diffused flashlight can create beautifully moody shadows.

Use modifiers—like tracing paper, thin fabric, or a DIY cardboard snoot—to soften or tighten the beam.

Position the light at varying angles to explore dramatic side lighting or subtle backlighting, both of which add depth and texture to still life subjects.

Stability is crucial in low light. Place your camera on a tripod and switch to manual mode.

Use a low ISO to keep noise minimal, and select a small aperture, such as f/8 or f/11, for crisp detail.

Because your shutter speed will likely be slow, use a remote shutter release or your camera's timer to avoid vibration.

Finally, experiment. Move objects slightly, adjust distances, or introduce reflective surfaces like white cards to lift shadows gently.

Low-light still life photography rewards patience and observation.

In a small home studio, every tiny adjustment makes a visible impact, helping you craft images that feel atmospheric, intentional, and uniquely your own.

To find out more about our club, visit www.downendcameraclub.org.uk or come along to the Assembly Hall in Salisbury Road, Downend, for meetings on Tuesdays at 7.45pm.

Wendy Lockyer



■ Setup and still life photos by Wendy Lockyer

CHRISTINE'S COLUMN

Football fever

WOULD we bring it home? This time?

Gareth Southgate had a really good go at it four years ago.

I remember the time when England won the World Cup so decisively, in 1966. I was 14, and my parents, my brother and I were travelling up to Grimsby by train, to catch the Tor Anglia ferry across the North Sea to Sweden, to visit my Swedish pen friend and her family.

We stayed at the Ship Hotel overnight in Grimsby and that evening, while we were in our hotel room, there was joyous chanting of "we won the cup", and we looked out of the window to see, to our amazement, enthusiastic

football fans revelling in the street.

My parents always watched the football and although we never went to Bristol Rovers' ground at Eastville Stadium, we did support the team.

Living a stone's throw away in Welsford Avenue, Stapleton, we knew when they were playing at home because our cul-de-sac became chock-a-block with football supporters' vehicles.

One of my grandsons, Finn, is in a local football team and I have been to see him play.

He often wins trophies for football achievements, and next year he has been picked to play in the Mangotsfield Junior School football team.

Finn has set his heart on being a professional football player, so who knows - maybe we have a local Harry Kane or Jude Bellingham in our midst?



Christine's grandson Finn wants to be a professional

Hospital charities merge

BRISTOL'S two NHS hospital charities have officially merged after the trusts that run the region's acute hospitals did the same.

The Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity and Southmead Hospital Charity have come together to form one united charity partner for the Bristol NHS Foundation Trust, supporting patients, families and NHS staff across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

University Hospitals Bristol and Weston NHS Foundation Trust and North Bristol NHS Trust merged earlier this year to bringing services for 16 hospitals across the region together.

Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity chief executive



Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity staff at Southmead Hospital

Katie Walker said: "This is a proud moment, bringing together the work of Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity and Southmead Hospital Charity to now support every hospital across our region."

"For many years, Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity and Southmead Hospital Charity have stood side by side with our NHS – it's the most common connector we all have as a population, because when it comes to our health and the well-being of those we love, we all want the very best care when we need it most."

"By joining forces we can go

further, making every donation have even greater impact, supporting NHS staff to innovate and deliver outstanding care, while ensuring kindness and compassionate care remain at the heart of everything we do."

"Supporters can continue to give to the hospitals, services or causes closest to their hearts, and the Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity has raised more than £110 million since 1974 to support patients, families and NHS staff across Bristol and Weston-super-Mare, funding equipment, treatments, and improvements to patients' experiences of staying in

hospital."

Southmead Hospital Charity recently celebrated 30 years of fundraising. It has paid for a range of equipment and support, from personalised prosthetics to research for people living with Parkinson's disease.

Katie said: "Together with supporters, volunteers, partners and NHS colleagues, the merged charity is looking ahead with confidence and ambition as it embarks on this next chapter as charity partner to one of the biggest NHS Trusts in the country."

For more information, www.bwhospitalscharity.org.uk.



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MOST people probably know the story of the band on the deck of the sinking Titanic, playing on as the ship went down.

Not so many know the connection with Downend.

Rev Robert Bateman was born in Staple Hill, and lived for a time in Oldbury Court Road. His parents were from Mangotsfield.

He was a stonemason by trade, his father a leather worker.

He married Emily Hall, from London, and emigrated to Canada, then moved to the USA, with a growing family - six children in all.

Bateman was an evangelical minister, of the fire and brimstone variety; it isn't clear whether he was Methodist or Baptist.

While in the USA he was heavily involved in setting up missions in the rougher parts of several towns, notably Knoxville and Jacksonville, Florida, where he finally settled, and was an effective helper of the poor and dispossessed.

Bateman is thought to have continued as a stonemason, but it seems he may latterly have had some wealthy supporters.

He travelled back to Bristol with his sister-in-law, Ada Ball, to study the Mueller orphanage system, and to arrange for a headstone for his mother Esther's grave in Anglican Christ Church, Downend. She had died many years earlier, in 1891.

While in Bristol, Bateman also preached at evangelical centres. He seems to have been something of a local celebrity, as when he left to return to the USA, 200 people paraded him to Staple Hill station.

On returning on the ill-fated Titanic, it is said Bateman was asked to conduct the ship's band.

When the ship hit the iceberg, he escorted his sister-in-law to one of the last boats, gave her his Bible and tie, and stayed on the ship, probably to lead those still on deck in prayer.

He is thought to have asked the band to play his favourite hymn,

Downend's Titanic hero



Robert Bateman. Picture: Encyclopaedia Titanica

'Nearer my God to Thee', which survivors in the boats, including Ada, heard.

Bateman's Bible is still held in the Kellogg Titanic Museum in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.

Apparently, in a postcard to a nephew before he set sail, he wrote: "If this ship goes to the bottom I shall not be there, I shall be up yonder."

Bateman's body was recovered from the sea a few days later. He seems to have also been an active Freemason, as masons in Jacksonville were reported as clearing a large mortgage on the family home, and he had a gold Masonic pin on him.

Bateman was buried in Jacksonville, where there is both a tomb and a memorial stone.

His widow stayed in Baltimore with her child, Grace, who lived to 95, dying in 1990.

His father, Charles, was reported to have emigrated to Baltimore and died there. This last claim is inaccurate, as both parents are definitely buried in Christ Church Downend.

The modest slab gravestone



The Titanic leaves Southampton

is in section 19, plot 32, close to the alley next to the churchyard, behind a prominent tall headstone, and below a large holly tree. It holds both parents.

Thanks to Jenny Alcock of CHAP, who cleaned the barely-legible grave. It looks as if two hands did the inscription: the top line is Gothic, maybe a pre-carved standard line.

Perhaps Bateman, as a stonemason, carved the rest himself - it would seem in character.

There might be evidence in church records.

Robert Bateman was a fascinating character, clearly quite charismatic and inspirational.

Downend has had a good share of interesting characters, but he and his parents deserve to be better-known locally.

There are two truly bizarre American Titanic museums with half-replicas of the ship - one

in Tennessee and the other in Branson, Missouri in the Ozark mountains, both hundreds of miles from the sea!

For more on Bateman's life visit the Encyclopaedia Titanica at tinyurl.com/2zv5j7dj or Bristol History at tinyurl.com/mvwr4y5p.

A booklet of his life and the US religious context has been published: 'Robert Bateman - The Minister that inspired the Titanic', by Stephen Flick.

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

For more information visit www.downendchap.org, email biggin@yahoo.com or write to CHAP, 49 Overhill Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 5DS.

Jonathan Seagrave



The grave of Bateman's parents at Christ Church Downend. Picture: Jonathan Seagrave



One of the American Titanic-shaped museums. This one is in Branson, Missouri. Picture: Brad Tolman.

A devolution revolution is coming

I HOPE everyone has had an incredible August and a chance to enjoy the weather safely, whether you took in the Bristol Balloon Fiesta, headed for the beach or made the most of the summer close to home.

I was thrilled to see hundreds of thousands of children and young people taking advantage of our free bus travel scheme again this summer.

I know this is making a difference to parents' pockets, and Kids Go Free will be back again at Christmas to help families get out and about at what can be another expensive time of year.

First launched here in the West of England, children across the country got to experience Kids Go Free this August, as the scheme went national.

It's one of the reasons Andy Burnham chose the West Country for his first visit as Prime Minister, to announce a new national bus fare cap.

During the visit I spoke with Andy about the importance of buses for people in our region, a lifeline which connects our towns and rural areas, and our exciting developing plans for mass transit.

We also discussed a visit to Ashton Gate in the future, to see Bristol City, whose London

supporters' club he used to play for. Graciously, I have agreed to go - even though I remain a steadfast Rovers supporter.

I'm sure that we'll see lots more of Andy in the West of England, as he takes on his new role.

While the country is getting used to a new Prime Minister, there is another new beginning closer to home. I am thrilled to let you know we have been made an Established Mayoral Strategic Authority.

This means the West of England is now in the top tier of regions in England and is set to unlock a new wave of powers which will help us improve life for everyone in the West.

From now on, we are jointly front of the queue for further devolution, with greater control over transport, skills, housing, investment, public services and funding. It strengthens our voice nationally, gives us greater freedom to invest in our priorities and helps to ensure more of our region's success is seen and felt by local people and businesses.

This is the moment we have been working towards since I became mayor 15 months ago.

I am delighted we have achieved our goal, ahead of schedule, and I am excited for the opportunities we have ahead of us in the West



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

of England.

With more powers coming to the regions, under the government's plans, we are going to have more funding and more freedom to invest in the West.

More decisions being made here in the West, for the West, will make sure we are building new homes where we need them, improving transport connections, and increasing jobs and opportunities for local people.

The government has announced a devolution revolution, and I cannot wait to get started.



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LAND that has been officially blessed and set apart for sacred use is known as consecrated ground.

Historically, it designates a space for the burial of baptised Christians, and ensures the graves are afforded long-term protection against being built over or used for secular purposes.

So what has it got to do with the Mangotsfield Residents Association?

Actually, quite a lot!

We knew that the Dame School grounds had been used by the church in the past: there are still headstones around the inner wall, as I'm sure many of you know.

But in finalising our plans for the Dame School art installation, South Gloucestershire Council have discovered that the grounds are consecrated, which means we need permission from the local diocese to place the installation on the site.

That's not likely to be a problem for the project. It does, however, mean that any future plans will involve an additional set of permissions: how likely it is we'll get them will, of course, depend on the work we are doing.

Tidying up the gravestones in the Dame School Garden has been on our 'to-do' list for quite a while now.

Step forward Simon Scothern, who has taken it upon himself to clear and tidy up the grave stones - and what a fantastic job he's done!

Not only has he cleared away years of undergrowth but also cleared out a path so that they can be seen. We should be and are very grateful for all his hard work, and the photos just show what a difference one person can make.

We have been thinking about future activities, conscious that we don't want to always be doing more of the same. So one of our members is researching what it would take to create a 1700s style classroom within the Dame School building, a permanent exhibition. After all that is what the building was originally used for.

We never thought our HAMs (hours a month) would be postponed or cancelled because the weather was too nice. How wrong we were!

Our weeding and tidying around the village HAM finally took place in July, and the volunteers have made a huge difference, as you can see in the pictures:

Our gardening team that meets on most Tuesday mornings has also been doing great work - I'm



MRA volunteer Simon Scothern's work to tidy the Dame School grounds has made a big difference



A new pathway enables to gravestones to be seen

Working on consecrated ground

sure they'd welcome some help, so if you are interested, please let us know.

Our next HAMs are being organised, dates to be advised:

War Memorial Bench painting (they need some TLC)

Bulb planting on the common in October

Parish Boundary Walk - when it's a bit cooler

More litter picking

A talk on the history of

Mangotsfield station and railway

Our Christmas tree lights have been taken down and we'll be inspecting and repairing them over the coming months so they will be back to their best this year.

A question: would you prefer to see them put up as they were, around the tree, or as they were on the Preddy's tree, hanging in loops? Let us know, please.

Our next Red Lion Coffee Morning will be on September 2 at 10 am: all are welcome.

And finally, this very hot weather is likely to be the norm going forward, so please keep an eye on one another, particularly on anyone vulnerable.

To get in touch email MangotsfieldRA@gmail.com, message the Mangotsfield Matters Facebook page, call our chair, Clive Heath, on 07507 168700 or me on 07918 701881.

Chris Amos

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Cricket season reaches a crescendo

AT the time of writing, the Carsons & Mangotsfield 1st XI remain the club's strongest promotion hope, sitting firmly in the mix near the top despite a few bumps along the way.

Back-to-back wins over Frampton Cotterell and Old Bristolians Westbury have steadied things at the right moment.

With only 17 points separating the top four, the next couple of weeks will decide who breaks into those top two spots heading into the final weekend. One to watch as the season tightens.

The T20 side have won Division 1 East in the Bristol Midweek League, sealing it with a thumping win over Rockhampton.

George Sutton's 3-24 kept them to 135, and the chase was handled with authority, Tom King's rapid 52 guiding the side home with four overs to spare.

The Premier Division will be new territory and a genuine test, but it's another clear marker of the club's upward stride.

The 4th XI produced one



Carsons & Mangotsfield's title-winning under-13 team

of the season's most dramatic finishes, edging local rivals Pucklechurch by a single run.

Tom Carter's maiden 50* set the tone, supported by Del Capel's 32, before Luca Talbot (3-23) swung momentum. With one run in it, Steve Edwards (4-27) held his nerve, taking the final wicket with the last ball to spark jubilant scenes.

A perfect advert for the 4s, that bridge between junior

cricket and the longer league format.

The Sunday side continues to flourish, leaning on the club's junior talent. A standout win over Clevedon featured young Dan Cook's (98) maiden senior fifty, followed by victory over North Bristol, where juniors claimed all ten wickets.

Edward Barr and George Clatworthy took three each, Stanley Bater and Max Holbrook

two apiece, before Sutton (72) and Farmer (59*) steered the chase with their junior partners.

The women's softball team have made an encouraging start, four games in with a first win and narrow defeats showing real promise. Winter training plans are forming, and new players are warmly welcomed.

Finally, the under-13s capped a superb season by winning their division in the Bristol Youth Cricket League.

Seven wins from eight, seven of the league's top ten wicket-takers — including the entire top four — and three of the top six run-scorers underline a remarkable effort from the players and coaches.

With several already stepping into adult cricket, the future at CMCC looks wonderfully bright.

If you're looking for a friendly, all-ability cricket home, drop us a line at [info.carsonsandmangotsfield@gmail.com](mailto:carsonsandmangotsfield@gmail.com) or connect with us on social media.

Jake Lane

Boxers bring back gold and silver from Riviera

DOWNEND Boxing Club came back with two medals from this year's Riviera Box Cup.

The tournament took place on the weekend of August 8-9 at Torbay Leisure Centre in Devon.

Representing Downend Boxing were 15-year-old Rocco Parker, Alex Richardson, 20, Ben Carpenter, 24 and, also representing the Royal Air Force, 22-year-old Drew Cutting.

First up was Rocco Parker, who competed in a semi-final against the strong and determined Jack McCusker of Gilford Boxing Club, of Northern Ireland.

Rocco boxed intelligently throughout, using his superior technique to avoid the shorter opponent's attacks and score consistently.

His performance earned him a unanimous points victory and a place in the next day's final.

In the final, Rocco faced Jimmy Price of Torfaen Warriors.

The contest was fiercely competitive, with both boxers giving everything over three hard-fought rounds.



Gold medallist Drew Cutting (centre) with Downend coaches Matt Powell, Craig Turner, Ben Robson and Lee Rosenthal

At the final bell, a very narrow split decision went in favour of the Cwmbran boxer, leaving Rocco with a well-deserved silver medal.

Bristol University student Alex Richardson took on Alex Forde, of Gilford, in his semi-final bout.

A nervous start saw Richardson fall behind early, but he settled into the contest and

edged ahead by the end of the first round.

Forde responded strongly and the bout remained too close to call at the final bell. Ultimately, a split decision went to the Irish boxer.

Ben Carpenter faced Shay Gallagher of Odyssey Boxing Club, London. It was exactly one year since Ben's last contest at the same competition, having

been sidelined through injury.

The opening round was a case of shaking off the ring rust, and appeared evenly-contested. Gallagher's greater work rate gave him the edge in the second round, while the third proved impossible to separate. In another close contest, the split decision went to the Odyssey boxer.

Drew Cutting entered the ring for a straight final against Fin Hodder of Blue Flames, Taunton.

A fast start and a series of heavy shots forced two standing counts in the second round.

Further sustained pressure in the third prompted the referee to stop the contest, handing Drew an excellent victory.

Everyone at the club was pleased with the guys' performances.

Amateur boxing is a sport of very narrow margins, and in a good contest it can simply come down to one punch making the difference.

Whether they win or lose, the lads conduct themselves superbly, and we are very proud of them.

Craig Turner

Cups bring cheer to Mangos

THE FA Cup and FA Vase gave Mangotsfield United their first wins of the season.

As the Voice went to print, the Mangos had yet to play their first home fixture, having started with four straight away games.

The team never really got going in the season opener at Fairford, despite the home side, who went ahead in the first half, being reduced to 10 men on the hour.

Mangotsfield could not make the extra man pay in the final 30 minutes, as Fairford stood firm to win 1-0.

The performance at Cirencester three days

later was much-improved, despite remaining goalless. Both sides worked hard and created chances, but they could not break each other down, and a draw was a fair result.

A 2-1 win at Oxfordshire side Easington Sports in the FA Cup gave the Mangos their first goals of the season.

They roared into an early 2-0 lead thanks to goals from Mohammed Djalo (5) and James Corey Horrocks (22), then weathered the storm before the break, as the Combined Counties League Premier Division North side fought back.

The hosts pulled one back from the penalty spot on 79 minutes, leading to a frantic final 11 minutes or so, but the Mangos held on to secure a home Preliminary Round tie against Thatcham Town, who play in the same league as Easington, on August 22 at 3pm.

On August 15 the Mangos kicked off their FA Vase campaign at Berkshire side Kintbury Rangers, who play in the Wessex League

Division 1.

An early penalty - after an incident that saw Mangos defender Jack Mills sent off - was saved by goalkeeper Ellis Parker, whose man-of-the-match performance saw him pull off several other great saves.

Barbados international Curtis Jemmet-Hutson scored the winner on 40 minutes and the Mangos held on through a nail-biting second half.

Dave Smale

Upcoming fixtures:

August 29: Westfields (home)

August 31: Malmesbury Victoria (away)

September 5: Highworth Town (H)

September 15: Corsham Town (H)

September 19: Droitwich Spa (A)

September 22: Devizes Town (A)

September 26: Roman Glass St George (A)

Flyers ready for take-off

DOWNEND Flyers have welcomed experienced coaches and the return of under-18s football as the new season approaches.

The Women's 1st team warmly welcomes Kyle Edwards as its new manager.

A UEFA B licence-holder, he brings a wealth of expertise from a coaching career spanning professional clubs, academies, and regional talent centres.

As the 1st team enters its 20th consecutive year in the South West Regional Women's Football League, Kyle's arrival sets a clear, ambitious tone for the squad's next chapter.

Reserve Team manager Matt Smith, who is UEFA C-licensed, returns to lead the side in the Gloucestershire County Women's

League Division Two, joined by new assistant player-manager Vic, whose extensive playing experience will add valuable insight both on and off the pitch.

Steve Poole takes over as A team manager following five years of coaching at Downend.

Having guided many of his players from youth setups into senior football, Steve is uniquely positioned to lead the group as they look to build on a highly competitive run last season.

The new season also marks the return of U18s football at the club after an absence of over a decade. This new side creates a crucial bridge between youth and adult football, giving rising talent a clear, structured pathway into senior competition.

In the girl's section the U12 Swifts had a great summer of tournaments, winning five cups, one plate and finishing as runners-up three times.

The girls always show unbelievable spirit and stand-out performances, often finding a

way to win but staying humble.

They are coached by Carla Reese and Kasha Kelly, who are proud to be an all-female coaching team.

With over 400 players ranging from age five to (nearly!) 50, the club remains dedicated to empowering women and girls through sport.

Matchdays at Pomphrey

Hill bring players, families, and supporters together, with that strong community spirit continuing after the final whistle at the sports bar - why not come down and become our newest fan? To learn more about playing, coaching, or supporting the club this season, contact info@downendflyers.com.

Duncan Gardner



The Flyers U12 Swifts won a collection of trophies in summer tournaments

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Seeking help with mole and lesion checks

James Singh, Advanced Nurse Practitioner at Cleve Chiropractic, gives professional advice on how and when to seek help with mole and skin lesion checks...

Most of us are good at noticing when our back, neck or shoulders feel different and are in need of attention – or even a little bit of TLC. However, we are not always so vigilant with any changes on our skin.

For Tim Button at Cleve Chiropractic, it took a comment from someone else to make him stop and take notice.

Tim had a lesion on his chest that he had not really given much thought to. Like many busy men in their 40s, he was probably more focused on getting through a workout session than inspecting his chest in the mirror. Thankfully, someone at the gym spotted it and said, "You should probably get that checked."

That simple comment was enough to prompt a timely call to action for Tim. He did get it checked out, the lesion was removed and thankfully it was benign. But this incident provides a helpful reminder that many of us put things off, especially when something does not hurt or cause any obvious symptoms.

With the extremely hot summer we've been

enjoying here in the UK, there's a fair chance that many of us have been exposing more of our skin than usual to the sun. It's timely therefore to outline the mole and skin lesion checks being offered, with specialist tele dermatology reporting, at Cleve Chiropractic.

The aim is simple: to make it easier for adults in the local community to get a mole or skin lesion reviewed and gain clarity on whether further action may be needed.

Skin cancer is common in this country. Cancer Research UK states that the melanoma skin variety is the fifth most common cancer in the UK, with around 19,400 new cases each year. While many moles and skin lesions are harmless, it is always worth taking seriously any changes you may have noticed.

The key things to look out for include a mole or lesion that is new, changing in size, shape or colour, bleeding, itching, crusting, growing, or simply looking different from the others around it. Some people describe this as the "ugly duckling" sign — one mole that does not seem to match the rest.

Some workers and people with outdoor hobbies may be especially exposed to UV light over time. Builders, roofers, gardeners, cyclists, runners, golfers and anyone who spends long periods outside should be particularly mindful of looking after their skin. Sun exposure is not only about holidays abroad; it can build up gradually over years.

The service at Cleve Chiropractic is available for adults aged 18 and over and includes clinical image capture of the mole or skin lesion, followed by specialist tele dermatology

reporting. Results are usually returned within 72 hours.

This service may be suitable if you have noticed a mole or skin lesion and would like reassurance or advice on whether further medical assessment is needed. It may also be helpful if a partner, friend or family member has pointed something out to you and encouraged you to get it checked.

Prices are £60 for one mole or skin lesion check, or £99 for up to three lesions.

This service does not replace urgent medical care. If you have a rapidly changing lesion, significant bleeding, pain, or have already been advised to seek urgent medical review, you should contact your GP or NHS 111 as appropriate.

Tim's experience is a reminder that sometimes it only takes one comment to make us act. His lesion was benign, but getting it checked meant he had clarity and peace of mind.

So it's always worth taking a few moments to check your skin. Ask someone else to check any areas of your body you cannot easily see yourself, such as your back. And if something has CHANGED, DO NOT IGNORE IT – WE CAN HELP.




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 Les Ferdinand ”

US hockey team visits Mangotsfield

MANGOTSFIELD School played host to a visiting American hockey side on tour.

Bristol & West Hockey Club's women's 1st team, which is based at the school, took on the Bulldogs from Dean College, Massachusetts, for a pre-season fixture in August.

The Bulldogs arrived with considerable numbers both on and off the field.

After what started out as a tight game, B&W pulled ahead, eventually bringing in a 4-0 win in their first friendly of the season, and first international ever!

Head coach Joe John said: "This is exactly how we want to be playing so early in pre-season."

The game was played in fantastic spirits with great fun had by all involved - B&W look forward to continuing their relations with all past, current and future international sides, and thank the Bulldogs for visiting.

Two days later Bristol & West men's 1st team hosted Horsham Hockey Club 1sts in a competitive pre-season friendly on Mangotsfield School's 2G pitch.

The lads-on-tour left West Sussex in the early morning and arrived in Bristol ready for



Bristol and West Women (in black kit) and Dean College players (white/pink kits)

their first game against B&W, with another one scheduled for 2.30pm the same day against another local club!

B&W started quickly, with an early conversion from a penalty corner. Horsham replied soon after with a PC of their own that was batted into the roof of the net on the rebound.

The rest of the game was more than fiercely contested, but B&W added another three goals to seal a 4-1 victory.

The 1st team have multiple friendlies lined up before the season starts in late September.

They will once again be looking to claim promotion into the West Premiership, after narrowly missing out last time round.

Bristol & West HC is hosting an open club day on September 5 at Mangotsfield School, which is free to new members.

The event will include friendly games, a BBQ and a bake sale.

A junior tournament will run from 10-11.45am, followed by an adult tournament from 11.45am-3pm.

Everyone, including interested players, families and supporters, is invited to play in a friendly and social tournament, meeting players, coaches, and volunteers, to find out more about our club.

For more information on club day, training, membership and the upcoming season, please visit www.bandwhc.org.uk.

Harry Bryant

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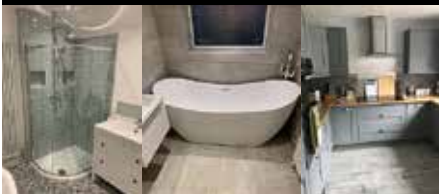
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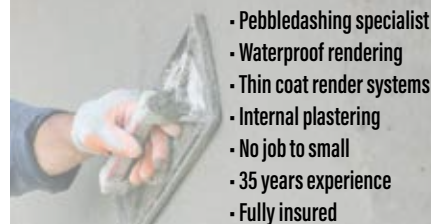
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