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FREE EVERY MONTH IN EMERSONS GREEN, LYDE GREEN, SHORTWOOD & PUCKLECHURCH

School passes tough new test



Blackhorse Primary leaders Neil Fry with pupils following a successful Ofsted inspection Full story: Page 3



Doubt on surgery repair funding

MP Claire Hazelgrove says lessons must be learned from the ongoing delay in agreeing funding for repairs to Emersons Green Medical Centre.

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Wait for school places nears end

Families find out this month if their applications for the first places at the long-awaited new Lyde Green Secondary School have been successful.

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Science park welcomes Prince

Prince William visited the Isambard-AI supercomputer at the Bristol & Bath Science Park at Emersons Green..

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Council tax bills top £2,500

COUNCIL tax bills for the typical household in the Emersons Green area will top £2,500 for the first time this year.

Band D tax payers living in the area covered by Emersons Green Town Council are set to pay an extra £115.45 or 4.74% from April, when increases in charges from South

Gloucestershire Council, the town council, police and fire service are added up, taking the total bill to £2,548.99.

People living in the area covered by Pucklechurch Parish Council will have higher bills, adding up to £2,617.90, while Band D taxpayers in the area covered by Siston Parish Council

will see bills reach £2,514.42.

Charges vary according to property size, with this year's overall bill in Emersons Green ranging from £1,699.34 for the smallest Band A homes to £5,097.98 for people with those in Band H.

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Further details of the complaints process can be found on the Voice website, or can be obtained by contacting the Publisher.



Councillor spared driving ban

A SOUTH Gloucestershire councillor has been spared a driving ban after he admitted being in charge of a vehicle after taking cocaine.

Matt Palmer represents the New Cheltenham ward, which includes the Siston Hill estate, and is a former Emersons Green town councillor.

He was found parked at the roadside by police last summer and pleaded guilty to being in charge of a vehicle while above the limit for a specified controlled drug at Bristol Magistrates Court in November.

Cllr Palmer was suspended from the Labour Party following the plea hearing, with a party spokesperson saying he had failed to inform colleagues after his arrest.

He has continued to represent the ward as an independent councillor.

Returning to the court in February, Cllr Palmer was ordered to carry out 120 hours of unpaid community work, comply with a one-year community order and had ten points added to his licence - two points short of a ban.

Cllr Palmer previously told the Local Democracy Reporting Service that he was in crisis at the time of the incident, which happened in the early hours of July 2, and was diagnosed with borderline personality disorder after struggling with his mental health.

He was taking strong prescription medication at the time, and said he couldn't remember taking the cocaine as he had also been drunk.

Following the sentencing hearing Cllr Palmer told the Voice: "I was found in my car following an attempted overdose.

"At the time, the situation was treated by police as an offence rather than as a medical emergency.

"Since then, I have been prescribed appropriate medication and have been working closely with secondary mental health services.

"With the right support and treatment, my health and outlook have improved significantly.

"During this period, the Labour Party made the decision to remove the whip and withdraw its support, including character references.

"While that was disappointing, my focus remains firmly on recovery, service and moving forward positively.

"Now that my life is back on track, I will continue to serve residents as an independent councillor, giving my full commitment to the community.

"There is help available for anyone who may be struggling.

"If you need support, please do reach out. I am always happy to talk and can also signpost you to a range of professional support networks."

Cllr Palmer chaired the council's health overview scrutiny committee before the incident but lost the position after being suspended from the party. He had previously been Labour's lead councillor for planning.

At the time of his first court appearance, Labour said the group had withdrawn the whip immediately from Cllr Palmer "due to failure to disclose a court matter and misrepresentation to the group".



Matt Palmer

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The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

DEADLINES

Our April edition deadline is March 18.

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Praise for 'highly positive' school

INSPECTORS have praised a primary school's "highly positive culture for learning" and inclusive ethos.

Blackhorse Primary School in Blackhorse Lane was one of the first schools in the country to be assessed by Ofsted using the regulator's new 'report card' grading system in November.

The team of four inspectors, whose report was published in late January, said the school had achieved its new 'strong standard' in three areas: attendance and behaviour, personal development and well-being, and inclusion.

It was given 'expected standard' gradings for pupil achievement, curriculum and teaching, leadership and governance, and early years provision.

The inspectors said: "The school fosters a highly positive culture for learning, maintaining a calm and purposeful environment.

"Staff implement the school's approach to behaviour with

kindness and sensitivity.

"Pupils show high levels of self-discipline and maturity.

"In the classroom, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They listen carefully, work hard and are supportive of each other.

"On the playground, pupils' respectful and considerate behaviour continues. Discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated."

The inspectors said pupils at the school's Resource Base for children with autistic spectrum disorder integrated successfully into classes where appropriate.

They said: "The school's inclusive ethos ensures that pupils with special educational needs or disabilities, and those who are disadvantaged, participate fully in school life."

More than one in ten Blackhorse pupils have an education, health and care plan, with more support than is available through special educational needs support: three times the national average of



Blackhorse Primary School pupils

3.5%. Another 9.26% have SEN support: below the national average of 15%.

The report said the school, which has 421 pupils aged between four and 11, provides a comprehensive range of opportunities to develop "artistic, musical and sporting passions".

The inspectors said: "Pupils take pride in being part of the 'track team'. They enjoy learning to play musical instruments, such as the recorder, or taking part in musical theatre. This develops pupils' confidence and builds their self-esteem."

Figures published in the report showed the proportion of pupils achieving expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics combined over the past two years was between 70% and 73%, above the national average of 61%.

The inspectors said: "Leaders prioritise teaching pupils the most important knowledge and skills they need to succeed. This ensures that most pupils develop their handwriting, spelling, reading and knowledge of number well."

The report recommended that checks on learning and understanding are made more precise to ensure all "gaps" in knowledge are addressed.

Inspectors said there was a "clear vision" for providing Reception pupils with the support they need.

The inspectors said: "The school's mission, 'to build champion learners', is a golden thread that runs throughout all aspects of school life."

Leaders and trustees of the

school were described as "highly ambitious" for the school and its community, taking measured actions to achieve priorities and ensuring staff have high-quality training.

The inspectors said: "Pupils and families are at the centre of the decisions they make.

"Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about many aspects of the school's work."

Blackhorse executive head teacher Simon Botten said the inspection was "one of the most rigorous" the school has experienced.

Mr Botten said: "Inspectors must evidence every statement they make, so this was a searching and thorough process, but one which allowed us to demonstrate the ethos which makes our school so special.

"We are particularly pleased to see the school's emphasis on children's wider school experience - through our extensive extra-curricular offer - being singled out for praise.

"We are delighted that the report captures the lived experience of our pupils and the strength of our school community.

"It reflects the commitment, care and professionalism of our staff, who go above and beyond for children every day.

"This outcome is a moment to celebrate for our children, families and staff.

"It recognises a school where pupils thrive, feel a strong sense of belonging, and are supported to become confident, resilient learners - true champions in the making."

First reports under new system

OFSTED'S visit to Blackhorse Primary School was one of the first in the country using a new way of assessing schools, following widespread calls for change.

The pressures the old system placed teachers under came to national attention when a coroner ruled that an inspection of a Berkshire primary school in 2022 contributed to the suicide of its head teacher, Ruth Perry. She had been told it would be downgraded from the top rating of 'outstanding' to the bottom rating, 'inadequate'.

Ofsted's new system replaces the old one and two-word ratings - 'outstanding', 'good', 'requires improvement' and 'inadequate' - with a 'traffic light' system.

Schools are given marks in seven areas, ranging from 'exceptional' (blue) through 'strong standard' and 'expected standard' (green) to 'needs attention' (amber) and 'urgent improvement' (red).

However, the new system has already been criticised, with an independent review finding the increase in areas judged has caused concerns there are now "many more ways to fail" for schools.

Leaders at Blackhorse say the new system is "significantly more demanding", with "more exacting and tightly defined" judgements; most schools are said to be likely to receive at least one area identified as 'needs attention'.

Teachers also stress that the new scores don't match up exactly with previous ratings: some performances that would have been judged to be 'good' previously can now receive a 'needs attention' score, and some previously 'outstanding' performance levels now fall within the third, 'expected standard' category.

Blackhorse executive head Simon Botten said a strong standard rating is "broadly comparable" to a high 'outstanding' rating under the old system, adding: "This framework sets the bar extremely high."

Average council tax bill up by £115

From Page 1

South Gloucestershire Council approved a 4.99% increase – the maximum allowed without calling a referendum – at its annual budget meeting in February.

It takes the authority's basic charge to residents with homes in the average Band D tax bracket up by £94.66, from £1,904.91 to £1,999.57.

The council also levies a 'special expenses' charge for neighbourhood facilities it provides, which can include upkeep of neighbourhood parks and open spaces where it runs them, and differs between parishes.

The rest of the overall bill is made up of charges from other public bodies.

Avon & Somerset's police and crime commissioner Clare Moody is raising charges for a Band D tax payer by £15 (5.12%) from £293.20 to £308.20.

Avon Fire Authority is raising its annual charge by £5 or 5.53%, to £95.43.

Town and parish councils are not subject to government restrictions on how much they can raise charges without calling

a referendum, and as a result some raise their share of bills by a higher percentage to pay for new facilities, workers or responsibilities.

Emersons Green Town Council, which includes Lyde Green, has frozen its precept budget at £816,102 this year.

This is because last year it mistakenly asked South Gloucestershire Council to increase it from £584,600 to £816,102, instead of the intended £599,215 - putting the 2025/26 charge to Band D tax payers up by 40.9%.

The town council said it told South Gloucestershire about the "administrative oversight", but no-one realised it had not been corrected until after last year's bills were sent out.

At the time the town council said it would keep the extra money in a savings account, towards a "reduced or frozen" precept this year.

An increase in the number of new households in the area paying council tax, from 6,920 to 6,973, means the town council's precept charge to individual households has gone down slightly.

Band D taxpayers will pay

Band D council tax bills 2026/27

Parish/town council	Parish budget	Precept Charge	Special expenses	Total Council tax
Emersons Green:	£816,102	£117.04	£28.75	£2,548.99
Pucklechurch	£175,000	£181.35	£33.35	£2,617.90
Siston	£66,000	£37.89	£73.33	£2514.42

Figures from South Gloucestershire Council

£117.04, 89p or 0.75% less than last year.

However, a £1.68 increase in special expenses charges, and the increases to other parts of the bill mean the overall charge is still up 4.74% or £115.45 on last year in Band D, at £2,548.99.

Three years ago the town council's budget was £306,000. Pucklechurch Parish Council has increased its budget by £28,040, or 19.08%, from £146,960 to £175,000 this year, with the precept rising by £26.17 or 16.86%, from £155.18 to £181.35 in Band D.

Special expenses have gone up by £1.65 or 5.21%, from £31.70 to £33.35, and the overall bill to Band D council tax payers

is £2,617.90, up £142.48 or 5.76%.

In Siston parish, which includes the Siston Hill estate, the parish council has increased its charge to Band D taxpayers by £4.52 or 13.54%, from £33.37 to £37.89, and the special expenses bill is up by £3.26 from £70.07 to £73.33.

The parish budget has risen by £8,000 or 13.79%, from £58,000 to £66,000.

The highest council tax bills in South Gloucestershire are in Filton, where the town council pays for facilities including a leisure centre. Its Band D charge is £321.68, and total bills are £2,735.60 this year.

Council spends £20 million of reserves

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council is spending £20 million of its reserves to balance the books, as pressure on local services continues to build.

Changes to how business rates are collected have left the council £16m worse off this year, councillors heard as they met to vote on this year's council tax bills on February 11.

The council will spend extra money on social care, equalities work, community cohesion, schools and other services, including school improvement programmes, support for children with complex needs and improving access to local shops for disabled and elderly people.

Council leader Maggie

Tyrell (Lib Dem, Thornbury), said: "Our costs are increasing faster than inflation, faster than government funding, and faster than it's reasonable or sustainable to raise council tax.

"Although this is a very tight budget, we're pleased to invest in areas of great importance to us."

There is rising demand for spending on care for elderly and disabled people and supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities, and an increase in costs to maintain roads, while extreme weather is making potholes worse.

Co-leader Ian Boulton (Lab, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield), said: "At a time when many councils across the country

are struggling to balance their books, we have delivered a responsible and balanced budget that protects the services residents rely on."

The budget includes a 19% increase in garden waste collection fees, from £63 to £75, and an increase in car park charges of between 5% and 15% - starting with a 10p rise for an hour's stay in short stay car parks. Charges of private hire taxi licences, pest control and planning applications are also going up.

Opposition Conservative leader Liz Brennan (Frenchay & Downend) accused the ruling coalition of passing a budget aimed at "short term survival" after her group's proposals to spend more on fixing



Maggie Tyrell

potholes and cut spending on council political assistants and communications staff were voted down.

Meeting report by Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Meeting report by Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Email us: news@emersonsgreenvoice.co.uk

Path CCTV approved as police seize e-bikes

A PROJECT to install CCTV cameras on a busy stretch of the Bristol and Bath Railway Path will go ahead after winning funding.

The West of England Combined Authority will spend more than £450,000 to fund cameras between Staple Hill tunnel and the old Mangotsfield railway station, and improve the path at nine "pinch points" between Siston Common and Warmley station.

South Gloucestershire Council first unveiled plans to install 20 permanent CCTV cameras on the path in 2024 to help tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

The funding means the scheme can now go ahead, although a start date has yet to be fixed.

WECA says the path is "one of the busiest traffic-free stretches in the country", with more than 1,100 cyclists and pedestrians on average using it daily between Staple Hill and Warmley.

The 'pinch points', where



The illegal e-bikes and e-scooters seized by police

bollards and narrow sections of pathway make it difficult for path users to pass and for some people to use the path at all, will be improved with a view to make it easier for disabled people those using "non-standard wheelers" to use the path.

A public consultation was held last year and the council has also spoken with Bristol Cycling Campaign and other groups.

Announcing the funding in

February, Metro Mayor Helen Godwin said: "By improving lighting, safety and accessibility, we're making it easier for people to choose sustainable travel options and to do so with confidence. This is especially important for women and girls, as we can feel more vulnerable using the path."

The money is coming from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, £540

million of funding awarded to WECA by the government in 2022 to pay for improvements to the region's travel and transport system.

The funding was announced days after police from the Staple Hill Neighbourhood Team carried out a one-day operation in January targeting illegal e-bikes and e-scooters being ridden on the same stretch of path earmarked for CCTV.

Officers stopped people riding three illegally-modified bikes, that go above the legal speed limit of 15.5mph, have a battery of more than 250w or can operate with a throttle instead of the pedals, as well as two people riding privately-owned e-scooters on the path. The only e-scooters that can be used on public roads and paths are those in the region's hire scheme.

A police spokesperson said the riders of the seized bikes and scooters were "given warnings and education".

Anyone found re-offending may face prosecution in future.

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No 'confirmed plan' to reopen health centre

WORK to reopen Emersons Green Medical Centre still has no starting date - with funding for required repairs yet to be agreed.

The medical centre in St Luke's Close, which has more than 11,000 patients on its books, shut suddenly in October 2024 when the heating and hot water system failed.

Green Valleys Health, which runs the surgery, said the closure was temporary. A year later it sent a letter telling South Gloucestershire Council health scrutiny committee members that work would start later that month or in November, and take six weeks "subject to parts availability".

But the partnership also said it was "looking for the relevant budget" to fund the work - and so far no agreement has been reached with the NHS Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Integrated Care Board about where the money will come from.

Filton & Bradley Stoke MP Claire Hazelgrove, whose constituency includes the

building, wrote in February that she had met with both Green Valleys Health and the ICB.

She said: "As there is not yet a confirmed plan in place, I requested to meet with Green Valleys Health to sit down and discuss progress and next steps.

"The team have now obtained the quotes needed for the work, and have applied to the ICB for funding.

"There are, rightly, checks and balances in place so these are under way before any final decision.

"They hope to have this soon."

Ms Hazelgrove said she hoped the closure could finally be resolved now "joint steps" are being taken to consider funding options.

She added: "It will also be important for lessons to be learned from this to help avoid such significant delays anywhere in our community in future, where issues arise leading to more limited access to care."

Green Valleys managing partner Maria Hartnell said: "Green Valleys Health has



Emersons Green Medical Centre has been closed since October 2024

instructed and received surveys regarding the work that needs to be undertaken at Emersons Green.

"Detailed reports about the infrastructure, and the work needed to reopen the building, have been produced and have been viewed by the ICB.

"The practice has received quotes from contractors to carry out the work necessary to ensure the safety of the building such as the installation of a new boiler."

She said the group was "aware of the challenges" posed by the closure and is still maintaining the same service to patients via

Leap Valley surgery in Downend and Abbotswood in Yate, with the ICB providing "advice".

However the ICB has not committed to funding repairs to the surgery.

A spokesperson told the Voice: "Green Valleys Health continues to keep the ICB updated on the developments on the temporary closure of Emersons Green Medical Centre.

"It is the responsibility of the provider to ensure the upkeep of the building and provide health services from the premises."

MP writes: Page 19

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Further arrest for ex-Metro Mayor

FORMER Metro Mayor Dan Norris is facing new allegations of sexual offences.

Avon & Somerset police initially arrested the 66-year-old politician in April last year on suspicion of rape and child sex offences alleged to have happened between the 2000s and 2020s. He was placed on police bail as officers from the Operation Bluestone dedicated rape and serious sexual assault team continued their investigation.

In February police said: "Following our enquiries, the man has been further arrested on suspicion of rape against a second woman, sexual assault against a third woman, as well as voyeurism and upskirting against a number of women.

"We're no longer actively investigating any sexual offences against children, but the original rape and misconduct in a public office investigation is continuing.

"Investigations into sexual offences are sensitive and complex and as a result, it can take a significant amount of time for enquiries to be completed. The man remains on conditional bail."

Mr Norris, whose term as Metro Mayor ended last May, was suspended from the Labour Party immediately after his arrest but remains the MP for North East Somerset and Hanham.

He issued a statement after his further arrest, saying: "I vigorously and entirely deny the serious allegations made against me.

"They are untrue. I am challenging them through my legal representatives."

Mr Norris has been banned from entering Parliament, under rules restricting access to MPs arrested on suspicion of a violent or sexual offence.

He told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: "I would like to make clear that I am still representing constituents on a broad range of issues, including handling casework and policy, submitting written questions, voting by proxy and staying across all local and national developments in order to continue to serve constituents to the best of my ability."

Families await news of places at new school

LYDE Green's new secondary school is just six months away from opening, with families about to find out whether their children have been offered a place.

Lyde Green Community School has unveiled its uniform, which features green jumpers, tops and sports kit, as well as sky-blue shirts.

It has also confirmed that September 7 is the date that the first pupils will start.

Head teacher Tom Hill says it has been "a busy and exciting time behind the scenes", as the school has been recruiting its staff team.

Among those appointed are a deputy head and two associate assistant heads, who each have a "wealth of experience and expertise", and an operations manager to oversee the smooth running of the school.

Heads of English, maths and science have been appointed to help lead the development of a

curriculum Mr Hill described as "rigorous, engaging and ambitious".

Mr Hill said: "For some posts we received over 60 high-quality applications, a clear sign of the excitement surrounding the opening of the school and the shared belief in what we are building together."

"Together, this growing team shares a common vision: to build a highly aspirational school that places academic excellence, character development and strong relationships at its heart."

"There is a genuine sense of excitement among staff about being part of something new and about working closely with families and the wider community as the school grows."

On March 2, families who applied for places at the school for the first cohort of Year 7 students will find out if they have been offered a place.

The school has 180 places, and will eventually have a



The sports kit for the new Lyde Green Community School is modelled by students from other schools run by Olympus Academy Trust

capacity of 900 across five year groups, as the first group progresses through to Year 11.

Mr Hill said: "These young people will truly be our pioneers, helping to shape the traditions, values and identity of Lyde Green Community School in its opening year."

"Once places have been confirmed, we will be in touch with families to begin the important work of building strong relationships, getting to know our students well, and ensuring a confident and positive start to secondary school."

He said families who had not named Lyde Green as their first choice earlier in the application process but are now considering a move can contact enquiries@lydegreens.org.uk to discuss places.

Local sports teams and clubs interested in using the new pitches can use the same email address to get in touch.

Mr Hill said: "We are prioritising clubs that are community-focused and inclusive so that facilities benefit Lyde Green residents."

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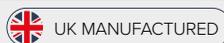
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Club on wheels rolls out

A NEW mobile community hub has gone into use for residents and groups in the area served by Emersons Green Town Council.

The multi-purpose vehicle, also known as the Community Hub On Wheels, or CHOW, has been commissioned to provide a space for activities, learning or meeting up.

It has a particular focus on youth work, going to areas where there are no youth clubs or other venues to offer access to drop-in sessions.

It is also available for families and older residents, to provide well-being and community services, workshops, community consultations and pop-up events in parks and neighbourhood spaces.

The town council says it will improve access to services for any residents who face barriers to travelling to static facilities.

The Voice first reported on the £155,000 project, which is being funded from contributions made to South Gloucestershire Council by developers as part of planning deals, last year.

It has games consoles, WiFi, kitchen facilities, music, charging stations for devices, sports equipment, art facilities, heating and air conditioning.

Town council youth liaison officer Shea Stew is spearheading the project, having run similar mobile provision in Bristol for five years.

Shea said: "The CHOW will allow us to reach more people in more places and in more flexible ways.

"It marks an exciting new chapter for our Youth and Community Teams and will help us deliver vital services where they are needed most."

One of the CHOW's first trips after going into service in February was to Mangotsfield School, where students found out what it has to offer.

Head teacher Hetty Blackmore said: "Shea has been a big supporter of the school's ambition to work more directly with the local community to support its young people.



Pupils from Mangotsfield School in the new mobile community hub, also known as the CHOW

"He brought the community club in on a wet lunchtime and parked on the playground, and used the opportunity to make some new acquaintances amongst the school community and promote the work he was doing.

"Lots of students took the opportunity to have a look at the bus, enjoy the sound system and have a better understanding of what is now happening in the evenings in the local area.

"It is a fantastic idea and

a well equipped unit that will allow young people to gain new experiences through the Youth Service's work, and make some new friends."

The hub has also been at Lyde Green Community Centre to support youth work with Sovereign Network Group, and is due to visit Emersons Green Village Hall, Rodway Hill, and Emersons Green Skate Park soon.

More information is available on the town council website.

Students win cash for local charity

YEAR 8 students at Mangotsfield School competed for the chance to win a £1,000 donation to the charity of their choice.

The school's annual First Give final was held at the end of January, as part of a programme organised by the social action charity as part of personal, social, health and economic education lessons.

Pupils from each Year 8 group made a presentation to the whole year group, showing the charity's impact and an action plan for the donation.

Head teacher Hetty Blackmore said: "It is always the highlight of my year, and this year the standard was extremely high!"

Class Pomphrey 8.2 won the £1,000 for mental health charity Changes Bristol after an "excellent solo presentation" from one of its students.

Pomphrey 8.1 was highly commended category for a "stunning" presentation for homelessness charity Caring in Bristol.

Right: The winning class secured a £1,000 donation



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Buses key to transport 'vision'

A NEW "vision for the future of transport" in the region, including a mass transit link to Bristol Airport, has been unveiled by Metro Mayor Helen Godwin.

The system would see trams, light rail or bendy-buses introduced in some places.

But in the Emersons Green area the most immediate change is likely to be the arrival of electric buses on major routes.

The West of England Combined Authority run by the Metro Mayor has £752 million of funding available for better buses, more trains, and mass transit projects across Bristol, South Gloucestershire and B&NES, as well as North Somerset, which could join WECA if a proposal now out for consultation goes ahead.

A spokesperson for the mayor said more than 250 new electric buses would be on the region's streets by the end of the year.

This will include those serving Emersons Green and Lyde Green: the Lawrence Hill bus depot, where the vehicles used on routes including the 48x and 49x are based, will be converted to accommodate electric buses later in the year.

Within five years the first mass transit routes could be up and running, but bringing them to routes between the city centre and Emersons Green, and along the ring road to Filton, are expected to be a "medium to long-term" project.

The spokesperson said the transport vision is still in a "conceptual" form, with a large amount of technical work needed before routes and the form of mass transit system are decided.

A public consultation on a new bus plan is expected to be launched during March.

Ms Godwin said: "We need a transport system that people can trust, wherever they live. Together, we can and must deliver the integrated transport system that people need and deserve."

South Gloucestershire Council leader Maggie Tyrrell said: "With significant growth across South Gloucestershire, we need transport improvements that help communities and businesses thrive, connecting people to key services and workplaces.

"That means reliable public transport, safe and accessible walking, wheeling and cycling. We will also be planning now for the next big changes in rail and mass transit."

Details of the Transport Vision can be found, and the 48-page vision document downloaded, at tinyurl.com/yzu83kuh.

Metro Mayor: Page 20



Memorial space planned

A NEW area for people to gather for Remembrance and other community events is being planned for Lyde Green.

Emersons Green Town Council is inviting people to have their say on designs for the proposed Parish Memorial Space during a month-long consultation.

The space would be created opposite Lyde Green's new school buildings, on the green space between Honeysuckle Road and Campanula Gardens.

The town council has shared a computer generated image with "early visual concepts" of how the area could look, which it says are "intended solely as a guide and may help open discussion".

The colours, materials and elements are not fixed at this stage.

Town council environmental services manager Paul Kearsley said: "This space is intended to be a focal point for reflection, remembrance, and community gathering, and your views will help shape the final design."

Draft design ideas are available to view on the council's website, emersonsgreen-tc.gov.uk, between February 27 and March 27, with information also being put on boards in Lyde Green Community Centre.

People are being asked to send comments and ideas to clerk@emersonsgreen-tc.gov.uk.



Computer image of how the new memorial space could look

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The Window Hub remains rooted in the local community. Being named finalists for Retailer of the Year at the Bristol Life Awards is

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From May 2026, your black bin will be collected once every three weeks.

Recycling and food waste will continue to be collected weekly.

Green bins (for garden waste subscribers) will be collected every two weeks.

A new hygiene and nappy waste collection will take place every two weeks (if registered).

FIND OUT MORE



southglos.gov.uk/three-weekly

Weather delays bridge works

NATIONAL Highways says wet weather has delayed work to connect the new Badminton Road bridge over the M4 to the embankment.

But it insists the bridge is still on track to open in the spring - although it has yet to fix a date.

A spokesperson said: "We have made positive progress on the new bridge, with works on the reinforced earth wingwalls starting imminently, and have been rebuilding the embankments as the weather allows. "The wet weather has impacted the scheme slightly, with earthworks needing to meet certain moisture content requirements - too wet and it can't be placed.

"However, we don't anticipate this having an impact on the overall opening date of the road this spring.

"Once the earthworks have been completed, we can start waterproofing the deck, allowing for the road formation and approach slabs to be built. Then we will be placing the kerbs, footpath and finally surfacing and line marking from the site limits over the bridge."

Four nights of overnight closures of the M4 are planned from March 26 to 30, for hard shoulder resurfacing.

Planning appeal win

PLANS for a new travellers' site outside Pucklechurch have been approved following an appeal.

South Gloucestershire Council had turned down Jason McDonagh's application for two mobile homes and two touring caravans, with a stable block and 'day room', opposite Meadow View travellers' site on Shortwood Road.

But planning inspector Jonathan Edwards has granted permission, saying that the site, last used as hardstanding by the council, was 'grey belt' rather than Green Belt land protected from development.

He said the adverse impact on the countryside and Siston Conservation Area was outweighed by the need for more travellers' sites.

Consent was given with conditions, including that the homes "shall not be occupied by any persons other than Gypsies and Travellers".

30 years on, tributes to firefighter Fleur

FORMER colleagues and family of a firefighter killed in the line of duty were joined by members of the public as they remembered her, 30 years to the day after she died.

Fleur Lombard was 21 when died on February 4 1996, as she and her colleagues fought to contain a fire started by an arsonist in the Leo's supermarket that stood on the site now occupied by Tesco in Staple Hill.

A crowd gathered around her memorial in Broad Street and fell silent at the exact moment when she was killed in a flashover 30 years earlier.

Her memory is honoured every year on the anniversary of the tragedy, and this year Fleur's father Roger, sister Bex Lombard-Earl and Bex's youngest child Rowan travelled from the North of England to attend the ceremony, as well as the unveiling of a red plaque in her memory at Kingswood fire



Fleur Lombard

station.

Bex said: "This anniversary has brought with it an extraordinary outpouring of kindness, respect and care, not just towards Fleur's memory, but towards us as the family who loved her long before the uniform.

"To see her remembered so thoughtfully, three decades on, is deeply moving."

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EDUCATIONCENTRES

William visits supercomputer and robo lab

THE Prince of Wales visited Emersons Green to find out more about the supercomputer based at the Bristol and Bath Science Park.

Prince William visited the Isambard-AI supercomputer, a £225m government-funded national facility, built and run by the Bristol Centre for Supercomputing (BriCS), along with the National Composites Centre next door.

Isambard-AI was officially launched in July last year and is the world's fastest university supercomputer.

On the visit Prince William met BriCS director Professor Simon McIntosh-Smith, as well as Bristol University senior research fellow Dr Danielle Paul, whose British Heart Foundation-funded research is using the supercomputer in the development of new drugs to combat heart disease, and climate scientist Professor Dawn Mitchell, whose research shows how to use AI to better predict extreme weather under different climate scenarios.

He was also shown around the National Composites Centre, a wholly owned but independently operated subsidiary of Bristol University, by its chief business officer Dr Jo Dally and university vice-chancellor and president Professor Evelyn Welch.

Later the same day prince found out how Bristol's universities are working together to use robotic technology to help older and disabled people

He visited the Bristol Robotics Laboratory at the University of the West of England's Frenchay campus to meet researchers and start-up businesses working in areas including smart garments, exoskeletons and self-stabilising mobility scooters.

BRL is a joint venture between UWE and Bristol University, and is described by the two universities as "the most comprehensive academic centre for multi-disciplinary robotics research in the UK".

Prince William met the engineering research team at the VIVO Hub for Enhanced Independent Living, where robotic and digital healthcare technology is being combined to develop new equipment to help older and disabled people, including clothing that can help prevent falls, and support people getting up from a chair, climbing stairs and walking.

The prince also met the founders of two start-up firms led by Bristol University graduates: Supersmith, which is building mobility scooters with self-stabilising robotic technology, and Milbotix, which is making 'wearable technology',



Prince William is shown the Isambard AI computer

including socks that monitor dementia patients' well-being.

UWE Bristol's pro-vice chancellor for research and knowledge exchange, Professor Darren Reynolds, said: "Prince William has seen first-hand our thriving community of tech-

mindful and solutions-focused entrepreneurs and researchers, reimagining tomorrow through robotics and the power of AI.

"These start-ups are addressing societal challenges that will improve people's lives and power our economy."

Data centre bid

BRISTOL University wants to build a new data centre to serve the Isambard AI supercomputer.

The university has applied to South Gloucestershire Council for planning permission to build the facility in the car park of the National Composites Centre, which it also owns.

A statement from planning agents Kendall Kingscott said: "The NCC have advised that they have a small excess of parking spaces on site that can be surrendered for use to accommodate the new facility.

"The reduction in parking has been carefully limited to nine standard car parking spaces."

The new facility will be just north of the supercomputer, which was also built on the NCC car park, in a separate building with a 4.5m (about 15ft) security fence.

The agents said: "Having the facility close to Isambard-AI means we can move the data between the supercomputer and the data facility at rates that would be simply impossible if the data facility was anywhere else.

"The proximity is vital. Even if the data facility was the other side of the Science Park we'd lose a lot of the performance benefit. The speed of light is quite slow when you're moving data - it only moves 30cm in ns. So close is critical."

The plans can be viewed and commented on the council's planning website, by searching for application P25/02989/F.

No comments had been made as the Voice went to print.

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Warning over fake £20 note scams

POLICE are trying to trace a man who conned a Downend resident out of a laptop by buying it using fake £20 notes.

They say the man in the picture, captured by a doorbell camera, used several counterfeit notes to buy the computer, which he picked up at around 5pm on January 21.

A police spokesperson said: "The item was advertised for sale on an online social media marketplace, and we have received similar reports where counterfeit notes have been used in other areas across Avon and Somerset.

"We are following lines of enquiry in relation to this incident, have carried out CCTV enquiries and intelligence checks, but we are now appealing to the public to come forward with information on the identity of the man, who we believe may have information which could assist our enquiries."

The man is described as black and about 5ft 10in.

He was wearing a gilet and a sweatshirt with the hood up.

Anyone who thinks they know who the man is should call 101 or contact the police online and quote the crime reference number 5226 027 249.

Inspector Barney Mabbett said a series

of frauds using the forged notes had been reported.

He said: "Officers are investigating multiple incidents where the victims have advertised an electrical item for sale online, with the offenders later attending their home addresses and paying for the item with counterfeit currency."

Police are issuing advice to spot the fake notes, and asking people to:

- Look out for three serial numbers repeatedly appearing on the fakes: YA09 592802, DK57 985923 and DK92 639731.
- Check the hologram image, which should change between "Twenty" and "Pounds" when tilted on a genuine note.
- Check the transparent window has clearly-defined images and edges.
- Check for raised print, especially on the words 'Bank of England', on a genuine note.
- Not accept a note that feels unusual, appears blurry or lacks security features.

They are advising anyone who is offered a fake note not to confront those involved but to record information including descriptions of people and vehicles, and to keep hold of the fake note if it is safe to.

Businesses are being advised to notify their bank and share information to help prevent the notes circulating more.



The man police want to trace

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TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

Blocked ears are not a minor nuisance (even if you've been ignoring them)



Most people don't book ear wax removal because of pain.

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Fed up with turning the TV up one notch at a time.

Fed up with that muffled, cotton-wool feeling they keep hoping will "just clear".

And here's the quiet truth: **ear wax rarely clears properly on its own once it becomes impacted.**

In fact, many well-meaning attempts to fix it, cotton buds, drops used too late, home gadgets, often make the problem worse by pushing wax further in.

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Not to wait. Not to hope. Not to keep compensating.

Just to get them checked properly and dealt with cleanly, safely, and professionally.

Because hearing clearly shouldn't feel like a luxury. It should feel normal again.

If your ears feel blocked, sounds seem dull, or ringing has crept in, book an appointment with our friendly audiologist. We'll check your ears, show you what we see, and, if needed, remove any troublesome wax safely and comfortably.

Deb Campbell

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

Awards celebrate 'remarkable people'

SOME of the "unsung heroes" who keep community organisations across South Gloucestershire going have been honoured with awards.

Volunteers for groups working in the Emersons Green area were among the 30 individuals and organisations to receive a Chair's Community Award at a ceremony at the end of January.

Recipients included community well-being projects, youth support groups and environmental projects.

Among them were the Lyde Green Litterpickers, a volunteer group founded by resident Dan Fedigan three years ago to tackle litter left lying on the area's verges.

The group's citation said: "The Lyde Green Litterpickers have transformed their community by organising regular volunteer litter-picks since 2023, collecting over 270 bags of rubbish and inspiring pride, well-being, and environmental care among residents."

There were two awards for Staple Hill & District Royal British Legion, which covers the Emersons Green area.

Vice-chair Di Roberts received an individual Community Hero award for her outstanding dedication to the organisation.

Her citation said: "Diane is a dedicated Royal British Legion volunteer, whose leadership and tireless community work



Dan Fedigan of Lyde Green Litterpickers receives the group's award from council chair Katie Cooper and SGS College principal David Withey

have ensured the success of Staple Hill's Remembrance events and preserved vital local groups, making her a respected cornerstone of the community."

The branch itself also received an award, which Diane collected along with chair Ian Campbell.

The citation said: "The Staple Hill & District Branch of the Royal British Legion has spent 100 years supporting veterans and fostering community spirit through remembrance events, the Poppy Appeal, and volunteered outreach across South Gloucestershire."

The awards are held every year by South Gloucestershire Council to recognise and thank local volunteers who give up their time to help others, in a ceremony hosted and sponsored by South Gloucestershire &



Ian Campbell and Diane Roberts of Staple Hill Royal British Legion

Stroud College.

They were presented by the council's chair, Staple Hill & Mangotsfield councillor Katie Cooper, along with SGS chief executive and principal David Withey.

Councillor Cooper said: "It is a privilege to recognise the remarkable people who contribute so much to our communities.

"Their kindness, energy and

commitment bring genuine benefit to residents across South Gloucestershire, often without seeking any recognition in return.

"Their actions make a hugely positive and lasting difference to the lives of residents across South Gloucestershire, and I want to thank each of them for their kindness and selfless contributions."

Thank-you to Norman

A VOLUNTEER with the Royal Naval Association and the Royal British Legion has received a personal letter of thanks for his service from Defence Secretary John Healey.

Norman Low, who is 90, continues to play a role at community events, including laying crosses on Commonwealth war graves at Christ Church Downend ahead of Remembrance Day, among other voluntary work.

The letter was arranged by Filton & Bradley Stoke MP Claire Hazelgrove, who said: "It was an honour to request this recognition for Norman Low. His service to our country and his ongoing commitment to the Royal British Legion and Royal Naval Association truly deserve to be acknowledged. Veterans like Norman remind us of the importance of service, remembrance and community spirit."

RBL branch chair Ian Campbell said: "Norman is a hugely respected member of our branch and a true example of dedication and service.



Norman Low with his letter

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Peter

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



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Lions welcome Year of the Horse

TWO lions from Bristol University's Chinese Lion Dance Troupe performed under the clock tower in Page Park as part of the Lunar New Year celebrations welcoming the Year of the Fire Horse.

With the tower roof keeping the rain off their fur, the lions danced to a lively drum accompaniment as families crowded around to watch the spectacle.

It was the highlight of the event on February 15, which also included traditional dancing,

games, craft activities.

There was music from the Dawn from Hong Kong group, featuring musicians from Hong Kong and Ukraine combining traditional Eastern and Western instruments, including an erhu, a two-stringed instrument often known as the Chinese violin, which has a heritage dating back 4,000 years but is rarely played in UK performances.

The event was organised by Melody Beard of the park's Bean Tree Cafe with South Gloucestershire Race Equality

A lion greets children in Page Park



Network, cultural education and social support organisation Mingle Bristol CIC and Me Time Cafe, a South Gloucestershire-

based non-profit group supporting people who have moved to the area from Hong Kong.

2,200 oppose abattoir plan

MORE than 2,200 people have now written to object to plans by a meat processing company to expand an abattoir where thousands of pigs are slaughtered every day.

Pilgrim's Pride has applied to South Gloucestershire Council for planning permission to build new facilities at its Pilgrim's Europe slaughterhouse at Oakley Green Farm, Westerleigh, on the opposite side of the M4 to Lyde Green.

The company says the work will "upgrade and expand" the livestock processing facility so that it can slaughter 25,000 pigs per week, adding: "The proposals aim to improve operational efficiency, enhance environmental performance, and provide modern infrastructure in support of the site's existing lawful use."

Many of the objections have been from people raising animal welfare concerns.

But villagers have also written to object, with one writing that the "pervasive smell" from the slaughterhouse "frequently engulfs the whole village and its surroundings", earning Westerleigh the nickname 'The Smelly Village'.

Residents have also raised concerns about effluent leakages into the ground and local waterways.

Developers behind plans to build more than 2,000 homes on land next to the abattoir, a project known as North Lyde Ecotech Village, have also objected to the expansion plan.

They told South Gloucestershire Council: "As the emerging Local Plan has now been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination, we consider that it can be given some weight in decision taking at this point in time, and needs to be considered as part of the proposals given that the spatial context of the abattoir is due to change significantly over the coming years.

"The abattoir will no longer sit in a relatively isolated position, with residential dwellings, employment floorspace, primary school and publicly accessible open space and sports provision proposed to be located between the M4, Westerleigh Road and the abattoir."

The plans can be viewed at the council's planning website by searching for application P25/02416/F.

Pavilion revamp

A CRICKET club that plays in sight of legendary player WG Grace's birthplace is planning to rebuild its clubhouse to make it fit for its growing membership.

The £1.1 million project would see the ageing pavilion at the WG Grace Memorial Ground in Downend replaced with a two-storey building that could accommodate upgraded changing rooms, a conference room and function room.

Downend Cricket Club has started to sound out potential builders and is looking at sources of funding, from sponsorship to grants. It expects the project to take about five years.

For more, contact the club via its website or Facebook page.



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March 10

■ **SODBURY AND DISTRICT FLOWER ARRANGEMENT SOCIETY** annual general meeting at the Old Grammar School Rooms, Chipping Sodbury, 7.30pm. Also practice class on leaf manipulation on March 24, same time and place. For more information contact rosemary.cummins2@gmail.com

March 20

■ **DOWNEND FLOWER ARRANGING CLUB** are hosting Kathryn Delve, Master Florist demonstration "She Came Late To Tea". Friday 20th March 7.15pm, Emersons Green Village Hall.

Tickets £12 per person include refreshments from downendflowers@gmail.com. All arrangements raffled at the end of the evening.

March 21

■ **HAM FARM FESTIVAL** Young Performer Spotlight concert at Resound, Blackhorse Road, 6.30-8.30pm.

Performances by local children followed by professional group CarmenCo, a trio with voice, flute and guitars. Tickets £12 adults, children free, from tinyurl.com/9sfw4eem.

March 22

■ **FREE ADVANCED DRIVING TASTER DAY** at Severn Beach Village Hall, Severn Beach, 10am-2pm. Introduction to techniques with Bristol Advanced Motorists. Pre-booking essential - apply online at www.iam-bristol.org.uk.

REGULAR EVENTS

Monday

■ **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.

Tuesday

■ **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. More info from Graham on 07968 050320.

■ **MESSY SPACE** at Badminton Road Methodist Church, Downend, 10-11.45am. Term-time group for toddlers and carers. Toys, books, crafts, singing and refreshments. First visit free. More information at badmintonroadmethodist.org.uk or

0117 956 1106.

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

■ **BEGINNER & REHABILITATION PILATES**

18:15-19:15 Pendennis Church (Opposite Wrenbert Road) Staple Hill. £8 please message Samantha 07736309272 for more information

■ **PUCKLECHURCH FOLK DANCING CLUB** Pucklechurch Community Hall. Abson Road every other Tuesday from 7.30 to 10.15p.m. All welcome either with a partner or solo. Enjoy an evening with us. Call Sue on 07742114566 or Linda on 0784324014.

Wednesday

■ **THE WOMEN'S SECTION OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION** 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 0117 956 3407.

■ **MANGO JAMS BABY & TODDLER GROUP**, meets at Lyde Green Community Centre, 9.15am-10.45am, term time only.

■ **FRENCHAY FOLK DANCE CLUB** meets alternate Wednesdays, English and American folk dancing to live music, 7.45-10.15pm, Frenchay Village Hall. New dancers always welcome. More details at www.frenchayfdc.co.uk or email FFDCSecretary@gmail.com.

■ **CLEEVE SINGERS OF DOWNEND** Enjoy singing, then come and join this four part choir who meet on Wednesday evenings at Lincombe Barn, Overndale Road 7.30 p.m. from September until July. For more information contact the Secretary on 0117 9561881.

■ **DOWNEND FLOWER ARRANGING CLUB** meet at Emerson's Green Village Hall twice a month on a Wednesday evening, term time only. We are a friendly relaxed group, why not join us. For more information Downendflowers@gmail.com

Thursday

■ **NEXT DOOR BOOKS** welcomes new members. Book club meets on the last Thursday of the month at 11am, depending on numbers. Normally meets at Emersons Green library, email jessica.callaway@hotmail.co.uk.

■ **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.

■ **WALKING WITH FRIENDS**, free group walks at a gentle pace around Siston Commons. Start and finish at Kingsmeadow@Madeforever Community Centre, Fisher Road, BS15 4RQ, 1-2pm. For more details email kingsmeadowmade4ever.org.uk or call 07588 622 372

■ **SHORTWOOD VILLAGE WI** meets on the second Thursday of the month at 7.30pm, at Shortwood Village Chapel, Main Road, Shortwood. More details from millhousejoinery@aol.com.

■ **BEECHMERE BELLES WI** meet in Emersons Green Village Hall at 7.30pm on the fourth Thursday of the month. More details from beechmerebells@gmail.com or Facebook.

Friday

■ **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.

■ **RAINBOW TOTS** parent and toddler group meets at Emersons Green Village Hall on term-time Friday mornings, 10-11.30am. All welcome. For more details email church.egbc@outlook.com.

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** regular coffee mornings, held on the first Thursday of the month, 10.30am-noon at the church in Cossham Street.

■ **LATER LIVE MUSIC**, Resound church, Blackhorse Road, Mangotsfield. Every second Friday monthly, except August & December, 8-10pm, £2.50. More details at facebook.com/lateratresound.

Saturday

■ **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.

Sunday

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** hold regular weekly Sunday morning worship at Cossham Street. Services start at 10.30 a.m. with different speakers each week. New members very welcome. For more details please

OVER 30s DANCE PARTY at the superb BAWA Club, Filton

... on the FIRST Friday of every MONTH (NO dance in August or January) It's the ideal night out for the 30-60 age range. Come dance and socialise amongst a friendly, lively crowd. Dancing Thru' the Decades includes Motown, Soul, Club Classics... Music you can relate to. Club times are 9 'til 1. Last entry 11pm - very smart casual. No t-shirts or trainers and gents required to wear collared shirts. Entry: £8. www.mingles.co.uk. Facebook: @Luv2mingle

contact Peter Redding (Ch.Sec.) on 0117 9657075.

■ **BADMINTON ROAD METHODIST CHURCH** Sunday worship followed by sharing refreshments, 10.30am Service of Holy Communion usually fourth Sunday of the month, led by Rev Leigh Maydew. 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

■ **EMERSONS GREEN BAPTIST CHURCH** services are held every Sunday morning from 10.30-11.30am at Emersons Green Village Hall, Emersons Way. We also hold regular craft services. Contact Simon on 07765 201435, visit www.emersonsgreenchurch.org or Facebook page for more details.

■ **LYDE GREEN LITTER PICKERS** meet at 10.30am on the first Sunday of the month outside Lyde Green Community Centre, Thistle Close. See www.cleanupuk.org.uk/groups/lyde-green-litter-pickers for information.

■ **SERVICES AT ST JAMES CHURCH, MANGOTSFIELD:** 8am, holy communion. 10.30am, services rotate between all-age service (1st Sunday), morning worship (2nd & 4th Sunday), holy communion (3rd Sunday) and healing service (5th Sunday).

■ **PUCKLECHURCH BADMINTON CLUB**, Pucklechurch Village Hall, 8pm weekly. Play friendlies and mixed doubles. Over-18s only. For more details contact Mark on 07866 375512 or Pauline on 07570 046177.

Let's talk about children and social media



SINCE my election, it has been super to see so many of you at my informal 'Coffee with Claire' events, focusing on priorities for our community.

Having completed a place-based round of these reaching every ward, including Frenchay and Downend, I'm holding thematic events focusing on these priorities, and where we can feed into key government consultations (like I did on SEND a few months ago).

The next Coffee with Claire, in partnership with youth work charity FACE on February 28 at 11am, will focus on potential restrictions on social media for under 16s.

The government is consulting on options,



Claire Hazelgrove with partners at Green Valleys Health.

and I want to make local views heard, sharing our feedback with ministers.

The event will be open to all across our Filton and Bradley Stoke constituency - RSVP for more details.

Young people are very welcome, with those aged 13-16 accompanied by a parent or guardian.

To RSVP, please visit tinyurl.com/bdx2396. Last month, my team and I worked on 926 new cases supporting residents. I was out knocking on doors and listening to people's priorities in Little Stoke and Patchway and will keep doing this across our constituency, which stretches from Cribbs to Lyde Green.

In Parliament, I was proud to vote to remove the two-child benefit limit, seeing around 1,640 local children lifted out of poverty. Children do not choose the circumstances they are born into, and it is right that we are in their corner as a society.

I was glad to speak in a debate on animal welfare and also fully support our government's announcement tackling rising vet fees. We will see clearer pricing, greater transparency and consistent access to care, rather than a postcode lottery.

The government also announced strong plans tackling 'fleecehold' practices, where homeowners are charged fees by private

management companies. Ground rents will be capped at £250 and new leasehold flats banned. Since being elected, I've supported local leaseholders directly, met with management agencies and spoken to the Housing Minister. I'm pleased that this has contributed to long-overdue action.

I've also met with government ministers to share local insight on important issues, including how child maintenance processes are sometimes being used to continue domestic abuse, and challenges for local residents and postal workers from delays receiving 2nd Class letters.

Locally, I met with Green Valleys Health about the prolonged closure of Emersons Green Medical Centre. They are now awaiting a response on funding from the NHS locally.

I was also glad to open the National Gas regional office in Stoke Gifford, bringing great new jobs to our area.

As always, please get in touch anytime at claire.hazelgrove.mp@parliament.uk.



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A transport network you can trust

NOBODY wants to sit stuck in traffic or hang around waiting for a bus that never turns up.

We all know that the West is best - but too often, our transport hasn't kept up.

As the country's fastest-growing region, we've been stuck in the slow lane for too long.

It's time to tackle congestion, potholes, and unreliable journeys, and build a transport network people can trust.

This isn't just about getting from A to B - it's about quality of life. It's about giving people their time back: to be home sooner, get out into nature more, or visit the many attractions that make our part of the world so special.

Transport is a big part of our Growth Strategy because it affects everyday life.

If we want more people across the West to be able to find work, access training, and take up new opportunities, we need a network that helps them get where they need to go.

Better transport also helps businesses grow and create more jobs locally.

That's why we've set out a clear vision for a better-connected West of England, focused on five priorities:

- Better buses: reliable, affordable services with one ticket and one timetable.
- More trains: new stations, more frequent services, and low-emission trains.
- Mass transit: a high-capacity system linking

key places across our region.

- Active travel: safer walking and cycling routes, with e-bikes and e-scooters for short trips.
- Improved streets: smoother roads and pavements, more electric vehicle chargers, and better Park & Ride and travel hubs.

Wherever you're travelling, we need to invest so you can rely on how you get there. And we need a system that makes it easier to switch between different types of transport, with simple tap-on, tap-off travel so you never pay more than you should.

We've already secured record transport investment from government. With over 250 new green buses due by the end of 2026 and more stations being built, we can look ahead with genuine optimism.

One of the biggest opportunities ahead is mass transit. Right now, the West of England is the biggest city-region in the country without it. High-frequency services along dedicated routes would be a real game-changer, whether that's a tram, light rail, guided bus, or something else. It won't happen overnight, but council leaders and I are determined to do the work needed to start building within four or five years.

Alongside this, there is another important moment for our region: the consultation on North Somerset joining the West of England



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

Mayoral Combined Authority is now open.

This is about bringing more communities into the decisions and funding that can improve everyday life.

If North Somerset joins, it could unlock an additional £15 million in the short term, with the potential for more investment in future, helping us deliver better transport, housing, and opportunities across a wider area.

I'd really encourage residents, community groups and businesses to take part. This is your chance to have a say on the future of our region.

Find out more on our website, westofengland-ca.gov.uk, or through paper forms at local libraries, community centres, and GP surgeries.

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Get a FREE Grand Appeal Will and support Bristol Children's Hospital

Here is your chance to get a **FREE Will NOW** and at the same time make a generous gift in that Will for Bristol's Children's Hospital.

This offer to our readers means that you can get the protection of an expertly prepared Will now – at no cost. And because the gift you make to The Grand Appeal charity is in your Will, you can afford to be generous - because you know that it will only take effect after you have died.

This is all possible because our local specialists in Wills and Powers of Attorney - Simpson Solicitors - have again teamed up with The Grand Appeal. Together, they are raising funds to support Bristol Children's Hospital

It starts with a no-obligation **FREE Grand Appeal Will** meeting. Then, Simpson Solicitors can prepare your Will (or 2 mirror Wills for a couple) **absolutely free** to

you. You will still receive Simpson Solicitors' full award-winning service. They will also check your home ownership for £7 and advise you on optional extras such as Additional Trust Protection. You will also be offered their Complete Powers of Attorney service with 20% off the full price. Then they will organise a follow up meeting for you to sign the Will, in compliance with the rules that apply.

Associate Director at Simpsons, Michelle Baden-Daintree says

"I hope many readers will take advantage of this amazing offer and then leave a generous gift in their Will to the Grand Appeal. As by leaving a donation in your Will, it costs you nothing now and you will be giving the gift of a brighter future to a sick child."

This offer is particularly close to Michelle's heart as Bristol Children's Hospital literally saved Michelle's



6-year-old daughter's life. She saw for herself how The Grand Appeal charity covered the many extras that the NHS cannot - making life a bit more bearable for both sick children and their families at the toughest of times.

With such a great offer, places are limited – so please contact Simpsons' friendly team now by phone or email message@simpsonslawuk.com to request your **FREE Grand Appeal Will** meeting.



John Baden-Daintree



Michelle Baden-Daintree

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Time to tackle our litter

IN last month's article we highlighted the problems with the Christmas lights and that we needed to raise money to sort them out for later this year.

We did not for one minute think that one local couple would offer to fund the work.

It's an incredibly generous offer, and one which has left us speechless – a rare thing, as some of you will know!

We can now get on with making sure our 2026 display is back to normal, and perhaps improved.

Sad to say that there is more and more litter and more incidents of fly tipping, especially in certain 'hot spots'!

We will hold a litter picking morning on March 28 to try to get on top of it, albeit temporarily, but it would obviously be a lot better if we didn't have to do it.

And we would urge anyone seeing fly tipping to report it:

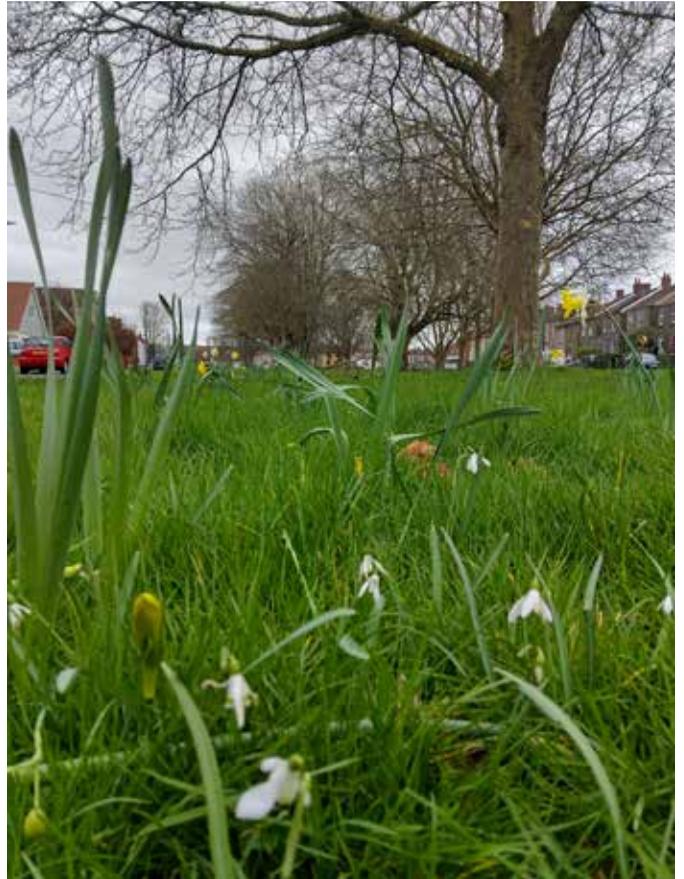
you can do that on the South Glos Council website at tinyurl.com/2r72czmw.

Spring is approaching or is already here - not quite sure with the current climate and weather conditions - and we are seeing lots of bulbs springing up, once they've learnt to swim!

The ones planted on the common over the last couple of years are doing OK but they could do with some friends, so, in conjunction with the parish council, we'll be planting more in the coming months.

If you want to get in touch, please do so by email at MangotsfieldRA@gmail.com, via the ever-popular Mangotsfield Matters Facebook page or by phone to our chair, Clive Heath, on 07507 168700 or me on 07918 701881.

Chris Amos



The flowers on the common are springing into life

Diary dates:

February 28, 10.30am: Hour A Month – Planter and bench inspection walk, and coffee

March 4, 10am: Red Lion coffee morning - all welcome.

March 28, 10.30am: Litter pick

April 23, 7.30pm: AGM – venue to be advised

COMMUNITY NEWS

BEECHMERE BELLES WI

HOPEFULLY by the time you read this the weather will be slightly warmer as the days grow longer.

I'm loving seeing lots of snowdrops and early daffodils – such a hopeful sign that we're through the worst of winter.

Our meeting on February 26 welcomes Heather from the Guide Dogs Association.

A registered charity, they have a wide range of services with and without dogs, to support people living with a vision impairment. As world leaders in puppy socialisation and dog training, they are the only organisation to breed and train guide dogs in the UK. We're really looking forward to hearing what Heather has to tell us.

And of course, in March, we

can't let the season pass without some Spring Crafts – Sam is busy organising a crafty evening for our ladies.

We welcome guests to any of our meetings: it's free for your first meeting (unless it's a craft evening, when we charge £5 to cover materials used).

We promise you a warm welcome, as well as tea or coffee and cake!

We meet in Emersons Green Village Hall at 7.30pm on the fourth Thursday of the month.

If you would like to know more, please contact us via email at beechmerebelles@gmail.com or follow our Facebook page, which is Emersons Green & Lyde Green WI Beechmere Belles.

Wendy



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Sisters' marathon challenge

TWO sisters are training to run the London Marathon for a charity close to their hearts.

Jen Davis and Mel Glanville will take on the 26-mile and 385-yard course in April to raise money for Marie Curie, which provides end of life nursing and hospice care.

The charity's nurses cared for their grandad when he died at home in 2016, and Mel now works for Marie Curie, providing overnight end of life care for terminally ill patients in their own homes.

Jen and Mel grew up in Downend and Mangotsfield, and still live in the area.

This will be the first time they have taken on a marathon together: Jen has done the London Marathon once before, in 2023, and Mel has done a 10k and some parkruns.

Jen, who is a full-time foster carer, said: "We know it will be a challenge but want to run it and cross the finish line together."

"It's been tough fitting in the training, with Mel working nights as well as being a mum, but she fits it in around sleep.

"I have done lots on the treadmill when the kids



Jen Davis and Mel Glanville on a previous run

are in bed, but am hoping to be out on the road more during March and April!"

Mel and Jen have set up individual donation pages on the marathon's fundraising website, which can be found by searching for their names at 2026tcslondonmarathon.enthuse.com.

They are aiming to raise £2,500 each.

Jen said: "Every five minutes someone dies without the care they need. That needs to change. "Marie Curie nurses provide nursing and hospice care whatever the illness. They also provide support and information on all aspects of dying, death and bereavement."

For more information on Marie Curie, visit mariecurie.org.uk.

Head confirmed

DOWNEND School has confirmed that its interim head teacher has been appointed permanently to the role.



Rachael Corns

Rachael Corns had been the school's deputy head before taking over temporarily last year after predecessor Linda Ferris took on a directorial role at the Castle School Education Trust.

CSET has now confirmed that the roles of Mrs Corns and senior deputy head Ben Hickman have been made permanent.

Mrs Corns has previously served as the school's head of PE, a head of house and special educational needs coordinator, before becoming the deputy head.

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Keeping up to date with our history

SINCE the Community History and Arts Project (or CHAP) was set up in 2018, we have looked to engage as much as possible with the local community.

We are a voluntary collective of people with an interest and passion in the history of our local area, seeking out information about places, people, and events from the past of Downend and Emersons Green, to share them with everyone.

We have published a history map of the local area, worked with residents and groups to make a banner depicting key people and events from local history, had stalls at local festivals to hear tales old and new of the area, and held many community history walks - both for the public and over 1,000 local school children.

This is in addition to monthly articles in the Voice, of course, sharing our findings and activities.

We are very much a living history group too, and keen to document significant events and the development of our local area today.

This is why we photographically documented the effects of the Covid 19 pandemic on the local area, and the celebrations for the coronation of King Charles III.

In the spirit of this contemporary history, we



Squares made for the CHAP banner by local individuals and groups

recognise that social media and other forms of communication play an increasingly important role in all of our lives.

We already share our latest articles and findings via Instagram (@downendchap) and are seeking other ways to communicate with different generations of our local community and learn more about our collective history.

This is why we now have a Substack newsletter, which will enable us to better share our findings, upcoming local events and articles with you, our local community.

By subscribing via our website,

downendchap.org, or our Substack profile (downendchap.substack.com) you'll receive our newsletter directly to your email inbox.

We're always keen to hear from anyone in the community.

Whether you would like to get involved, are curious about our area's past, have memories to share or a question we may be able to answer, please get in touch via the CHAP website.

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

Elliott Sargent

Whitehall RFC to launch new women's team at community day

Founded in 1931, Whitehall Rugby Football Club is inviting the local community to a free Open Day on Saturday 7 March to celebrate the launch of its new women's team, the Whitehall Valkyries, and the opening of newly refurbished facilities supporting women and girls in rugby.

The Open Day marks one of the most significant milestones in Whitehall RFC's near-century history, reflecting the club's ongoing commitment to growing the game for women and girls in East Bristol.

This investment represents a major step forward for Whitehall RFC. The club continues to expand its thriving junior section and is welcoming an increasing number of young female players, inspired by the success of the England Women's team and the rising profile of women's rugby nationally.

The refurbishment project has been made possible thanks to extensive fundraising by senior and junior players, volunteers and the club's sponsors, ensuring

the club can continue to provide a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment for players of all ages and abilities.

A full programme of activity will run throughout the day, including:

- T1 and contact rugby taster sessions
- Coaching masterclasses
- A round-robin tournament
- A Women's Showcase Match featuring two established local sides
- Food, drink and family-friendly entertainment

An official opening ceremony will be led by Sarah Pascoe, Junior Chairperson, joined by local councillors, to mark both the facility launch and the formation of the Valkyries.

Celebrations will continue into the evening, with the Italy v England Six Nations match shown live in the clubhouse.

The event is free to attend and open to all. Whitehall RFC encourages players, families, supporters and local residents to join the celebrations and be part of this landmark day for the club and the wider community.

WHITEHALL VALKYRIES
LAUNCH DAY

We're proud to invite you to celebrate two major milestones for Whitehall RFC, the launch of our Women & Girls rugby team and the official opening of our brand new female changing facilities.

SAT 7TH MARCH - 11AM ONWARDS

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE DAY

- ✔ Have-a-go rugby skills sessions for women & girls
- ✔ Women & girls rugby matches, touch & contact
- ✔ Official launch of the Whitehall Valkyries
- ✔ Special guests joining us for the celebrations
- ✔ Bar serving drinks & snacks
- ✔ Kitchen open with hot food available
- ✔ Tania's Treat Hut open for kids favourites

WHERE IS IT?
Whitehall RFC, Foundry lane, Speedwell, Bristol, BS15 3PW

RFU #notjustarugbyclub
Whitehalljuniors@gmail.com

Whitehallvalkyries Whitehalljuniors Whitehallrfc

BEARS

Flamenco fever

PUPILS from three primary schools were invited to a Flamenco concert as an end of term treat.

Resound Church in Blackhorse Road hosted 240 children from Emersons Green, Blackhorse and Barley Close Primary schools for a concert by Lourdes Fernandez and her group Flamenco Raices in February, organised by Ham Farm Festival and supported by Emersons Green Town Council.

Emersons Green Primary School head teacher Soraya Young said: "The children had a great time and were even practising their own moves in the playground before the Valentine's disco!"



Lourdes Fernandez and Flamenco Raices perform

BRISTOL u3a

Anyone for a spring walk?

WINTER is now behind us, so why not get out in the fresh air for a walk with friends?

Bristol u3a has five regular walking groups (no dogs) and a couple more that are organised informally.

One of the five regulars is the "Weekend Amblers", which enjoys weekend walks of three to six miles, led by different members.

The aim is to have leisurely ambles every weekend, where the social element is just as important as the walking element.

Walks can be urban or in the countryside, and most are accessible by public transport.

All members are encouraged to share favourite walks with the group and lots of support is available for people who've never dared to suggest a route before.

If you'd like to join a dog-friendly group, then the best way forward is to come along to one of the café socials and share your idea.

If you go on to join u3a, we can include your idea as a future activity.

In fact, this is how most new interest groups start – a chat over coffee often blossoms into a new regular event.

Café socials in March are at: Orchard Coffee & Bakery in St George (flat access) on Friday 6th; the Market Café and Lounge in Kingswood (stairs) on Tuesday 10th; the Crafty Egg in Fishponds (ramp) on Wednesday 18th and Mokka Downend (flat access) on Monday 23rd.

All socials run from 2-4pm, and

everyone is welcome.

Bristol u3a (you in your Third Age) is for anyone. There's no lower age limit, but most members are retired or semi-retired. Activities are wide and varied, so the best way to find out more is to come along to one of our café socials.

You can also key "Bristol u3a groups" into your favourite search engine.

Don't worry if you can't make it to a social – just send me an email at learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk if you'd like to find out more about walking groups or u3a in general.

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SHORTWOOD VILLAGE WI

THE weather for our January meeting was very inclement, but we opened with a welcome to Philomena, who encouraged us all to follow her actions and do Seated Zumba to lively music.

After a sedentary Christmas and New Year this warmed us up, revived all our minds and worked muscles we did not know we had!

This was followed with our 'News and Views' and a vote for the resolution that we want to be carried forward in 2026.

We had a 'Santa slip-ups' sales

table, raffle, cuppa and chat before finishing the evening with a quiz.

Our February meeting included a visit from David and Zillah Savage, from the Siston Archaeological Society, for us to learn more about the historical village of Shortwood and the surrounding area.

Planning is in process for local trips in 2026 to Oakham Treasures, Kingswood Heritage Gardens and Organic Blooms.

We are a small friendly bunch, and if you would like to see for yourself we will welcome you to

our next meeting on March 12 at 7.30pm, in the vestry of Shortwood Village Chapel, Main Road, Shortwood.

For more information, questions or just a chat, you can contact us by email at millhousejoinery@aol.com - please include the heading Shortwood Village WI.

Lynne Miller

RODWAY RUBIES

RODWAY Rubies had a busy January, starting with our 'Xmas' lunch at Salford Golf Club.

There was great food and service, as always - the only little blip was the heating breaking down, but we carried on regardless!

Our January meeting's speaker was a last-minute change but we found out a great deal about Treasure Trove and its legal realities.

We ended the month with our quiz night in aid of Parkinson's UK Bristol branch.

It was a fun night, and we raised the excellent sum of £408, which we will add to our previous efforts for the year. We are making arrangements to hand a cheque over in person to the charity in March.

We have now firmed up on the trips we are planning for later in the year, to Dartmouth and Buckfast Abbey in June and London in October, mostly to view the exhibition of Queen Elizabeth's clothes and accessories at Buckingham Palace but also for members to go shopping if they so wish. Coaches are booked and seats are filling up!

In February we have a speaker from the RNLI, who is a volunteer for the charity.

As its work is totally funded by volunteer efforts and donations, it will be interesting to gain an insight into the ways and means they raise the cash to keep their boats doing such sterling work. In March we are having a talk about Uganda, the 'Pearl of Africa', so something completely different. Our programme for the coming year is almost ready to go to the printers: always a varied mix of subjects to cover a wide range of interests.

We also dip into events and talks arranged by the Avon Federation of Women's Institutes throughout our region.

We meet at St James Church Hall on Richmond Road in Mangotsfield.

Jane Eldon

MANGOTSFIELD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

MANGOTSFIELD Community Association will hold its annual spin cycle fundraiser at the Red Lion pub on Easter Saturday and Sunday, April 4 and 5.

Starting at 10.30am each day, fundraisers will clock up virtual miles on the spin bikes until the distance of around 940 miles is 'reached'.

Anyone can enter to help raise money for this year's charities, St Peter's Hospice and Pancreatic Cancer UK - just register at the Red Lion or show up on the day. **Clive Heath**



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Flyers win through to semi-final

If you've glanced out of the window at any point in 2026, you'll know the forecast has been fairly consistent: wet, wetter, and "is this a joke?"

At the time of writing, it's rained every single day so far in the UK, and while we're all doing our best to keep spirits up, our grass pitches at Pomphrey Hill and Johnsons Road have officially had enough.

The ground is so waterlogged it's less "football pitch" and more "mud spa with occasional goalposts."

Still, if there's one thing Downend Flyers are proving this season, it's that you can't rain on our parade — even if the rain is absolutely trying.

Despite the relentless drizzle (and the occasional downpour that feels personal), our Under 12s Kites have soared into the County Cup semi-final with a brilliant 1-0 win against Bristol Ladies Union.

It was a hard-fought battle from start to finish, with the young Flyers showing real determination and grit. The Kites held strong, battled through the conditions, and came away with a well-earned victory — a fantastic



Young Downend Flyers with players from Bristol City Women's FC Early Talent Centre.

achievement and thoroughly deserved.

Away from competitive fixtures, Downend Flyers also hosted a special event with Bristol City Women's Early Talent Centre, which gave young players an exciting opportunity to showcase their skills and play against some incredibly talented young and upcoming players.

The event was a huge success and marks the first of many as we continue to expand, develop, and build strong links for the future.

Of course, even with the wet weather trying its best to dampen everything (including socks, morale, and probably a few footballs), our Flyers teams have managed to get some football played. But we're all desperate for more consistent match time — and the planning is already under way for a much brighter summer. At this point, we'll take "partly cloudy" as a personal victory.

Speaking of summer, planning for our annual football tournament on June 27-28 is well under way — and it's set to be bigger than ever.

Due to high demand, we'll be expanding the age groups.

Registration is already open and applications are coming in fast - teams can sign up at tinyurl.com/4mrjkmw.

Finally, one of our biggest announcements: Downend Flyers will have an Under 18s team next season.

This is a fantastic opportunity for our current Under 16 players to continue their football journey in the Bristol Girls League. If you're currently aged 15-17 and interested in joining Downend Flyers for the 2026/27 season, please get in touch.

Steve Poole

10k entries open

THE 44th Frenchay 10k is open for entries.

Since the race began in 1980, around £200,000 has been raised for charities by the volunteer organisers. This year's nominated charities are mental health charity Bristol Mind, 1625 Independent People, which supports young people at risk of homelessness, and Freewheelers emergency volunteer service, which provides a free out-of-hours courier service for hospitals for blood and vital supplies.

The event will take place on April 19 from 11am, following its established course from the race headquarters at UWE's Glenside campus through Snuff Mills, up into Oldbury Court Park, through Frenchay Village and back up Blackberry Hill to the university site.

Race director Dave Guyatt said: "We've already seen high interest with race entries this year, so sign up today to avoid any disappointment!"

The event has an updated website this year where entries can be made, at frenchay10k.co.uk.

There are 600 places, with reduced rates for juniors and affiliated club runners.

Bowls course returns

A COURSE to teach people the basics of bowls will be held in Staple Hill from April.

The popular annual course is run and hosted by Page Park Bowls Club, with five qualified Bowls England coaches, and is open to anyone aged 12 and above. It will be held on seven consecutive Saturdays from April 25, from 10am to noon, with an initial £5 registration fee, plus £5 per session charge to cover costs.

All equipment will be provided except for flat soled shoes, which participants need to bring as heels or ribbed soles aren't suitable for the green.

Anyone interested should contact club captain Don Willcox on 07718 306623 or donwillcox@hotmail.co.uk. People taking the course don't have to join Page Park Bowls Club but it is a condition of club rules that anyone who does join must have completed the course. For more information visit www.pageparkbowling.org.uk.



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Love is in the air... and it's mid football season

FEBRUARY is that funny time of year. The nights are still dark, the pitches are still muddy, and everywhere you look there are red roses and heart-shaped chocolates.

Valentine's Day always gets people talking about love... but here at Cleve Chiropractic & Physiotherapy, we see a different kind of love every week. Love for sport. Love for movement. Love for football.

And sometimes... love for Bristol Rovers finally winning a couple of games and taking the pressure off me! Yes, the Gas have managed a few victories, which means I can walk into clinic without being reminded of league tables. Long may it continue.

Welcome Beth Birdsey – our new physio star

This month we're absolutely delighted to welcome Beth Birdsey to the team.

Beth has joined us from Manchester, where she was working in Accident & Emergency — so when we say she's seen it all, we mean it. From acute trauma to complex musculoskeletal presentations, Beth brings calm, clarity and clinical excellence to every case.

But that's not all. Beth has also worked with the girls' pathway for the England women's national football team — helping to lead the Lioness talent pathway. That means she's worked with some of

the most exciting young footballers in the country, guiding their development, managing injuries, and keeping them performing at their best.

Having someone with elite sport and A&E experience join a community clinic like ours is huge. It means whether you're a weekend five-a-side hero, a young academy player, or just someone who twisted their knee stepping off a curb, you're in very safe hands.

Football injuries – what we see every week

Football is brilliant. It's dynamic, explosive, technical and tactical. But it also places huge demands on the body.

The most common injuries we treat include:

- Ankle sprains – Often from tackles or awkward landings.
- Knee injuries – Including ligament strains and meniscal irritation.
- Hamstring strains – Especially during sprinting.
- Groin pain – A classic in footballers due to cutting and turning.
- Lower back pain – Repeated rotation and impact can build up over time.

With Beth's background and our multidisciplinary team, we're able to manage these from acute injury through to full return to sport.

How we treat football injuries

One thing I'm proud of at Cleve is that we don't just "treat pain". We treat people.

For footballers, that usually means:

- Accurate diagnosis
- Understanding what's really going on — ligament, tendon, joint, muscle or referred pain. Beth's A&E background is invaluable here, especially when something feels more serious.
- Early management

Load modification, manual therapy, taping, mobility work and pain management to calm things down quickly.

• Progressive rehabilitation:

Strength, control and conditioning — tailored to football demands. We rebuild sprint capacity, deceleration strength, change of direction mechanics and resilience.

• Return-to-play testing: We don't just say "off you go". We test. Hop tests. Strength comparisons. Movement quality. Confidence.

Because the goal isn't just getting back on the pitch. It's staying there.

From Elite to Everyday

What I love about Beth's experience with the Lioness pathway is this: the principles don't change.

Elite athletes and grassroots players both need:

- Strong foundations
- Good movement quality
- Smart load management
- Recovery
- Confidence

Whether you're dreaming of Wembley or just trying to get through Sunday league without limping into work on Monday, the body responds to the same evidence-based approach.

And as someone who's been around sport for years — from rugby to running to skiing — I can tell you this: consistency beats heroics every time.

Tim

Clinic Director, Cleve Chiropractic

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Cleve bounce back after Chippenham loss

CLEVE lost another clash with a club near the top of the table on the artificial pitch at Chippenham.

Both teams were well-prepared, and it was Cleve who started most at ease, taking control for the first 10 minutes and going 7-0 up with a catch and drive after 15 minutes.

But Chippenham were up for the game, a reunion day for their club which had everyone well motivated.

The hosts went towards Cleve's line and Ben Robinson bravely prevented a try five yards out, but from the resulting scrum Chippenham used a set backs move to score.

Cleve, who had narrowly lost their previous game to league leaders Trowbridge, then went 19-7 up with two tries, first after sending the ball along the line and then from a lineout.

Chippenham went on the attack, coming straight back to make the score 19-14 before Cleve produced the best move of the game so far, as Will Warman came into the line to score,



Steve Bush on the charge for Cleve against North Dorset

making it 26-14.

The home side then scored three unanswered tries to wipe out Cleve's lead and pull ahead 31-26 by half-time.

In what was one of the toughest games of the season, Chippenham were relentless. Cleve continually responded but could not get back in front and the match finished 52-40 to the home side.

In their next game, on January 31, Cleve bounced back

with a big win over North Dorset.

This was a special day for several reasons.

Firstly, it was a reunion dinner day. Ex-players, sponsors and officials gathered at Cleve prior to the game for a meal and celebration.

Secondly, one of the acts of celebration was the opening of a corner of the Cleve ground that is a memorial wall, with plaques on it that have names of ex-players and officials who have passed

away. A flagpole was also placed at the memorial garden. It was donated by the family of Stuart 'Buzz' Gaston, who died last year.

The game saw Cleve get back to winning ways in style, beating one of the Regional 2 Tribute Ale Severn division's bottom two clubs by 47 points to 7.

The Cleve family of players, sponsors and officials had a wonderful day.

The next game against mid-table Thornbury reflected the weather we have been experiencing.

It was postponed twice due to a waterlogged pitch and was looking likely to be postponed again, but Thornbury persuaded a local school to rent them a pitch.

The game went ahead in very different surroundings. Due to the weather it was difficult to get to, but supporters overcame these problems.

Cleve also rose above the rain and pitch, to run out winners by 30 points to 19.

Steve Bateman

Mangos' play-off hopes fade

MANGOTSFIELD United achieved perhaps their best result of the season in beating league leaders Roman St George, before falling to a defeat at home to mid-table Cinderford Town.

The reverse against Cinderford meant the Mangos' already slim hopes of making the play-offs became slimmer still.

Although 7th in the league table, they are 15 points behind the last play-off place, currently occupied by Corsham Town, with only 11 league matches left to play and 33 points available.

The morale-boosting 3-2 win over Roman Glass St George saw Lewis Powell score a hat-trick.

Despite an early goal from the visitors, the Mangos kept plugging away and more than matched their high-flying opponents and local rivals.

Man-of-the-match Powell's hat-trick came on 30, 77 and 84 minutes, with a second goal from Roman Glass providing a

grandstand finish.

Watched by a crowd of 327 at Cosham Street, it was a well-earned three points for the Mangos, giving them some hope for the rest of the season.

However, one week later they were brought back down to earth as they ended up on the wrong end of the same scoreline, as Cinderford Town nipped over the Severn Bridge to take all three points.

Mangotsfield began badly, and defensive lapses meant that the visitors found themselves 2-0 up inside 14 minutes, thanks to goals from Jack Watts (11) and Kian Davies (14).

Urged on by another large home crowd of 357, the Mangos battled back into the game, facing the tough task ahead of them, and pulled one back on 37 minutes through Jacob Spence.

Cinderford, however, made the perfect start to the second half by going 3-1 up on 50 minutes, through Jack Watts again.

The Mangos rallied immediately, and Lewis Powell got one back just three minutes later.

Try as they might though, the Mangos just could not break the visitors down any further, and the Foresters stood firm with an excellent performance.

The following week's away trip to Longlevens was, not surprisingly, called off because of a waterlogged pitch. It will be rearranged as soon as possible.

Reaching the play-offs is going to be a very tall order indeed, and will need a few teams above the Mangos to implode big time if the miracle is to be achieved!

In the meantime, the club was still in two cup competitions, the Marsh Cup and GFA Trophy, as the Voice went to print.

Silverware in the trophy cabinet always means success of some sort at the end of a season, so there is still much to play for in the coming weeks.

The club hopes a mass of home games coming up in late February and through March will see more excellent attendances at Cosham Street as the Mangos try to win as many games as they can and see where it takes them.

Dave Smale

Upcoming fixtures

(3pm unless stated):

February 24: Bitton - GFA Trophy (home, 7.45pm)

February 28: Lydney Town (H)

March 7: Hereford Pegasus (H)

March 14: Slimbridge (H)

March 21: Corsham Town (H)

March 28: Worcester Raiders (away)

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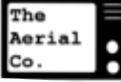
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