

# emersonsgreenvoice

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April 2026, Edition — Issue 108

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

## Railway remembered



A special event has been held to mark the 60th anniversary of the day the last British Rail train services ran through Mangotsfield and Staple Hill stations on the Mangotsfield and Bath branch line. Picture: Adam Ashford, for Avon Valley Railway. Full story: Page 13



## Event celebrates arrival of spring

Residents enjoyed a free programme of nature talks, exhibitions and stalls, plus music and dancing, at Emersons Green's Spring Gathering.

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## Festival called off

Organisers of the Mangotsfield Village Festival have cancelled this year's event.

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## Green belt demo

Campaigners to save the Green Belt in east Bristol from large-scale housing development plan a day of action this month.

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## Giving it a try

Young rugby stars of the future from Cleve took part in a competition day hosted by Premiership side Bristol Bears.

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## 140 choose new school

LYDE Green's new secondary school will have around 140 Year 7 pupils when the first lessons begin in September.

The school in Honeysuckle Road, which is currently being fitted out as a £58.3 million building project nears

completion, has made offers to a total of 131 pupils who applied through South Gloucestershire Council's secondary school admissions process.

Head teacher Tom Hill says that since the council's applications process closed last

autumn, more families have been in touch to enquire about places, and around 140 are currently expected to join when it opens its doors for the coming academic year.

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# emersonsgreenvoice



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## COMPLAINTS

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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.



# No Mangotsfield Village Festival this year

ORGANISERS of the Mangotsfield Village Festival have cancelled this year's event.

The decision not to go ahead was taken at a meeting in March of the volunteer committee that plans and organises the festival.

The free event attracted around 3,000 visitors last year, but immediately afterwards there was a warning that it could be the last, if new volunteers could not be found to help run it.

A number of long-standing committee members, including previous chair Paul Mallorie, stepped down in the autumn.

Another committee member, Madeleine Bills, then volunteered to take on the chair's role, and the team set about organising a festival for June 13.

But the organisers have found sponsorship hard to secure, raising fears that there could be a shortfall of up to £3,000 in funding for the festival, which costs around £17,000 to put on.

Madeleine, who has been on the committee for around 12 years, said: "We've always made sure we've got enough money in the bank to pay for the event, even if it poured with rain."

"We were finding sponsorship quite hard to get and felt there could be a shortfall, which would fall on us."

Visitors to last year's event enjoyed music, dancing, displays, fairground stalls and competitions including a dog show at Pomphrey Hill North playing fields, off Johnson Road in Emersons Green.

Madeleine said the funding secured this year would have only covered a much smaller event.

She said: "Rather than do an event where we had to curb everything because of costs, we felt it would be better to do a good event next year."

"If we do a poor event this year, it would be harder to get back the following year."

The committee is already planning to bring the festival back for its 34th staging next year - but also needs volunteers to commit to helping out to make sure it happens, both throughout the year and on the weekend of the festival itself.

Madeleine said this included young volunteers to help with publicising the festival on social media during the run-up, a team of around eight people to set up on the day before the event and about ten to help take the stages, marquees, bunting and other equipment down at the end of the event.

She said: "We will definitely be there next year, but like all things it's going to be an uphill job to get back."

Emersons Green Town Council and Staple Hill & Mangotsfield Parish Council both supported the festival financially last year.

Town council clerk Jo Bryant said the committee had taken a "difficult but responsible decision", adding: "The Town Council remains committed to supporting the Village Festival wherever possible."

"Officers and members of Emersons Green Town Council will continue to work closely with members of the festival committee to support fundraising efforts and volunteer recruitment, with the aim of helping to ensure a successful event in 2027."

Anyone who would like to help make sure next year's festival goes ahead can volunteer by emailing [chair@mangotsfieldfestival.co.uk](mailto:chair@mangotsfieldfestival.co.uk) or calling 07955 184003.



The Sambistas lead last year's festival parade

## ADVERTISING

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## EDITORIAL

news@emersonsgreenvoice.co.uk

Letters to the publication can be sent to the above e-mail address.

The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

## DEADLINES

Our May edition deadline is April 15.

## LOCAL INFORMATION

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# School prepares for first intake of 140

From Page 1

The opening of Lyde Green Community School is also easing the pressure on other schools to provide extra places.

It had originally been due to open in 2022 to provide secondary school places for families in the fast-growing estate, alongside a primary school which is also part of the new-build complex.

But the project was hit by a series of delays and in the meantime, neighbouring schools including Downend, Mangotsfield and Winterbourne Academy had to increase capacity and host extra classes to accommodate the demand.

The new secondary school can accommodate up to 180 Year 7 students in six classes every year.

Already this year it has received 248 applications, including 107 first-preference bids, and has made offers to a total of 131 pupils.

If that number increases to 140 it will be just over three quarters full when it opens.

Mr Hill said the number of students offered places is broadly in line with predictions.

He said: "We're also seeing increasing interest since the initial allocation – with just over 10 new enquiries in the past week or so – which is a really positive sign.

"Many families have told us they were initially unsure about selecting a brand-new school, but now that they can see the build progressing so strongly,

the quality of our facilities taking shape, and the strength of the staff team we've appointed, confidence is clearly growing. We fully expect numbers to continue rising."

Mr Hill said families who have recently moved into the area or are considering transferring their child's place can contact the school directly at [enquiries@lydegreencs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lydegreencs.org.uk).

He said the school's build is "progressing extremely well", with carpets in many classrooms, furniture going in and internal spaces starting to take shape.

Mr Hill said: "It's a lovely moment to see the building come to life."

Downend School, which two years ago had 325 first-choice applications, had 287 for its 240 places this year, making offers to a total of 236 first-choice applicants and four who put it second or third.

At Mangotsfield, which in 2024 and 2025 raised its admission number to 270 to help accommodate demand, offers have been made to 209 pupils for 210 places, with all 178 families who put the school as their first choice being offered places.

At Winterbourne Academy, which has a capacity of 300 students per year, all 232 families who made the school their first choice were given offers, with a total of 267 places filled: two years ago it had 304 first-preference applicants, and 54 missed out on a place.

South Gloucestershire Council cabinet member for



Lyde Green Community School head teacher Tom Hill and his senior leadership team at the new building, which is still under construction

education Ian Boulton said: "The opening of Lyde Green Secondary School this September marks an important step in ensuring that local families have access to the school places they need within their own communities.

"The benefit is clear: for the first time in several years, no existing secondary school

has been asked to exceed its published admission number. This gives families greater certainty, supports school stability, and ensures we can continue to respond positively to families moving into the area throughout the year."

Offers to parents who applied for primary school places are due to be made in April.

## Team takes shape

LYDE Green Community School has announced the leadership team who will support head Tom Hill in running the school.

Deputy head Janie Ashburner has nearly 30 years' experience in secondary education and was previously head teacher of a special school.

Associate assistant head teacher and head of Year 7 Chloe Smart is a PE and sport specialist who was previously senior assistant headteacher at a state boarding school for boys.

Associate assistant head teacher and special educational needs coordinator Lou Roscoe has a background in psychology and sociology, and previously held a range of leadership roles within the Kingswood-based Cabot Learning Federation.

Operations lead Donna Smith has more than 15 years' experience in the mental health sector along with experience of working as part of the pastoral team at Patchway Community School.

\*The new school is currently inviting expressions of interest from groups, clubs and organisations interested in hiring its facilities from September.

More information can be found at [www.lydegreencs.org.uk/Lettings](http://www.lydegreencs.org.uk/Lettings).

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# Bus service axed in shake-up

A BUS service serving Pucklechurch is being axed after losing its funding from the West of England Combined Authority.

The 532 service linking the village to Emersons Green, Warmley, Oldland Common, Bitton, Longwell Green and Cadbury Heath, was only set up in September 2024, one of eight WESTlocal routes championed by former Metro Mayor Dan Norris.

Devised with input from four parish councils, including Pucklechurch, services originally ran to Keynsham and Yate at some times of the day, but the route was later changed after a year, to serve Longwell Green.

People from Pucklechurch can still reach Yate, using the Stagecoach 525 service.

The Voice asked WECA why the decision to withdraw the service was taken but had not received a response by the time the paper went to print.

Main operator First has announced a series of changes to other bus services, including some revisions to the timetable for 48x services between Emersons Green and the centre and 49x services from Lyde Green.

Timings are being adjusted to accommodate more services on other routes using Fishponds Road, including the 47x from Oldbury Court.

The 48 from Downend and the 49 from Staple Hill to the city centre via Stapleton Road will both have their frequency cut from every 30 to every 40 minutes on average as part of the changes.

The m3 metrobus service is not being changed.

Details of all changes to bus services from April 5 can be found online at [travelwest.info/bus](http://travelwest.info/bus).

Metro Mayor Helen Godwin has announced that the £1 cap on child fares is being extended until Spring 2029 as part of a fares support package for bus passengers.



THE West of England Combined Authority has unveiled new artwork inspired by nature at the Lyde Green Park & Ride.

It is one of seven 'travel hubs' across the region where the artwork has been commissioned.

The Lyde Green work has been produced by illustrator Zoe Power, who created a floral design aiming to reflect the names of local roads including Hollyhock Lane and Burdock Road.

WECA aims to make the hubs "vibrant spaces that help to enhance our streets and public areas".



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# Campaigners set for day of action

GREEN Belt campaigners are planning a walk to raise awareness and funds for their fight against new housing developments.

Members of Save Our Green Spaces-South Gloucestershire (SOGS-SG) will be holding the event as part of the Community Planning Alliance's National Day of Action for Nature, Parks and Green Spaces on April 18.

The announcement comes as government inspectors confirmed when a public examination of South Gloucestershire Council's draft Local Plan, which proposes sites for more than 22,000 homes in the district over the next 15 years, will take place.

SOGS-SG will hold a fundraising walk on April 18 starting at 11am from Warmley Station Waiting Room Café. The walk will take in Warmley Forest Park and Siston Common, before arriving at the old Shortwood Golf Course, near Mangotsfield, where 1,600 new homes are proposed to be built in the Local Plan, at around 12.15pm.

A spokesperson for the group said: "The purpose is simple: to demonstrate, visibly and collectively, that people everywhere care deeply about the natural world and want to see it protected and restored."

"South Gloucestershire Council's Local Plan proposes to build many thousands of new homes on Green Belt at Emersons Green, Shortwood, Warmley, Oldland Common, Bitton and Hanham, with neighbouring authorities also planning huge developments around Saltford, Keynsham, Hicks Gate and Brislington.

"If all of these developments are given approval then our green belt and open spaces will be severely impacted.

"SOGS-SG are extremely concerned about the impact that mass housing developments will have on our semi-rural communities and villages.

"Our infrastructure simply cannot cope with housing on this enormous scale."

The group says the council's current plans are flawed because



Members of SOGS-SG and residents who protested in January against plans for homes at Shortwood

the council's own data shows three times the number of potential jobs in the north of the district than in the east, where most new homes are proposed, potentially adding thousands of extra daily car journeys on the already congested A4174.

The Planning Inspectorate has announced that it will hold 15 days of hearings to examine the council's draft Local Plan in public in the council chamber at Kingswood Civic Centre, between May 19 and July 16.

Each set of hearings will be held over three days between

Tuesday and Thursday, with one in May and the rest in June and July.

SOGS-SG have employed a planning consultant to represent the group at each day of the hearings.

They are aiming to raise £15,000 towards their representation and had raised more than £7,000 as the Voice went to print.

The fundraising page is at [gofundme.com/ff/sogs-sg](http://gofundme.com/ff/sogs-sg), and more details of the walk can be found on the SOGS-SG website and Facebook page.

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## New crossing by M4 bridge

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council has published plans for a traffic light-controlled crossing near the new Badminton Road bridge over the M4.

The 'toucan crossing', with segregated lanes for pedestrians and cyclists, is planned to cross the A432 just north of its junction with Cuckoo Lane, near Winterbourne.

It is part of a project aimed at improving safety and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists travelling along and across the A432.

A consultation on the plans is open for public comments until April 11 and can be found online at [tinyurl.com/muz2jven4](http://tinyurl.com/muz2jven4).

The scheme is planned as National Highways says it expects to have finished work on a key part of the new bridge by Easter - and will remove the traffic restrictions on the motorway in May.

It says the building of the concrete abutments linking the bridge to the embankment either side of the motorway is expected to finish before the bank holiday weekend at the beginning of April.

A National Highways spokesperson said: "We have made positive progress on the bridge despite the wet weather in January and February, which has impacted the programme slightly.

"Despite the weather, the abutment construction has been progressing well and should be completed by Easter, and we are still on target to open the road in spring."

Following overnight closures from March 26-29 for hard shoulder resurfacing, the M4 will close again between the Bristol and Bath junctions on four nights each in April and May.

Workers will adjust temporary lane positions to allow for central reservation work during April's overnight closures, from the 27th-30th, before removing all traffic management from the M4 during the closures on May 26-29.

Work is still under way on the earthworks at each end of the bridge - after they are finished, the contractors will move on to lighting, traffic signals, crossing points and surfacing before the bridge is connected to the A432 and A4174 Avon Ring Road.



Young performers and professionals together on stage Picture: Steven Harris

## Talent in the spotlight

MORE than 100 people packed into Resound Church to hear young musicians and professionals perform at the same concert.

The Ham Farm Festival Young Performer Spotlight concert at the church in Blackhorse Road, Emersons Green on March 21 featured 12 young people from West of England Music and Arts, followed by professional trio CarmenCo.

Local performers included Savona Leung, Sandy Correa and Charlie Correa from Blackhorse Primary School, and Robin Mills from Emersons Green Primary School.

Organiser Emily Andrews, who is also a member of CarmenCo, said: "The children and youths performed beautifully, and there was a huge range of styles, ages, and instruments on display.

"Bravo to all who took part and thank you to everyone who came to listen. Especially thanks for the kind donations which will all go towards our summer festival!"

The concert was supported by charity the Paragon Music Trust. Another one is planned for June 6.

# Growing together.

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# Gathering welcomes the spring



Visitors to the Hedgehog Rescue stall

Picture: Gianina Turner

RESIDENTS joined nature experts and entertainers at Emersons Green Village Hall for this year's Spring Gathering event.

Organised by the town council with South Gloucestershire Council's Common Connections team and West of England Combined Authority, the free event in late February included music, dancing, exhibitions and stalls.

There was a buzzing atmosphere around stalls from local environmental initiatives including the Emersons Green and Warmley Community Nature Reserves and Litter Champions.

One of the busiest stalls was run by Dr Sam Bonnett from UWE Bristol, whose research into soil 'eco-acoustics' sparked plenty of curiosity.

Dr Bonnett explained to visitors how his team uses underground sound recordings to reveal details about soil health

and biodiversity, and gave people the chance to listen to real soil-sound recordings.

Entertainment included a dance display by Winterbourn Down Border Morris and music from Mangotsfield Ukulele Jam.

Visitors were able to swap seeds and plants, pick up gardening tips from local experts, and take home a young tree to plant.

Children joined in wildflower planting near the library, and made 'seed bombs' to take home and grow.

Volunteers from the British Trust for Ornithology introduced their Garden BirdWatch scheme to record the birds and other wildlife that visit gardens, which is open to anyone to take part in: for more information visit [www.bto.org/gbw](http://www.bto.org/gbw).

There was a tree planting ceremony in nearby Emersons Green Park to mark the end of the Common Connections



Winterbourn Down Border Morris

Picture: Gianina Turner



Mangotsfield Ukulele Jam performing

Picture: Gianina Turner

Programme, which has been run to build links between different wildlife-rich areas in the district, along with an indoor exhibition on the project.

The event was followed by

a nature-themed comedy hour later the same evening, where stand-up comic Matt Hobs performed a version of his Edinburgh Fringe festival show 100% Badgers.

EMERSONS Green Town Council's Community Nature Reserve team is encouraging people to share wildlife sightings in the area using an app.

The project has been helping residents of Emersons Green and Lyde Green make their gardens and green spaces friendly for wild plants, pollinating insects, butterflies, birds and other animals since 2023.

Now the team is asking people to share sightings in the town council's area using the online platform iNaturalist.

The app and website enables anyone with a smartphone or camera to upload pictures, and uses a combination of AI tools and an online community of nature enthusiasts to identify living things they have photographed,

## Nature spotting? There's an app for that

and find out more about them.

The pictures are added to a worldwide online database aiding scientific research on biodiversity.

People can browse these records to find out more about nature in the area by visiting the [uk.inaturalist.org](http://uk.inaturalist.org) website and searching for Emersons Green Community Nature Reserve: there are already more than 1,000 records, covering 450-plus species.

Deputy mayor Bobbie Sunderland said: "We know that this is only a small sample of the wildlife, plants and animal life in the area,

though, and we would love to use this project to build a bigger picture of all the nature that is thriving in our gardens, parks and green spaces.

"If you are a nature enthusiast, a budding wildlife photographer or you simply want to find out more about the plants and creatures you come across, we would love for you to get involved and try out the app."

More information is also available on the Community Nature Reserve page on the Emersons Green Town Council website.



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Touching a giant snail



Close encounter with a snake

# Zoo comes to school

PRIMARY school pupils had some hands-on experience of exotic animals when a mini-zoo visited their classes.

The Reception pupils at

Mangotsfield C of E Primary got to touch and hold creatures including a giant African snail, a Madagascan hissing cockroach and a corn snake at an animal handling workshop with experts Zoolab.

It was part of a wider project in the school's Early Years Foundation Stage to learn about maps and habitats.

EYFS and Year 1 lead Jo Sihag said: "We learnt about the North and South Pole, where they

are located on Earth and what animals live there.

"We also learnt about the desert and what lives in this region. We have enjoyed reading Poles Apart and Martha Maps it Out to support this learning.

"We have had polar and desert areas set up to enhance our learning. We have also read non-fiction books about the Polar and desert regions.

"To further develop our learning and understanding we

had a visit from Zoolab.

"This enabled us to have hands-on experience with animals from different habitats, which we loved! An expert guide taught us about the different animals, their habitats and what they eat.

"It has been amazing to find out about places around the world, to look at maps and globes, to create our own maps and to learn about different habitats this term."

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# Council to remove website ads

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council is set to axe adverts on its websites after inadvertently promoting fish and chips on its healthy lifestyles page.

The website also had ads for air travel on its climate emergency page, and luxury ship cruises on a page for housing benefits claimants.

The council has admitted the ads were 'misleading and inappropriate'.

Officers have recommended scrapping all advertising on the authority's public-facing websites when it moves to a new content management system (CMS) this year.

A report to the cabinet said: "The content of adverts displayed on our websites is an uncertainty since we do not control exactly what is shown to users (although we do exclude certain categories of adverts).

"Adverts shown might not always accurately support the council's values.

"For example, adverts have previously appeared that promote air travel on our climate and nature emergency page, fish and

chip shops on our healthy lifestyles' website, and cruises on a page for users claiming Housing Benefit.

"In 2026, our main public websites will move to a new CMS platform. As a result some design changes will be needed.

"Incorporating advertising would significantly limit the flexibility of this design and is expected to negatively impact overall user experience.

"Since most of the advertising is national and multinational companies, the removal of advertising would reduce confusion about whether the advertising links to council services.

"The financial impact is very low."

Officers included 'screengrabs' in the report showing examples of inappropriate adverts on its three websites that carry them – its main site, healthy lifestyle-focused One You South Gloucestershire, and Glos Life, which provides residents with information and advice on council services.

They include an advert for Marella Cruises at the top of the page for people trying to claim housing benefit. A two-week Caribbean cruise by the operator costs up to £8,938 for two people sharing.

A huge advert for fish and chips, as well one for pub lunches, appeared on the home page of One You.

A promotion for air travel featured prominently next to information telling residents what the authority was doing to

tackle climate change.

The report said councillors approved advertising on our public-facing websites in 2014, to create a new "revenue stream", and appointed the Council Advertising Network (CAN) to handle ad sales and provide technology to display them on its websites.

Officers said: "Before the initial contract was signed, the supplier projected estimated income to

the council in the first year would be £27,425 and this would increase in subsequent years."

They said the actual income for the first year was £4,145.74, rising to a high of £7,245.65 two years later before falling steadily, to £1,788.77 in 2023/24 and £1,301.11 last year.

The report said CAN "admitted to overestimation of income" and clicks had fallen since 2018, a trend accelerated by increasing use of ad-blocking software.

It said: "There are no current arrangements with local businesses to advertise on our website.

"Whilst we can include our own house adverts, for example to promote our resident newsletter and fostering service, these could be promoted through our other existing communication channels such as social media, website homepage promotions, and newsletters."

*By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service*

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# Big families can ask for extra wheelie bin

LARGE families who might struggle with South Gloucestershire's move to three-weekly black bin collections can apply for a second wheelie bin, council leaders say.

The reduction from fortnightly kerbside collections of non-recyclable rubbish is being accompanied by a rollout of new reusable white recycling bags for plastic, cans and foil, rolls of smaller blue bags for soft plastic, and a nappy and hygiene waste collection.

Council leaders have admitted making mistakes during the transition to a new waste contract seven months ago, which included changes to collection days.

At a council scrutiny commission meeting in March, Paul Hughes (Con, Bitton & Oldland Common) asked if the authority had "modelled the impact on vulnerable residents and larger households" of the

change to three-weekly black bin collections.

Cabinet member for communities Sean Rhodes (Lab, Kingswood) said: "Any household that is struggling to manage with the move to three-weekly, even once they've taken on the recycling, there is the capacity for applying for an additional black bin.

"They will be assessed on that, and as long as all of the appropriate levels of recycling and sorting are happening, the option of getting an additional black bin is available to people, as long as they apply through the website."

As part of the new £120 million, eight-year waste contract, the council has taken over waste transfer stations and Sort It household waste recycling centres.

Kerbside collections continue to be outsourced to Suez, which held the previous long-term deal.

The new contract has seen more than 50 Suez staff transfer to the council and more than half of all bin lorries replaced.

Cllr Rhodes said: "I genuinely cannot overstate the amount of work that has gone into delivering transformational change to a service which connects to almost every single one of our residents."

A report to the scrutiny commission said not everyone was aware their bin day had changed when the new contract started last August, despite the authority sending two separate leaflets to every household, as well as social media posts, adverts, and information in One Stop Shops and libraries.

Asked by Cllr Hughes if the council "could have done more", Cllr Rhodes said: "The ideal way of doing it would be 1-2-1 to every household, and knock on every single door to let people know, but obviously that's not

going to happen.

"The simple answer to your question is yes, there are always lessons we can learn to get our comms better.

"Overall a good job was done in terms of getting that information out.

"A considerable change happened.

"Could we have done more? Always, we could do more, absolutely."

Replying to a question by Brenda Langley (Con, Hanham) about collection delays on New Year's Eve, Cllr Rhodes said high levels of staff sickness, combined with an "unprecedented" rise in cardboard from home deliveries, meant extra rounds could not be made.

He said: "Maybe we should have had a better handle on that, but it was at a level that we genuinely didn't expect."

*By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service*

NEWS: CONTACT US AT: [NEWS@EMERSONSGREENVOICE.CO.UK](mailto:NEWS@EMERSONSGREENVOICE.CO.UK)

## Your black bin collections are changing



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



[southglos.gov.uk/app](https://southglos.gov.uk/app)

# Scarecrows back on the trail

PEOPLE and visitors in Pucklechurch will be exploring the streets again next month to seek out a variety of creative and comic scarecrows.

This year's Bank Holiday Scarecrow Trail will take place on May 3 and 4.

Last year there were 48 entries, with well-known fictional characters including Gollum, from *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of*

the Rings, and Shaun the Sheep among the creations.

The event is organised by St Thomas a Becket church and supported by organisations and individuals.

Visitors can collect a trail map, tickets and clues/entry forms at the church from 11.30am on Sunday 3rd or from 10am on Monday 4th.

Tickets cost £5 for a family

(two adults and three children), or £2 per adult and £1 per child or student.

The church offers sandwiches, cakes and cream teas during the event. The village also has two pubs, a post office and convenience store, a cafe, a social club which provides food, and a bakery. Visitors are advised that while tickets can be bought using cards they will need cash at church stalls, and the village has no cash machines.

The organisers said: "Walk around our village, guessing the names of the scarecrows and discovering its historic centre and more modern additions that keep our community vibrant. Enjoy the fresh air and help us raise funds for our village church.

"We look forward to welcoming everyone again."

There will be a presentation of the answers on May 4 at 3pm in church, with prizes available for the best scarecrow as voted by visitors and also for the most correctly-guessed scarecrow names.



Last year's winning fictional character entry, Groot

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EDUCATION CENTRES

# Lost railway remembered at closure 'protest'

THE clock was turned back to 1966 for a day at a special event to mark 60 years since the end of passenger trains on the railway line that once served Staple Hill and Mangotsfield.

Avon Valley Railway held a special commemorative event, called *The People and Their Protest*, which saw Bitton station transformed into the scene of a dramatised confrontation between demonstrators and Dr Richard Beeching, the former chairman of the British Railways Board.

It was Dr Beeching's infamous report of 1963, *The Reshaping of British Railways*, that recommended the closure of the Mangotsfield and Bath branch line, which included passenger services calling at Staple Hill station and Mangotsfield station on their way from Bristol Temple Meads to Bath Green Park.

Local stopping passenger services between Bristol and Gloucester on the line ended in January 1965, and the final British Rail services to Bath ran on March 6, 1966, with the line officially closing the following day.

Trains continued to pass Staple Hill and Mangotsfield stations, without stopping, on journeys between Bristol and Yate until a landslip on Boxing Day 1969 blocked the line, a week before it was scheduled to close.

The old track bed now forms part of the Bristol & Bath Railway Path, and the platforms of both stations are familiar landmarks for path users.

Mangotsfield station was also the scene of an art project, *Mangotsfield Folly*, from

2022-23, and has earned a place in theatrical history as the inspiration for *The Ghost Train*, a hit play in the mid-20th century written in 1923 by Arnold Ridley, who would later become a household name playing Private Godfrey in *Dad's Army*. Ridley was waiting for a train on one platform of the triangular station when a train passed, out of sight, on another side, giving him the idea for the play.

The Avon Valley Railway's event on March 8 this year saw trains running between Bitton, Oldland Common and the Avon Riverside halt, on the preserved section of the line that was revived by rail enthusiasts following a campaign to bring trains back, launched in 1972 by the Bristol Suburban Railway Society.

Trains running on the day carried the old British Rail carriage window labels listing the stations served by the old line: Bristol Temple Meads, Fishponds, Staple Hill, Mangotsfield, Warmley, Oldland Common Halt, Bitton and Bath (Green Park).

Hundreds of visitors stepped back in time, with children paying just 20p to travel - the equivalent price of a ticket from 1966.

Re-enactors from the Kingswood Players acted the parts of Dr Beeching and a group of angry protesters.

Avon Valley Railway trustee Joseph Dean said: "With it being 60 years since our railway closed under British Rail, we really wanted to do something special to mark the anniversary, so after months of planning, *The People*



Mangotsfield station in 1964

Picture: Avon Valley Railway Archive

and Their Protest was born.

"We wanted to shift focus from just railway operation to include both community and social perspectives, attempting to capture the emotions and characters of the time.

"Working alongside the Kingswood Players, we managed to recreate 1966 for the day, with protestors swarming Bitton station and onboard our trains, interacting with the general public, and handing out sheets to fill in and flyers to wave.

"They were joined by Dr Richard Beeching, preparing to close the railway, which certainly caused some drama. These interactions even led to passengers giving Dr Beeching some (slightly inappropriate) choice words!

"There was one unplanned moment of our passengers literally queuing to take photos with both Beeching and our fantastic re-enactors, which was

great to see.

"The comments from the public throughout were overwhelmingly positive, which was greatly appreciated by all of us."

The event also saw the unveiling of a new sign at Avon Riverside station, remembering the closure of the line and reaffirming Avon Valley Railway Heritage Trust's commitment to restore the railway to the outskirts of Bath.

Representatives of South Gloucestershire and B&NES councils, including Staple Hill & Mangotsfield councillor Ian Boulton, attended the event.

The Avon Valley Railway has more special events taking place in April, including Easter Eggspress on the 5th and 6th, Farmyard Friends on the 11th and 12th and Local Residents' Weekend on the 25th and 26th.

More details can be found at [www.avonvalleyrailway.org](http://www.avonvalleyrailway.org).



## Could you be a support worker?

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For more info, contact [kat.dingle@unitedresponse.org.uk](mailto:kat.dingle@unitedresponse.org.uk)

Registered charity no. 265249

## Young engineers' festival

MANGOTSFIELD School students had a taste of the challenges and rewards on offer to engineers on a visit to a Bristol company.

The school's design and technology department took 29 Year 8 pupils to Babcock International's Stoke Gifford base for a day of activities including bridge and boat building challenges.

The Festival of Engineering event in March included software and electronic engineering tasks, driving robots and welding using cutting-edge virtual reality headsets.

Head teacher Hetty Blackmore said: "The students got a chance to speak to a range of representatives from engineering firms, as well as an opportunity to explore the Babcock General Logistics vehicle during its first ever visit to the site.

"The students performed brilliantly, excelling in their bridge designs, which beat many of the other schools' efforts. It was a hugely informative and inspirational day."



**Mangotsfield School students took part in challenges at Babcock International**

## World of work

DOWNEND School sixth form students have been taking part in a wide range of work placements, both in person and virtually.

A work experience week for Year 12 students gave them the chance to explore possible future careers and gain some valuable real-world experience for their CVs.

Head of sixth form Kate Long said: "Many students chose placements linked to their future ambitions.

"Aspiring vets spent time at organisations such as Vets4Pets and Chew Valley Animal Park, gaining hands-on experience with animals and learning from professionals in the field.

"A number of students hoping to go into teaching completed placements in local primary schools, including Tynings, Bromley Heath, Lyde Green and Blackhorse Primary, where they supported lessons and worked closely with staff and pupils.

"Students interested in healthcare careers also had exciting opportunities. Several spent time in hospitals, including Bristol Children's Hospital, where they were able to shadow cardiologists, physiotherapists and other staff. These placements offered a valuable glimpse into the fast-paced and rewarding world of healthcare."

Students with an interest in business and finance were given placements with Bristol companies including McCanns and Focus Accountancy.

Some had virtual placements with national organisations, including EDF Energy, Airbus and the Woodland Trust.

Ms Long said "We are extremely grateful to all the organisations who welcomed our students and supported their development.

"These opportunities make a real difference to young people as they begin shaping their future pathways.

"If you or your organisation would be interested in offering work-experience placements in the future, we would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact the school."

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by Mel Woolley, Local Growth Officer for Wiltshire and Avon Scouts

# Adventure, opportunity and community: these are what Scouting makes possible

LAST month I had the chance to visit Woodhouse Park Activity Centre while attending the Squirrels and Beavers Adventure Days, where hundreds of young people from across the area came to experience outdoor adventure.

I was given a tour of the site by the centre manager, Andy Scully, and spent time speaking with volunteers who help make these experiences possible.

Hidden among rolling countryside and woodland near Almondsbury, Woodhouse Park is an incredible space for young people to challenge themselves and experience the outdoors. Set among beautiful grounds and even home to a magnificent 450-year-old oak tree, the centre offers a huge range of activities.

Young people can take on the climbing wall, tackle Jacob's Ladder, or try the centre's new snow tubing slope. Campfire areas are dotted throughout the woodland, and the views across the countryside make it a truly special place for camps and activities.

Over the past five years, the site has been transformed into a thriving hub for outdoor adventure thanks to the passion and dedication of the team who run it. Andy, who lives on site and works closely with staff and volunteers, says his approach is simple: whenever young people or volunteers come forward with an idea or an activity they'd like to try, his aim is to find a way to say "yes."

The centre is also creating opportunities beyond adventure. Through an apprenticeship programme, young people have been able to train and develop careers in outdoor activity leadership. One apprentice has even progressed into a management role on site. A great example of how environments like this can help young people build skills for the future.

Accessibility is a key focus. The team work hard to ensure activities can be adapted so that young people with mobility challenges or additional needs can still take part, including experiencing the climbing wall and other activities. =

But what really stood out during the visit was the role volunteers play in making experiences like this possible.

Many adults first get involved in Scouting because their children join a group and then they stay because they discover how rewarding it can be.



Adventurers start young at Woodhouse Park

One volunteer I spoke to joined when her son was a Beaver. Years later her son is now a Group Lead Volunteer, and she is still involved alongside her husband. When I asked what her favourite part of Scouting was, she didn't hesitate.

"Camping," she said. "And encouraging kids to try new things."

It's a sentiment shared by many volunteers. The County Lead Volunteer, who was also visiting the event, said he often attends activity days like this so he can be reminded of why he does what he does.

## Challenge

Watching young people challenge themselves, support each other and achieve things they didn't think they could do is at the heart of Scouting.

During the Adventure Days, even the youngest members of Scouting were getting involved. Squirrels as young as four years old were proudly taking on the climbing wall, supported by volunteers and instructors as they challenged themselves to reach the top. For many, it was their first time trying an activity like this, and watching their confidence grow with every step was a powerful reminder of how Scouting helps young people build resilience and believe in what they can achieve.

The team at Woodhouse Park are keen to welcome more local Scout groups from Avon to experience everything the site has to offer. They have even offered free camping opportunities for Avon groups who might otherwise struggle with the cost of camps, helping ensure that cost is never a barrier to adventure.

Experiences like those taking place at Woodhouse Park show

young people climb higher than they thought possible, volunteers are the people who make Scouting happen.

If you've ever looked at places like Woodhouse Park and thought "that looks incredible," you could be part of it.

Volunteering in Scouts isn't just about supporting young people; it's also about being part of the adventure yourself. Whether it's helping at weekly meetings, joining camps and activities, being on a trustee board or sharing skills and hobbies, there's a place for everyone.

Because Scouting isn't just for young people it's for the adults who help make the adventure possible too.

**Want to be part of the adventure? Whether that is at the forefront or behind the scenes, Scout groups across Avon are always looking for volunteers. For more information, email [volunteer@avonscouts.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@avonscouts.org.uk)**

what Scouting is all about. Adventure, confidence, teamwork and creating opportunities for young people to grow.

But these experiences only happen because adults give their time to make them possible.

Scout groups are always looking for more volunteers to help create opportunities like these.

From lighting campfires and supporting activities to helping

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## TURNER'S VISION

# Look out – here comes the sun!

LIVING in Britain we sometimes forget just how bright the sun can be, largely because we spend half the year wondering where it's gone.

Now I'm not sure about you, but with the wet start to the year I barely had a reason (excuse?) to wear my sunglasses. It's been such a relief to have even a few days of sunshine and be able to dust off my sunglasses and enjoy clear, glare free vision, out in the sun.

I say dust off, metaphorically of course. I don't imagine anyone

reading this would actually expect me to have a dusty pair of sunglasses, although I will confess that after a busy holiday or burst of gardening I may well need to give my sunglasses a thorough deep clean.

Good sunglasses don't just reduce glare - they protect your eyes from UV damage and make outdoor vision far more comfortable. Of course you can squint your way through bright sunshine - but decent sunglasses mean you don't have to.

For this year, and due in no small part to the fact that I had another birthday last year, I needed my first varifocal sunglasses. Previously, I have kidded myself that my old faithful Ray-Bans, with brilliant distance vision correction, could also be worn for reading too. This is clearly no longer the case.

Whilst we all like to hold on to our youth, myself included, my new, Oakley frames with our Brunel 10\* All Vision sunglasses give me both the range and protection that I need without straining or needing to grow

my arm length. It is of course a revelation being able to see both far and near out in the sun, much as I can in my everyday varifocal glasses.

I can now say that whether I'm driving, using my phone or relaxing reading in the sun, I can see again at all distances clearly and comfortably.

If any of this sounds familiar, whether it's struggling to read your phone in bright sunshine, or realising that your arms just aren't quite long enough anymore, it may well be time to have your eyes properly checked.

At Turners Opticians we take the time to assess your eyes thoroughly and recommend the right lens solution for how you actually live day to day. The right lenses can genuinely transform how comfortable and effortless your vision feels.

So if you're thinking your sunglasses, or perhaps your everyday glasses could be working a little better for you, we'd be delighted to help.

To find out more or to book an appointment, visit our website



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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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# Friends conquer Kilimanjaro for Cameron

TWO friends have raised more than £3,300 in memory of a Downend teenager by climbing Africa's tallest mountain.

Jo Robb, of Mangotsfield, and Kim Dixon, of Warmley, took six days to reach the summit of Kilimanjaro, which at 5,895m (19,341ft) is the highest free-standing peak in the world.

They took on the challenge to raise money for the Cameron Williams Foundation, which aims to help men talk about their mental health, and charity Suicide Prevention UK.

Former Stanbridge Primary and Downend School pupil Cameron, who was 19, took his own life in 2024 after being left devastated by the death of his friend Tyler Carley in a lorry crash the previous year.

Cameron was not physically injured in the crash, but was left with survivor's guilt and post-traumatic stress disorder, which he hid from his family and friends.

The foundation was set up by Cameron's mum Melissa Care, his aunt Amelia Care and their mum, Karen Parker, to keep his memory alive by helping other men find help with their mental health when they need it.

Jo's daughter Millie was Cameron's girlfriend and he worked at their family business, the Window Hub in Staple Hill.

Jo, an advanced nurse practitioner based at Kingswood Health Centre, said: "Standing

on the roof of Africa is something I will never forget, but the journey to get there was far more than just a physical challenge.

"There were moments during that climb where I questioned whether I could go on. Fatigue, cold, and the mental strain all combined to push me to my limits. But it was also in those moments that I found my reason for being there.

"Knowing the cause behind every step gave us strength when we needed it most. It reminded me that while this climb was temporary, the struggles many people face every day are far greater—and often invisible.

"Reaching the top wasn't just about completing the climb - it was about honouring Cameron, raising awareness, and proving to ourselves that even in the most difficult moments, there is a way forward.

"If sharing our story encourages even one person to reach out for help or to check in on someone else, then every step of that climb was worth it."

Jo and Kim thanked everyone who has donated and sent messages of encouragement.

They have an online fundraising page which is still taking donations, at [tinyurl.com/3s7ra7ch](https://tinyurl.com/3s7ra7ch).

The total raised stood at £3,321 as the Voice went to print.



Jo Robb and Kim Dixon at the summit of Kilimanjaro

## TURNERS HEARING CARE BLOG

### The sun's out... but why do my ears feel blocked?



THERE'S something about that first proper spell of sunshine in the UK that lifts the mood, isn't there? The garden starts calling, sunglasses come out, and suddenly everything feels a little lighter.

But interestingly, this time of year is also when I start hearing a familiar phrase in practice:

"My ears feel a bit blocked... I thought it might just be hay fever?"

And sometimes, it is. But quite often, ear wax is playing a quiet (and slightly annoying) supporting role.

Spring brings a few subtle changes that can affect our ears. Warmer air, increased pollen, and spending more time outdoors can all influence how the ear canal behaves. Add in a bit of natural dehydration (we tend to drink less than we think), and ear wax can become a little drier, stickier, and more prone to building up.

Then there's the classic combination: a bit of wax + a bit of pollen-related congestion = ears that feel full, muffled, or just not quite right.

It's not uncommon for people to notice it when they're out enjoying themselves, chatting in a pub garden, on a walk, or wondering why the birds sound slightly less enthusiastic than usual!

Now, a gentle reminder: ear wax isn't the enemy. It's there to protect your ears. But when it builds up or gets a bit stubborn, it can start to affect your hearing and comfort.

This is where professional microsuction comes in. It's quick, precise, and far kinder to your ears than cotton buds (which, as you know, tend to make things worse rather than better).

So if things sound a little muted, or your ears feel blocked as we head into the brighter months, it's well worth getting them checked.

After all, spring is full of lovely sounds, birds, laughter, the odd distant lawnmower...

It would be a shame to miss them. Get in touch with Turners Opticians and book in to see me - I'd love to help you hear clearly again!

*Debbie Campbell*

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

## Blocked Ears Don't Fix Themselves



  
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**April 1**

■ **SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE MINES RESEARCH GROUP** meets at the Miners Institute, Badminton Road, Coalpit Heath. Talk: Miners, Accidents, Diseases, and (no) Compensation, by Rev Roy Crew, starts at about 8.15pm (following AGM at 7.30pm). Non-members welcome - £4 each (cash).

**April 14**

■ **SODBURY AND DISTRICT FLOWER ARRANGEMENT SOCIETY** practice class, 'Spring Parallel' arrangement, Old Grammar School Rooms, Chipping Sodbury, 7.30pm. Also April 28, demonstration with Mary Gibson, same time and place. All welcome, non members £5. More information from rosemary.cummins2@gmail.com.

**April 19**

■ **FRENCHAY 10K RACE** from UWE Glenside campus, Fishponds, to Snuff Mills, Vassalls Park, Frenchay Village and Blackberry Hill. Starts 11am. Raising money for Bristol Mind, 1625 Independent People and Freewheelers emergency volunteer service. More details and entries at frenchay10k.co.uk.

**April 26**

■ **CAR BOOT SALE**, Mangotsfield School, Rodway Hill, 10am-1pm. £5 per car, £10 per van, £1 entry per adult. Raising money for a new school minibus! More details on Friends of Mangotsfield School Facebook.

**April 30**

■ **HOME-START BRISTOL & SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE** training course for volunteers to support families with under 5s starts at The Greenway Centre, Southmead, every Thursday for four weeks, 9.30am-2.30pm. More details at www.homestartbsg.org.uk, email admin@homestartbsg.org.uk or call 0117 950 1170.

**May 3-4**

■ **SCARECROW TRAIL, PUCKLECHURCH**. Trail map, tickets and entry forms at St Thomas a Becket church from 11.30am Sunday, 10am Monday. Family ticket £5, or £2 adult, £1 child/student. Return forms by 3pm Monday.

**May 29-30**

■ **PUCKLECHURCH PLAYERS** present Off the Hook by Derek Benfield at Pucklechurch Community Centre, 7.30pm Tickets £10. Book via eventbrite.

**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 10.15pm. 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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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 [beechmerebelles@gmail.com](mailto:beechmerebelles@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](mailto: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](https://www.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 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](http://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](mailto:staplehillmethodist@hotmail.co.uk) or [www.staplehillmethodist.com](http://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](http://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](http://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.

# Your views help shape change



KNOWING how broken the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) support system is, I have collated views from local parents and schools.

This included a specific 'Coffee with Claire' event and online survey last year, which I shared with the Education Secretary.

I was pleased to receive a letter from her, recognising our community's influence in shaping new significant proposals for improving SEND support.

These involve a complete overhaul of the system - unrecognisable from the failed one where parents have to battle for support for their child - with expert support as a new

standard in mainstream schools, backed by a £3.7 billion investment to expand specialist support.

In the House of Commons, I asked the Education Secretary how local parents and others could help further shape these proposals. She confirmed she wants to hear your thoughts as the next step, and I will organise another local event shortly.

I was also proud to raise the experience of Stoke Gifford mum Christine Lote in the House of Commons. Her incurable stage 4 cancer diagnosis could not be considered when allocating her daughter's primary school place.

The Schools Minister confirmed that a new school admissions consultation will look at this.

I spoke in a debate on health systems in Gaza, calling for our Government to continue to do everything possible to help vulnerable children.

I've been working hard for you across our constituency, with my team and I working on 793 new cases.

I held my latest 'Coffee with Claire' event on crime and anti-social behaviour with Clare Moody, our Police and Crime Commissioner, in Emersons Green.

I believe politics and Parliament should belong to everyone, so was pleased to welcome students from UWE, Coniston Primary

School and those who are home-educated to Parliament.

Locally, I met with South Gloucestershire Council cabinet member Sean Rhodes to discuss real progress on the Hambrook Junction as part of our joined-up work.

Since 2019, two consecutive years of legally safe air quality data has been required for restrictions to end, but not met before now.

I've contacted government ministers to make sure the council have the information they need on next steps if this is now - as we all hope - confirmed shortly.

As the first woman to serve our community in Parliament, I joined an International Women's Day panel on women's experiences in typically male-dominated sectors. There's some real progress, with 40% of MPs women, but still more to do.

It was great to visit Winterbourne Academy for a wide-ranging Q&A session with students.

You can get in touch anytime at [claire.hazelgrove.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:claire.hazelgrove.mp@parliament.uk).



Claire Hazelgrove welcomes economics students from UWE to Parliament.



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# Save the date for our Sizzler

LYDE Green Community Centre is already preparing for one of the highlights of the social calendar - and is inviting people to get involved. The Summer Sizzler will return on Saturday July 18, from 11am to 4pm. Organised by the Lyde Green Community Association, the event promises a fun-filled day for residents of all ages, and is set to bring the community together for a celebration of local talent, creativity and family entertainment.

The popular annual event will feature a lively mix of indoor and outdoor stalls, live performances and interactive activities. Visitors can enjoy free graffiti workshops, meet petting ponies, watch shows and dance performances, and explore a wide range of local stalls, games and family activities.

There will also be rides and plenty of food and drink available throughout the day.

The Summer Sizzler has become a much-loved community event, attracting families, local groups and businesses from across the area. It provides a fantastic opportunity for residents to meet neighbours, support local stallholders and enjoy a day of entertainment in the heart of Lyde Green.

Best of all, the event is free to attend, ensuring everyone in the community can come along and enjoy the festivities.

There is still time for local businesses, community groups and craft makers to book a stall.

Spaces are available for £15, with priority given to those based in the local area.

Anyone interested in taking part can email [events@lydegreenca.org](mailto:events@lydegreenca.org) for more information.

Residents are encouraged to save the date and join the celebrations for what promises to be a vibrant day of family fun, entertainment and community spirit at Lyde Green Community Centre.

Helen Crew

# Let's dance!

IN March, Angela Rippon launched a national campaign to inspire everyone in the UK to embrace dance as a way to improve their health, connect with others, and have fun.

Supported by leading organisations such as the Sport and Recreation Alliance, NHS, and Parkinson's UK, its mission is to get more people dancing, regardless of age, fitness level, or experience.

We're fortunate to have several u3a dance groups in our local area: two 'Daytime Disco' groups, one soul music group and three tap dancing groups. Tuition is provided at the tap dancing groups but all the other groups are informal – you dance to as many tracks as you like, and sit out the rest.

Don't worry, you don't have to be a "good dancer" to join in – no-one will judge you.

However, we do promise that you'll leave the meeting smiling!

If you are interested in trying one of the groups, send me an email at the address below and I'll reply with the full details.

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 don't have to be a member to attend.

These are usually scheduled from 2-4pm, and in April you'll find us at Orchard Coffee & Bakery in St George on Friday 10th, the Market Café and Lounge in Kingswood on the 14th, the Crafty Egg in Fishponds on the 22nd, Mokka Downend on the 27th and Hillfields Park Community Centre on the 30th. We'll also be at Ivy's Café, Hanham Hall between 10am and noon on the 24th.

If you can't make it to a social, send an email to [learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk](mailto:learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk) if you'd like to find out more about the groups mentioned or u3a in general.

Membership is half-price from April 1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



John Baden-Daintree



Michelle Baden-Daintree

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**SHORTWOOD VILLAGE WI**

IN February we had a visit from David and Zillah, who told us all about the Glebe Field in Siston, which is an ongoing active, community-led archaeological site.

To date, this has revealed significant Medieval and earlier occupation, including Saxon and British. Ongoing excavations have uncovered stone-lined pits, dry stone walls and numerous artefacts, with animal remains dating back to at least 741 AD.

In March, we welcomed Heather from Heather Norman Hats in Chipping Sodbury.

Heather told us of her background as a teacher and then a career change as a milliner, following in her mother's footsteps.

She demonstrated various materials and techniques, and showed us a collection of different types of handmade bespoke hats.

These included men's caps in flat and Peaky Blinders-style, and bespoke hats for ladies days' at many racecourses, including Ascot.

The evening finished with a customary quiz, called 'All About Hats'.

Our trip to Oakham Treasures will take place in April.

We are a small, friendly bunch, so if you would like to see for yourself, we will welcome you to our next meeting on April 9 at 7.30 pm, in the vestry, Shortwood Village Chapel, Main Road, Shortwood.

For more information email millhousejoinery@aol.com, with the heading Shortwood Village WI.

**Lynne Miller**

**RODWAY RUBIES WI**

OUR March meeting began with a presentation of a cheque for £1,500 to Hannah from Parkinson's UK Bristol branch, which was the culmination of our fundraising efforts for 2025/26.

The cheque was presented by our committee member, Molly Bishop, who has been liaising with the charity this year.

Hannah gave us some facts and information about the work the local Parkinson's branch does to help those dealing with this illness, their carers and families, which was interesting to hear.

Our charity for 26/27 was decided on by our members at the meeting and is BUST, which is affiliated with the Bristol Breast Care Centre and raises money to

assist the centre and the many women who have recourse to its facilities. It is totally run by volunteers, and every penny raised is spent on supporting patient care.

It uses its funds to support innovation and the purchase of new technology, such as state-of-the-art scanners, and also contributing to pioneering surgery.

**Jane Eldon**

**MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES**

OUR March meeting was musical, as we welcomed Frankie Johns' grandson to entertain us.

He started by singing Hello, Dolly!, and then a range of ballads from the 40s and 50s, from singers such as Frank Sinatra, Matt Monro and more - plus some upbeat numbers we all joined in with.

We have our own Dolly Mixtures greeting cards and decided to send all Dollies one with a heart in on Valentine's Day. This was a real lift to all the membership and brightened their day.

Our number 19 bus trip to the Botanist in Bath is almost upon us.

In June we have booked a bespoke tour to explore

subterranean passageways under Corn Street and St Nicholas Market. This time we have included partners. It will be an interesting look at Bristol during the second world war.

For more information about Mangotsfield Dolly Mixtures email carol@applause.co.uk.

**Carol Coombs**

**MANGOTSFIELD COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

MANGOTSFIELD Community Association will now hold its annual spin cycle fundraiser at the Red Lion pub in May.

Renovation works at the pub over Easter mean that the 'Red Lion to Lisbon' event will now take place on Saturday and Sunday, May 2 and 3.

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**

**Celebrate Easter With the Churches in Emersons Green & Mangotsfield**

**April 2 | 7:30 PM** | Mangotsfield and Castle Green URC, Cossham St. (Maundy Thursday 2026)  
A 'Tenebrae' or 'shadows' service of quiet reflection on the 'Last Supper.' With readings, hymns, songs and candles. Led with Emersons Green Baptist Church.

**April 3 | 10:30 AM** | Resound Church, Blackhorse Rd. (Good Friday 2026)  
An hour of interactive prayer and worship reflecting on Good Friday and the cross. Hot Cross Buns served from 10am.

**April 4 | 7:30 PM** | St. James' Church Mangotsfield, St. James' St. (Easter Saturday 2026)  
A time for quiet reflection around the garden tomb.

**April 5 | Various times** | Emersons Green Baptist: (Village Hall) 10.30 am; Mangotsfield & Castle Green URC 10.30 am; Resound 10.30 am; St. James' Mangotsfield 8 am & 10.30 am (Easter Sunday 2026)

You are warmly invited to any or all of these celebrations, which we offer together. St. James' are also offering a community breakfast 9am Easter Sunday: for breakfast click the QR code.

**Happy Easter**

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# Next stop: better buses

REGULAR readers of my column will know I am determined to build a transport network people can trust.

It is time to tackle unreliable journeys and deliver reliable, affordable services with one ticket and one timetable.

We want to help more people across our region get home sooner, get out into nature more and explore the best the West has to offer, rather than being stuck waiting for a bus or in traffic.

Now, though, it is time to hear from you.

We are asking for your views on what matters most when it comes to travelling by bus, as we develop our Bus Plan to improve services across the West.

What is most important to you when it comes to your local bus services? Do you want them to be more reliable, or more frequent?

Do you want more green buses or to be able to get on multiple routes with one ticket?

I am determined to have a bus network we can be proud of, and for that we need you to have your say.

We want to hear from residents, businesses, bus users - and people who don't get the bus, too - about what matters most,

to help shape improvements across the network.

We have secured a record-breaking investment in transport in the West and are planning to invest £150 million into bus improvements.

The best way to spend that money will be shaped by you.

Visit [haveyoursaywest.co.uk/betterbuses](http://haveyoursaywest.co.uk/betterbuses) online and have your say, from March 30 until May 10.

Paper copies are also available at Bristol and Bath bus stations.

You can also contact your local library to see if they have any in stock.

Since I was elected, we have delivered more than £2 million in savings for families through the Kids Go Free holiday scheme and the £1 child fare cap, which is set to continue for another three years.

The Diamond Pass, for older people and people with disabilities, has also been extended and we are going to continue funding free bus travel for care leavers up to the age of 25.

Thanks to successful bids for funding, we are also one of the best-funded regions in the country when it comes to the number of electric buses in the region.



**Metro Mayor Helen Godwin**  
writes for the Voice

Soon there will be 250 green buses across Bristol and Bath, meaning that more modern, reliable bus travel is delivering cleaner air and quieter streets too.

People are already seeing and feeling the changes we have made to our bus network, on their journeys and in their pockets. But we need to do more.

With your feedback we can make sure to get the most out of our huge investment into regional transport and deliver the bus network we all deserve.

Please do take a few minutes to have your say on what you want from your local service, because the next stop is better buses!

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# A local hero: Bill Demmery

**JENNY ALCOCK** writes about a relative who put his renowned goalkeeping talents to an unusual use – to save a young boy's life in Staple Hill

BILL Demmery was my great uncle.

He was born in Kingswood in 1876. His family had relocated from South Wales to establish a shoe and boot-making business, which operated a factory and shop in Staple Hill.

Boot-making was a significant employment source in the Kingswood area of Bristol.

At the beginning of the 20th century, Kingswood boot and shoe factories employed over 11,000 workers, making it the third largest centre for boot making in the United Kingdom.

From a young age, Billy was involved in the shoe trade. Upon completing his schooling, he was duly apprenticed to become a cordwainer (making shoes from new leather) and cobbler (repairing and altering shoes) in the family business.

However, Billy's true passion lay in football, where he played as goalkeeper for his local amateur clubs, Warmley (1894-7), Staple Hill (1897-8), and Bristol East (1899-1905).

His significant breakthrough came in 1905, when he was signed by Bristol City and made his debut against Manchester United in the Football League.

He went on to play in 32 League games, helping Bristol City achieve their highest ever League finish, reaching the FA Cup Final and finishing in second place.

In 1908 he joined Bristol Rovers, where he played for two seasons.

In his senior career he represented various Welsh clubs, including Aberdare, Treharris, and Douglas, before retiring from the sport in 1919, at the age of 42.

Billy became a local hero when he fearlessly saved the life of a young boy in Staple Hill.



**Bill Demmery (top row, second right) in a Bristol City team photo**

A local rhyme was commonly sung by children, which went as follows:

*The boy was on the tramlines,  
The driver rang the bell,  
The tram went on to Staple Hill,  
The boy to Arnos Vale.*

This rhyme would have come true had it not been for Bill Demmery.

A young boy with no road sense was indeed on the tramlines and quite unaware of the approaching tram, on its way to the terminus.

There was no way that the tram could stop in time at the speed it was travelling. It seemed that a tragedy was inevitable.

Whatever could be done? Bill knew what to do. Quickly, he ran out of his shop, delivered one of his famous goal kicks to the boy, and landed him on the other side of the street. Then he ran on behind, narrowly missing the tram!

Already famous as a professional footballer, Bill quickly rose to the status of a local hero and subsequently became a celebrity within the Staple Hill community.

At the end of his football career, Bill returned to Bristol and continued in the shoe and boot

trade until his retirement.

He passed away in 1952 and was cremated at Arnos Vale.

I am indebted to my father's autobiography, "Ralph Pritchard: Memories of My Early Years," for providing the account of William and the boy on the tram lines.



**Portrait of Bill Demmery**

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

To get in touch visit [www.downendchap.org](http://www.downendchap.org), email [big.gin@yahoo.com](mailto:big.gin@yahoo.com) or write to CHAP, 49 Overhill Road, Downend, Bristol, BS16 5DS.



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# Dragons win under-16s title

THE spring has sprung, the grass has riz... and at long last, the football is back where it belongs!

After an exceptionally wet winter that kept everyone guessing, Downend Flyers have finally begun to feel the tide turn.

Warmer days have returned, pitches are playable again, and the beautiful game is making its long-awaited comeback on real grass — just as it should be.

Like many clubs, our women's teams have battled a season of postponements that created quite the fixture pile-up.

The good news? It means even more chances to watch them in action before the season wraps up. The First Team continue their push to secure a Step 6 place for the eighth consecutive year, while the Reserves and the As eye strong top-half finishes in their respective divisions.

You'll find all upcoming fixtures at [downendflyers.com](http://downendflyers.com).

In the girls' setup, our U16s Dragons have been among the first to reap the benefits of drier pitches, as they have been crowned Bristol Girls' League Division B champions, with three games to spare!

Meanwhile, in the U15s A Division, our Harriers are locked in a thrilling title race of



**The Downend Flyers U16s Dragons team and coaches celebrating their Division B title.**

their own, as they chase back-to-back league wins in what promises to be a nail-biting finale.

Across the intermediate age groups, several Flyers squads have been gearing up for Spring Cup finals at the end of March, while our youngest players continue to remind us what it's all about — joy, laughter, friendship, and football played with big smiles every single week.

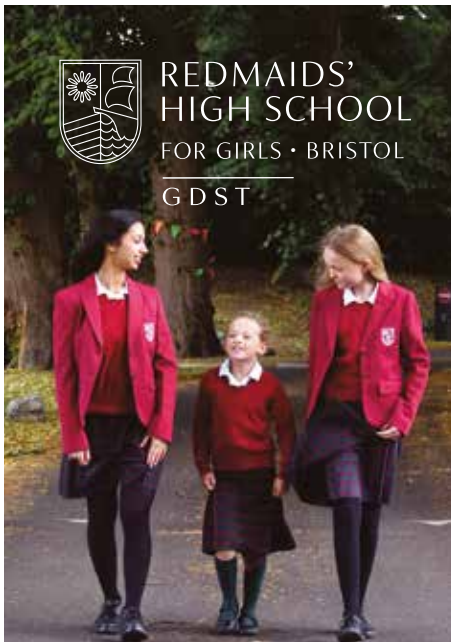
Behind the scenes, preparations are in

full swing for our annual girls' and women's tournament in late June, and we're excited to be building a brand-new U18s team for next season.

To get involved or learn more, head to [downendflyers.com/contact](http://downendflyers.com/contact).

As the pitches dry and the cheers grow louder, Flyers football is soaring again — and the best is yet to come.

**Duncan Gardner**



## Whole School Visiting Morning



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# Mangos exit two cups and play-off hopes end

MANGOTSFIELD United's faint hopes of making the Hellenic League play-offs have been dashed after several poor results.

The team was also knocked out of two cup competitions in ten days, and has lost four senior players in recent weeks.

With one month of the season to go, manager Ollie Price is fielding some of the club's Under-18 players to fill out the side for the rest of the campaign.

The Mangos crashed out of the Marsh Cup to Worcester Raiders on penalties after a 2-2 draw at Cossham Street in February.

Brandon Bak fired home at the back post after 28 minutes, following a good move down the right, but Worcester levelled eight minutes later. It was an even game afterwards, but late goals from Lewis Powell (89) and an even later one from the Raiders

took the game to a shoot-out, which the visitors won 5-3.

A week later, the Mangos travelled across the north of Bristol to relegation-threatened Cribbs, a must-win match for a serious play-off challenge.

It was a tough game, but Brandon Bak came up with the all-important winning goal with six minutes to go, the Mangos winning 1-0.

However, just three days later the team crashed inexplicably 6-4 at home to near neighbours and Toolstation League Division 1 side Bitton in the GFA Trophy.

Mircea Lea (36 & 55), Owen Pritchard (53) and Brandon Bak (77) were the Mangos' goalscorers.

The defeat to a side a level below the Mangos in the Non-League pyramid came as several senior players, including George Kellow, Jacob Spence and Aaron Parsons, started to leave the club.

Spirits were raised in the next game, a 3-1 home win against lowly Lydney Town.

Brandon Bak bagged a hat-trick for the Mangos on 35, 70 & 84 minutes, with O'Rian Reid scoring for Lydney just before the break.

But, as has been the pattern for much of this season, a win was followed by a defeat a week later, with the team going down 1-0 at mid-table Gloucester side Longlevens.

The only goal came on 33 minutes and, try

as they might, the Mangos could not get back into the game as the hosts stood firm.

The home game against promotion-chasing Slimbridge turned out to be a total disaster, with manager Ollie Price forced to field five U18 players, some of them making their first team debuts.

Despite Mangotsfield going ahead through a Harry Simons goal on six minutes, Slimbridge were 3-1 up at half-time.

Veteran striker Lewis Powell got one back on 49 minutes to give the Mangos some hope, but Slimbridge stepped up a gear and made it 4-2 six minutes later. Further goals on 62, 76 and 85 minutes completed a 7-2 rout for the visitors, who topped the Hellenic League table as the Voice went to print.

Away trips to promotion contenders Worcester Raiders and Droitwich Spa still await the Mangos before the season ends.

**Dave Smale**

## Remaining fixtures

**March 28: Worcester Raiders (away)**  
**April 4: Royal Wootton Bassett Town (home)**  
**April 6: Thornbury Town (H)**  
**April 11: Westfields (A)**  
**April 18: Droitwich Spa (A)**

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Cleve take on Old Redcliffians

# Bears host rugby stars of the future

YOUNG players from 22 rugby clubs from across the South West had a taste of competitive action and a professional environment at an event hosted by Premiership side Bristol Bears.

Mangotsfield-based Cleve and Dings Crusaders, of Frenchay, were among the clubs who sent sides to the Defender Rising Stars Cup at Bristol Grammar School's Failand Sports Ground, in March.

The annual Under-11s and Under-12s festival is one of a series of nationwide events, and was hosted by Bristol Bears in partnership with PREM Rugby to help develop the grassroots game.

A spokesperson for PREM Rugby said: "It was a day of competitive rugby which showcased the passion and commitment of the game's next generation of players.

"For many of the youngsters, it was their first time stepping onto a club pitch. Cheered on by proud parents and coaches, the teams played with determination, flair, and a real sense of camaraderie."

Organisers said the U11 teams were judged on rugby's core values of teamwork, respect, enjoyment, discipline and sportsmanship, focusing on development and participation rather than match results.

The U12 teams had a competitive tournament which was won by Old Bristolians.

Bristol Bears stars Fitz Harding and Benhard Janse van Rensburg presented prizes at an awards ceremony at the end of festival.

Fitz said: "I've been so impressed by the skill and passion for the game displayed by these young players. They may be at the start of their rugby journeys but many are already living and breathing the values of our game like respect and teamwork.

"Competitions like this really benefit the future of our sport. The playing experience and environment helps young players grow and develop into the next generation of players."

Cleve RFC coach Nick Bull said: "It's been really good. It's very well organised.

"Everyone's in good spirits, it's nice. They loved having the Bears guys come down.

"Overall we are really impressed."

Dings Crusaders coach Gary Morton said: "It's really good. There's been great team play, it's well organised and it's really nice having the Bears players here, the kids love it."

Other clubs taking part ranged from Frampton Cotterell in South Gloucestershire and Whitehall in Bristol to Wellington in Somerset and Newbury in Berkshire.

More than 125,000 children have taken part in the Defender Rising Stars Festival since 2008, with some going on to play professionally.



Dings Crusaders take on Clifton



Cleve U11s line up on the pitch



Dings Crusaders U12s with Bears stars Fitz Harding and Benhard Janse van Rensburg



Cleve U12s. All pictures courtesy of PREM Rugby



# What happens when 5,000 Chiropractors go to Las Vegas?

EVERY so often in your career you get an experience that reminds you just how big your profession really is.

Last month I had the privilege of travelling to Las Vegas for the Parker Seminars, the largest chiropractic conference in the world. Imagine more than 5,000 chiropractors from across the globe gathering in one place to learn, share ideas and help push the profession forward.

It was quite a sight.

For many UK chiropractors, this event is looked upon as a bit of a pilgrimage. You hear about Parker Seminars early in your career and think: one day I'd love to go to that. I was incredibly fortunate this year to attend as a VIP guest in my role as President of the British Chiropractic Association, which meant I even got a bit of backstage access to the speakers.

Now, Las Vegas is a pretty extraordinary place. Everything is bigger, louder and brighter than anywhere else. It's the only city I know where you can walk past the Eiffel Tower, a Roman palace and a Venetian canal all within about ten minutes... and still somehow be inside a hotel.

But the real reason we were there was to learn.

One of the highlights of the week was hearing from Steven Bartlett, entrepreneur and host of the

Diary of a CEO podcast. His talk was fascinating. He spoke about his humble upbringing and how success often comes from being willing to fail – sometimes repeatedly – before you finally get things right.

One point really stuck with me. After building a hugely successful company, Steven realised he didn't want to be known as the CEO of just one type of business. So he stepped away and went on to create successful companies across completely different industries. It was a powerful reminder that growth often means being brave enough to try something new.

Another surreal moment was meeting boxing legend Sugar Ray Leonard. It's not every day you come face-to-face with someone whose dedication, resilience and discipline helped make them one of the greatest athletes in history.

But perhaps the most valuable part of the week wasn't the famous speakers. It was the conversations with chiropractors from America, Europe and Asia. We talked about the challenges facing healthcare, shared ideas and discussed how we can continue to improve patient care.

It's always reassuring to realise that, wherever you go in the world, chiropractors are all trying to do the same thing: help people move better, feel better and live healthier lives.

Of course, this being Las Vegas, my week in the Nevada desert ended in style and a splash of glamour.

The final evening finished with a huge rooftop celebration with thousands of chiropractors overlooking the famous fountains of the Bellagio Hotel. It was wild watching this amazing aquatic show while standing in a crowd of chiropractors from all over the world, all celebrating the fact that

we're all part of the same profession. It felt pretty special.

A massive thank you must go to Bill Morgan, one of the most influential chiropractors on the planet, who very kindly hosted me during the event.

Now, you might be wondering what all this has to do with Cleve Chiropractic back here in Bristol, thousands of miles away from the bright lights of Las Vegas.

Well, one of the most important things in healthcare is that should never stop learning. Conferences like this bring together the best minds in the profession, sharing the latest research, treatment ideas and rehabilitation strategies.

The knowledge doesn't stay in Vegas. It comes home with us.

So while the setting may have been slightly more glamorous than our clinic on a rainy Tuesday morning in Bristol, the goal is exactly the same: helping our patients stay active, move well and live healthier lives.

And if there's one thing I took away from the week, it's this: whether you're an entrepreneur, an Olympic boxer, or a chiropractor from Bristol... success usually comes from the same place – hard work, resilience and a willingness to keep learning.

Although I must admit, the Bellagio fountains were a nice bonus!

Now it's back to the clinic and the day-to-day mission to look after all our lovely patients... that's always a special place to be.

**Tim, Clinic Director, Cleve Chiropractic**

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# Cleve comeback sees off Keynsham

CLEVE won away at old rivals Keynsham thanks to a relentless second-half performance.

Keynsham looked well-prepared for the game and were surrounded by fans as their ground basked in the mid-March sunshine.

The game started with both teams keeping the ball well outside the red zone, before Keynsham slotted over a penalty.

Urged on by their crowd, they camped on Cleve's line for 10 minutes until Cleve made an error and they went over to lead 8-0.

Cleve then lost Lewis Beer and brought on Matt Lane, who had an immediate impact.

After Cleve scored under the post, Archie Staples - kicking in the absence of Matt Jarvis - converted to bring them within a point but Keynsham immediately reacted, their winger scoring to make it 13-7.

Cleve then went through a bad period of penalties and mistakes and, after a number of scrums, Keynsham moved the ball wide to score.

The second half saw a different Cleve, more determined and precise, and back to full strength.

Josh Davies scored under tremendous pressure to make it 18-14.

Matt Lane was making deep runs into Keynsham's defensive line.

Keynsham scored to go 25-14 up but this did not affect Cleve's mindset, as they relentlessly



Harry O'Donnell linking with the backs during Cleve's win over Wotton Bassett

pursued the Keynsham try line.

A lineout, then catch and drive brought pressure on Keynsham's try line that saw Cleve go over.

Another try came after Cleve moved the ball to the wing, bringing them to within a point of the hosts as they desperately fought for the win.

Keynsham, really under pressure, gave away a penalty which Archie put over to put Cleve in front, 27 to 25.

Cleve, now on top, scored a late try to make the final score Keynsham 25, Cleve 34, after a performance a veteran player in the stands described as outstanding.

The match followed a comfortable 61-7 home win over Royal Wootton Bassett II, and a 36-10 home win over Witney.

Against Wootton Bassett Cleve opened the scoring after

5 minutes, with tries from Liam McGrath, Josh Davis, Matt Jarvis and Tom Gollop putting them 26-0 up at half time.

Theo Garnet and prop Steve Bush - following a 25m burst down the wing - scored before Cleve received a yellow and red card to go down to 13 players in the 65th minute.

They still scored three more tries, through Garnet, Will Warman and Lewis Beer. Jarvis converted all five second-half tries to take his points for the game to 21, before Wootton Bassett scored a converted try at the death.

In February Cleve's 2nd team edged out local rivals Yate 39-35 in a breathless, full-blooded contest that had everything from relentless defence to flowing attack, and late drama right up to the final whistle.

Cleve knew they were in for

a battle from the outset as Yate started with intent, moving the ball sharply and testing the home side's resolve, but Cleve's defensive line refused to buckle.

After soaking up pressure deep in their own half, Cleve clawed their way upfield and the breakthrough finally came when Neil 'Chuckie' Evans went over for the first try of the afternoon.

From there, Cleve were in the ascendancy, stretching the Yate defence. Tries from Dan Allaker and Hatib Jeldin kept them firmly in control, with Oakley Gwyther delivering a man-of-the-match performance that embodied the afternoon.

But Yate emerged after the break with renewed intensity and struck three times in quick succession, turning the match into a knife-edge contest as tension gripped the Hayfields.

Cleve, however, showed the resolve that has become a hallmark of their season, returning to the disciplined defence, controlled phases and intelligent territory that have served them so well.

With the clock ticking down and the game in the balance, Cleve worked the ball wide after drawing in the Yate defence, found space in the corner and put Archie Walker over to seal the contest. The finish was met with a roar from the touchline, relief and celebration mixing in equal measure.

**Steve Bateman and Jonathan O'Hara**

## Andy steps down as cricket club chair

LONG-STANDING club servant Andy King has stood down as chair of Carsons and Mangotsfield Cricket Club.

Andy has seen many changes at the club, the most significant of which was the formation of a youth team. This has been the foundation of the club's success over the last few seasons and has secured the club's future.

Andy had enormous energy and enthusiasm for cricket, and Carsons and Mangotsfield in particular. The club owes a tremendous debt to Andy, who has given an enormous amount of time and effort to enable others to learn, play and enjoy the game.

New chair Craig Andrews intends to build on the foundations left by Andy and has started to diversify the cricket offered by the club, including indoor walking cricket and a ladies' cricket team with sessions being run on alternate weeks.

Craig said: "With Bristol being a host city for the women's World Cup, this is an exciting time for women's cricket, which is likely to be high on the summer sporting calendar. If you are interested in either women's cricket or walking cricket please get in contact with us."

Walking cricket is a new initiative encouraged by the Gloucestershire Cricket

Foundation to encourage new and older players to stay engaged in the game. It is a short-format game with a soft ball and the intention of plenty of involvement from the participants.

Both walking cricket and ladies are building towards the start of the new season, when sessions will be taking place outside.

Another new development is the appointment of a cricket development officer, Kieran Gallagher. Kieran's role is to bring a coordinated approach to training, lead adult coaching and help with the development of the youth players as they transition into adult cricket.

In addition to the current coaches, five club members have recently passed the foundation coaching level, which broadens the club's ability to provide sessions.

**Ian Coles**

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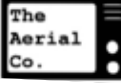
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