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May 2026, Edition — Issue 109

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



'Heroic' mum died saving loved ones

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

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

device.

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

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

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

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

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Scarecrows are a big success

The annual Scarecrow Competition and Trail in Pucklechurch drew big crowds and raised a record sum.

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Chance to visit new school

Residents are invited to take a look round the long-awaited secondary school in Lyde Green, which opens in September.

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Bid for homes thrown out

Councillors have voted against plans for 100 homes at Marsh Farm in Pucklechurch.

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Our July edition deadline is June
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behaviour.

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

A member of the



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

Date set for bridge opening

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mum 'made the ultimate sacrifice for others'

From Page 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



Emergency services vehicles inside the cordon

called in.

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

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

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

Begbrook Green Park.

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

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

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

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New school invites in the community

PEOPLE are being invited to take a look inside the new Lyde Green Community School.

The secondary school in Honeysuckle Road and a new primary school next door are currently being fitted out as a £58.3 million building project nears completion.

Both are due to open to pupils in September, with the secondary school expected to welcome around 140 Year 7 pupils and the primary school - a twin site for the existing Lyde Green Primary School in Willowherb Road - taking 60 Reception pupils.

Eventually the secondary school will have a capacity of 900 students across five year groups, with up to 420 at the primary.

People who would like to look around the new schools are being invited to come on organised tours on July 14 - between 3pm and 5pm for the community and between 5pm and 7pm for Year 5 children and their families.

Lyde Green Community School head teacher Tom Hill said: "We are delighted to invite



An aerial picture showing the new school buildings in the spring

members of the community, along with Year 5 children and their families, to take a tour of the new Lyde Green Community School.

"This is an exciting opportunity to explore the building ahead of our opening in September 2026. "Whether you are a local resident who has followed the development, a local business or community group

interested in using our facilities, or a family considering joining us, you are very welcome."

Places on the tours can be booked at the school's website, www.lydegreencs.org.uk.

Staff from the school visited the site in May to see how the work to make the school ready is progressing.

Mr Hill said: "It was fantastic to look around some of the



A classroom inside the new school

classrooms, including our science labs and art spaces, which are really starting to take shape.

"It is becoming so much easier to picture the vibrant learning environment our learners will enjoy from September.

"We cannot wait to welcome families into the building in July so they can see it for themselves."

The school is also hiring out facilities including a 3G sports pitch, grass pitches, multi-use games area, sports hall, drama and dance studios to clubs and community groups.

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Schools lock phones away

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

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

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

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

secondary schools.

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

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

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

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

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

"We want our students to grow into themselves without the anxiety of constant comparison, ensuring they leave

our classrooms with not just better grades, but better mental health and strong positive relationships."

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

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

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

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

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

CSET says one school already using the pouches reported an 80% decrease in cyberbullying, a 40% reduction in detentions for disruptive behaviour, and a 75%



One of the lockable pouches

drop in truancy.

Last year the head teacher of Lyde Green Community School announced that the new secondary school will be a phone-free environment when it opens in September.

All students will have to hand in their mobile phones at the start of the day and collect them at the end, with strict penalties for breaches.

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M32 repairs will last six years

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

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

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

busiest route into Bristol, which carries 85,000 vehicles a day, closed for three years.

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

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

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

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

Project manager Will Miller said National Highways is

committed "100%" to keeping the M32 open in both directions, as there is nowhere else that could cope with the amount of traffic that uses the motorway.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Skate park closed for two more months

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council expects it to be another two months before the Jamie Clapp memorial skate park in Emersons Green is back in use.

The skate park has been fenced off since April as the council carries out major works at the site next to Emersons Green Shopping Centre as part of the £6.5 million Linking the Greens project.

When finished the area will have new

paths and steps, upgraded street lighting, wildflower and tree planting and a 4m tall bronze sculpture.

The scheme aims to encourage more use of Newlands Bridge linking Emersons Green and Lyde Green, and upgrades on the other side have already been finished.

But it will not include reinstating the BMX track that previously stood next to the skate park, but had become overgrown in recent years. It has now been flattened.

The council says the skate park and path to the bridge has been fenced off "for the safety of the public and to ensure the works can be completed in a timely fashion without unreasonable delay".

It says it expects the work to finish at the end of July.



The fenced off area next to the skate park



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Plan for 100 homes is thrown out

COUNCILLORS have refused permission for plans to build 100 new houses on the outskirts of Pucklechurch.

Developers IM Land applied to South Gloucestershire Council for permission to build the homes at Marsh Farm, on a field at the corner of Feltham Road and Abson Road.

The site is currently protected as Green Belt land.

The developers and council planning officers said the site fell under the designation of “grey belt”, and should be built on

But members of the council’s strategic sites delivery committee voted against the planning permission at a meeting in May, citing concerns about the effect of the development on “glorious” views from the village.

Because officers had recommended approval for the plans, the application will now be referred to the council’s spatial planning committee, which can either overrule the decision or back it.

Michael Knott, representing the developers, told councillors: “The development would meet the golden rules for grey belt.

“The development would provide 50% of new homes as affordable, with new and improved public open space and sports provision, and with necessary improvements to infrastructure in the area.”

As well as new homes, the developers said they would build a village green, allotments, a community orchard and a children’s play area.

They are proposing to pay money towards improving local roads, supporting outdoor sports and the village hall.

But residents raised concerns that the new houses would pave the way for much more



The new estate, circled, would be on the eastern outskirts of Pucklechurch



The site is currently a field

development to the east of Pucklechurch.

Rosalind Abbott said: “What is to stop developers going on to the next field to the east, or the south, and all the way to Dyrham or Hinton or up to the A46?”

“There will be an increase in traffic, which is bad enough already. One hundred houses could quite easily mean 200 more cars.”

The farm was owned by Avon County Council and then sold in 1995, because the land was then in the Green Belt, and was protected from development.

However the government

has recently weakened these protections, calling some land on the edge of towns and villages ‘grey belt’.

The site is not included in the council’s draft Local Plan of places it considers to be suitable for development between now and 2041, which is currently undergoing a public examination by a government inspector, although a neighbouring site off Abson Road, for up to 60 homes, is in the plan.

Councillor Marilyn Palmer, whose Boyd Valley ward includes Pucklechurch, told the meeting enough sites were

already earmarked in South Gloucestershire to meet the district’s targets.

She said the farms east of Pucklechurch play an important role in protecting the village’s rural character, and cows were still grazing on the fields in the development site.

Cllr Palmer said: “If Marsh Farm is assessed as so-called grey belt land, then so is all of the farmland between Pucklechurch and Dyrham and Hinton.

“If the settlement boundary is breached, it will open the door to a raft of applications on adjoining farmland, and the glorious view will be lost forever.”

Concerns were also raised about a lack of public transport in the village, and road safety along the busy Feltham Road.

There is no direct service into Bristol, and cabinet councillor Chris Willmore told the meeting funding for the 525 bus service to Yate and Emersons Green wasn’t guaranteed beyond July.

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Plan hearings livestreamed

PUBLIC hearings on South Gloucestershire’s draft Local Plan are being livestreamed.

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

They are being held in front of a government inspector at Kingswood Civic Centre, with a total of 15 days of hearings held in three-day blocks on five separate

weeks.

Hearings started on May 19 - the next ones will be held from June 2 to 4 and from June 16 to 18.

The Local Plan is being opposed by campaigners who object to proposals to open Green Belt land near Shortwood, Siston and Warmley for development.

Developers who want to build on sites not in the draft Local Plan, including near Thornbury and Yate, are also making representations at the hearing.

In the meantime developers of some sites included in the plan have already started moves to obtain planning permission.

They include David Wilson Homes, which

wants to build 260 homes on land between the B4465, Cattybrook Road North and the Shortwood Quarry landfill site, north of Shortwood Hill.

The builders’ agent recently made a ‘screening request’ to the council to ask whether it needs to produce an environmental impact assessment for the site - the first stage in the application process for many bigger developments. It has been told no assessment is needed, clearing the way for a later planning application. Details of Local Plan hearings can be found at localplanexamination.commonplace.is, the sessions can be viewed via a link at beta.southglos.gov.uk/new-local-plan.

Post buggies do the rounds

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

More than 100 are now in operation across the country, although Royal Mail would not confirm how many are based at Fishponds, or whether it intends to buy more.

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



One of the new MEVs

£1m claimed – just in time

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

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

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

National Lottery operator Allwyn made a series of appeals to people to check their old tickets as the deadline approached.

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

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

Allwyn senior winners' adviser Andy Carter said: "This is truly incredible.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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Runners remember Tyler

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

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

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

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

Funds raised by the Great



Connor Iles and Finn Searle ran the Bristol Half-marathon

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

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

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

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

was still open for donations at tinyurl.com/4rj3752j.

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

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

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

Thank you for your continued support."

Tyler was working as a scaffolder and living in



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

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

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

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Holes safety risk

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

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

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



One of the holes dug on the bike trails at Rodway Common. Picture: Emersons Green Town Council

New town powers could fix transport

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

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

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

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

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

"That's because generations of new housing and economic

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

She said: "What we're

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

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

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

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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Hundreds join the scarecrow trail

HUNDREDS of people turned out for the annual Pucklechurch Scarecrow Competition and Trail.

This year the event, organised by St Thomas a Becket Church, had the theme: "For a day I would like to be..."

More than 40 scarecrows were created by villagers for the Early May bank holiday weekend, featuring characters ranging from King Charles to Bananas in Pyjamas.

The winner was A Wizard and the lucky dip winner was A Brownie.

A spokesperson for the organisers said: "The scarecrow trail brings people together and it is lovely to see families and friends enjoying it in the church and around the village.

"We are so grateful to the businesses, organisations and residents who supported us.

"We raised a record sum this year that will help us serve our community. However, this event is not only about fundraising but also about creating community and flourishing relationships."



Some of the eye-catching entries in this year's annual Pucklechurch Scarecrow Competition and Trail Photos: Keith Eames



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A giant leap for Earthfest

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

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

Earthfest is organised by Emersons Green Town Council

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

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

It is described as a mass-participation story centred on the Earth as a sleeping giant, who must not be woken up. The giant will be represented by a willow model of the Earth and the story will feature dances and performances involving people who take part in clowning and percussion workshops on the day.

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

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

evocative movement and surprise."

Earthfest includes a range of nature-focused events, which got underway in May with an Eco Day in Emersons Green Park, followed by a wild foraging walk with outdoor educator Steve England and a 'BioBlitz' event, using the iNaturalist app to record wildlife living in the area.

June's events include walks, tours and wellness events, including a walk discovering the birds of Emersons Green Park with naturalist Ed Drewitt on June 2.

The first major event of the month is the Garden Open Day on June 6 from 11am-3pm.

Visitors will be able to see how residents involved in Emersons Green Community Nature Reserve are making their gardens more wildlife-friendly, get inspiration for their own gardens and share tips with other enthusiasts.

For more details see the advert below or visit tinyurl.com/28ejrvyyu.

A swift walk on June 9 and an audio tour on the 11th will be



Emersons Green Primary School choir performs at last year's Earthfest

OPEN GARDEN DAY



Garden Open Day 2026

GARDEN Open Day 2026 shines a spotlight on the ways local residents are transforming their gardens into havens for wildlife.

Visitors can explore a diverse range of spaces where native planting, pollinator-friendly borders, and thoughtfully designed habitats are helping birds, bees, and other species to thrive. Throughout the community, gardeners are sharing practical ideas and real-life examples of how even small changes can make a meaningful difference.

The day also offers a chance to connect with like-minded people, exchange knowledge and experiences, and celebrate a collective commitment to creating greener, more wildlife-friendly neighbourhoods.



Celebrating the Community Nature Reserve

Saturday 6th

June 2026

11am - 3pm

A day to visit some gardens in the area. See what they are doing for the local wildlife, get some inspiration and meet like minded

In partnership with: people.



followed by the next big event. Emersons and Lyde Community Energy (ELCoE) are staging their first Home Energy Fair at Emersons Green Village Hall on June 13.

The event includes expert advice on making homes more energy efficient, with local installers of renewable energy and householders who have retrofitted their homes with technology such as heat pumps and solar panels.

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

The festival concludes with another first, the Emersons and Lyde Green Flower, Produce and Crafts Show, held at Emersons Green Village Hall on June 27 from noon to 4.30pm.

Entry is free, and people are encouraged to enter a range

of exhibits from flowers, fruit and veg to jam, cakes and needlework, with special classes for children, family and group entries.

Outside the show visitors will be taken back to the 19th century with music from the Brigstowe Village Band, in Thomas Hardy-themed costume, and there will be picnics and family activities.

There will also be opportunities for local stallholders to get involved.

For information on how to participate, enter exhibits, or book stall spaces, contact Claire Ruggiero at ruggiero.claire@gmail.com or visit tinyurl.com/37uzt5tb.

Founded in 2021 as the Three Greens Festival, the annual celebration of our relationship with the planet attracted nearly 400 attendees last year.

Many smaller events need to be booked in advance, and there is a small fee for some of them.

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

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HOME ENERGY FAIR

2pm - 4:30pm

SATURDAY 13th June

FREE ENTRY
KIDS CORNER!
TEA & CAKE

EARTH FEST 2026

Welcome to the Garden Open Day map
A Chance to see what some of our gardens are doing to encourage wildlife.
Please note we are unable to guarantee parking or toilets.

19 Garnett Place BS16 6QY

22 Springfield Road BS16 9BG

Dibden Lane Allotment BS16 7AF

30 Tunbridge Way BS16 7EX

40 Bye Mead BS16 7DQ

10 Meadgate BS16 7AZ

50 Guest Ave BS16 7GA

107a Emerson Way BS16 7AP

6 Beck Close BS16 7HD

100 Guest Ave BS16 7DA

96 Emet Grove BS16 7EG

50 Stockwell Drive BS16 9DW

61 Park Road BS16 5LQ

Garden Open Day 6th June 2026 11am – 3pm

EMERSONS GREEN TOWN COUNCIL

A SPACE and technology company based at the Bristol & Bath Science Park is creating 100 new jobs after winning a £20.7 million contract to take part in the biggest ever mission to Venus.

OHB Space UK is a subsidiary of OHB SE, a German company specialising in satellite systems, spacecraft and aerospace.

It works in areas from navigation and telecommunications to space exploration, in which it works with the European Space Agency as well as on commercial projects and set up its UK arm in Emersons Green last year.

OHB Space UK will be responsible for the assembly, integration, and testing of the EnVision spacecraft to make sure it is ready to qualify for operation in space, on a mission led by the ESA.

The company will recruit 100 highly skilled engineers over the next five years to work on the EnVision mission.

But the expansion means that it will leave the science park next year, to move into a “state-of-the-art” plant at Aztec West.

The new facility will include

Space firm joins race to Venus



OHB, European Space Agency, UK Space Agency and WECA representatives were among those at the signing ceremony for the ESA EnVision mission in OHB Space UK's new cleanroom Picture: OHB

of the UK's biggest and most advanced 'cleanrooms' - an enclosed space where the air is controlled to minimise dust, microbes, particulates and chemicals dust that could interfere with sensitive instruments and materials.

The EnVision mission is to Venus is due to launch in

2031. A satellite will study the planet's geology, atmosphere and climate to learn more about how the planet's uninhabitable atmosphere developed and if it used to have a climate more like Earth's.

OHB SE chief executive Marco Fuchs said: "Space is booming - and we are growing

with it.

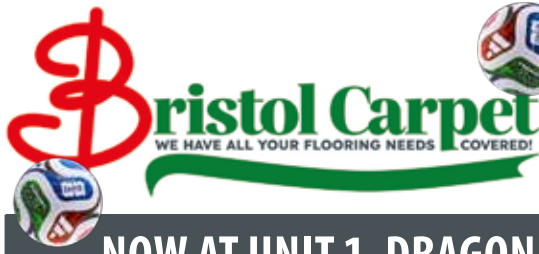
"I am very proud of the highly committed team in England and grateful for the close and trusted cooperation with our partners in the United Kingdom, Germany and across Europe."

Metro Mayor Helen Godwin said: "I am thrilled that OHB Space UK are expanding and that the West of England will be making a real contribution to such an important mission in space.

"Back here on Earth, we are already home to the industries and engineers who make space flight possible, and with our four incredible universities we have a pipeline of talent for future jobs in this industry."

Space minister Liz Lloyd said: "OHB Space UK's first year is a real success story for British space.

"This is exactly the kind of high-value investment that will drive the continued growth of our UK space sector."



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Downend School students in France

Students enjoy Riviera trip

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Revel's 75th birthday bash

VILLAGERS are preparing for a special Pucklechurch Revel day this month as the annual event marks two anniversaries.

It's 75 years since the historic event was revived as part of the 1951 Festival of Britain celebrations and 50 years since the first Pucklechurch Beer Festival was held.



Last year's Revel parade

The 2026 event has a 1970s theme – so expect colourful costumes, creative floats and retro flair. The fun begins on the Recreation Field at 11am and the Revel Parade will set off at 11.45am from Hillview Avenue, led as always by the Revel Royal Family and pixies.

The Rec will host a variety of local stalls, featuring community groups and charities, offering a chance to browse, support local causes and connect with neighbours.

Live music will provide the soundtrack to the day, with performances from Marshfield Brass Band, Sam Eaton, Stacey Charles, and Bohemian Bar Thieve, delivering an exciting mix of styles and atmosphere throughout the event.

Families can also look forward to Inflatable fun and entertainment with DJ Bridge.

Revel is organised by a hard-working team of volunteers and there's still time for businesses to offer sponsorship. Get in touch via the Revel Facebook page or email pucklechurch.revel@gmail.com if you can help.

History records Revel events in the village in the 19th century but it is thought that the tradition dates back even further, to early medieval times.

village church

Sunday | 10:30am

Mangotsfield Primary School

vcemersonsgreen.org

TURNER'S VISION

Exciting news: a new chapter

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

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

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

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

More families trusting us with their eye health and vision.

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

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

So... we've taken the next step. We are currently creating a brand new, larger practice in

Downend, in the former Fabrics Plus shop, a place many of us remember fondly.

And here's what that means for you:

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

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

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

"Effortless vision isn't a luxury - it's the standard."

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

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

appointments now available on Fridays.

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

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

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

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

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



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

To find out more or to book an appointment, visit our website or contact our friendly team by calling our Henleaze practice on 0117 9622 474 or our Fishponds practice on 0117 965 4434.

Peter

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



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Festival celebrates Armed Forces

SOUTH Gloucestershire Armed Forces Day will return on June 20.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Organising committee chair Ian Campbell said: "One of the highlights of the day will be an exciting historical re-enactment featuring firing cannons and muskets, alongside precision drill displays and military



Last year's Armed Forces Day parade in Staple Hill. Another parade will kick off this year's event on June 20

demonstrations that showcase both history and modern service traditions.

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

Bus operator First is offering free travel to the park, which is on the 7, 49 and 49x bus routes, for serving Armed Forces personnel and veterans, to make it easier for them to attend the celebrations.

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

dedication and contribution.

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

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

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

For more information visit www.southglosafd.com or email SouthGlosAFD@gmail.com

The following weekend the park will host Celebrate With Me, part of the Bristol Refugee Festival.

The free family-friendly event on June 27 runs from 11am-4pm and includes music and dance displays, with plenty of chances to join in.

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

For more information, visit tinyurl.com/7f37ntwf.

How can I stop ear wax building up?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Debbie Campbell

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

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June 1 & 5

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

June 2-27

■ **EARTHVEST FESTIVAL**, various events in Emersons Green Park, village hall and around the area. Includes Garden Open Day June 6 and Flower Show on June 27. More details, pages 12-13 or friendsOfEmersonsGreenPark.com.

June 6

■ **FUNDRAISING CONCERT** for Ham Farm Festival, Resound Church, Blackhorse Road, Emersons Green, 7.30pm. Eight musicians play a varied programme including Bohemian Rhapsody and The Swan. More details at www.hamfarmfestival.com

June 6

■ **CONCERT** by the North Avon Singers, St James Church, Mangotsfield, 7.30pm. Popular music with a theme. Tickets £10 including refreshments, from Ruth Oakley on 0782 631 2630. Proceeds to St James Church memorial garden restoration.

June 6

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

June 13

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

June 20

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

June 20

■ **PUCKLECHURCH REVEL**, Pucklechurch Recreation Field, from 11am. Parade starts 11.45am from Hillview. Live music, entertainment, inflatables, stalls, food and drink.

June 21

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

July 24-26:

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

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.

■ **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, Overdale Road 7.30 p.m. from September until July. For more information contact the Secretary on 0117 9561881.

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

Thursday

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

■ **COFFEE, CAKE AND COMMUNITY MORNING** at Emersons Green Village Hall. Free Tea, Coffee, and Cake served 10am to 12pm, with extra time to relax and finish your drinks until 1pm. Everyone is welcome! Donations to Emersons Green Village Hall welcome. Supported by Emersons Green Town Council.

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

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

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

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** regular coffee mornings,

held on the first Thursday of the month, 10.30am-noon at the church in Cossham Street.

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

Saturday

■ **STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH** Coffee mornings in our beautiful building every Saturday 10.00-12.00 in aid of church funds or charities. Enjoy Fairtrade coffee, tea and cake, and stalls.

Sunday

■ **MANGOTSFIELD AND CASTLE GREEN UNITED REFORMED CHURCH** hold regular weekly Sunday morning worship at Cossham Street. Services start at 10.30 a.m. with different speakers each week. New members very welcome. For more details please contact Peter Redding (Ch.Sec.) on 0117 9657075.

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

■ **STAPLE HILL METHODIST CHURCH**, High Street BS16 5HQ Sunday services 10.30am + Sunday Club for ages 5-17. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday of the month – all invited. Taizé worship 6.00pm 3rd Sunday of the month. Contact Rev Dr Aboseh Ngwana 07482 550888, Philippa Church Liaison at staplehillmethodist@hotmail.co.uk or www.staplehillmethodist.com

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

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

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

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

Defence spending supports skilled jobs

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



now running these services.

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

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

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

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

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



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Dance boss at premiere

A DANCE school owner from Emersons Green was among the guests at the premiere of a new film about pop superstar Michael Jackson.

Sophia Dacey attended the showing of biopic Michael with Matt Fiddes, who worked as a personal bodyguard for Jackson and was a close friend for ten years. He has been interviewed extensively by TV stations and newspapers about his time with



Sophia Dacey and Matt Fiddes with their families at the UK premiere of Michael



Matt Fiddes with Michael Jackson

Jackson, who died in 2009. Matt later founded a network of children's dance and martial arts schools in the UK and Australia. Sophia owns the franchise

for Matt Fiddes Dance Schools in Bristol, Somerset & South Wales, and runs classes in schools across Bristol and South Gloucestershire, including in Downend.

She said: "The methods Matt developed come directly from what he learned watching the greatest performer in the world prepare, train, and deliver under pressure."

Council's lane changes

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

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

It is also planning to legally confirm the

extent of the bus lane by the Hambrook traffic lights, which was removed when a number of turns at the junction were banned in 2019 to reduce air pollution.

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

The bus lane order confirms the extent of the lane either side of the Hambrook lights.

It is slightly shorter than the previous lane, which was first introduced in 1998, reduced in 2014 and removed in 2019.

The 2+ lane order will extend it to meet the westbound exit of the Wick Wick roundabout and remove sections on Bromley Heath Rd, and the other side of the M32.

Comments can be made via the consultations section of the council's website until June 6, with the bus lane consultation at tinyurl.com/p8jfrfjh and the 2+ lane consultation at tinyurl.com/n78dzz6a.

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Are you in touch with your creative side?

CAN you remember the last time you picked up a pen or pencil to draw something?

When was the last time that you picked up a paintbrush, apart from when you decided to give one of your rooms a facelift?

For plenty of us, including me, the answer to both questions would be: "When I was at school; a lifetime ago".

There are many scientific studies that demonstrate that creative expression has the potential to promote cognitive, emotional, physical, and social well-being in people of all ages.

Bristol u3a has just set up a new informal group, Art in 15 Minutes, to encourage people to get creative. The idea is to grab a cuppa and then doodle, sketch or paint something in the time it takes you to drink your tea.

With no pressure to attend a special meeting or to use specialist equipment, this is something everybody can do at home. Members share their efforts on WhatsApp.

We're fortunate to have two more art and crafting groups that meet in our local area: Painting & Drawing, where members work on their current projects in a social atmosphere, and Eastside Crafters, where members join in a suggested craft or work on their own project.

Why not come along to one of our café socials to find out more about Bristol u3a? All are scheduled from 2-4pm, and in June you'll find us at Orchard Coffee & Bakery in St George on the 5th, the Market Café and Lounge in Kingswood on the 9th, the Crafty Egg in Fishponds on the 17th, Mokka Downend on the 22nd and Hillfields Park Community Centre on the 25th.

Curious but can't make it to a social? Email me at learnlaughlive@bristolu3a.org.uk and I'll do my best to answer your questions. You can type "Bristol u3a groups" into your favourite search engine to see the full range of activities.

Lindsay Gough

COMMUNITY NEWS

MANGOTSFIELD DOLLY MIXTURES

WE love to send our birthday wishes to our members each month, and in May one of our founder Dollies celebrated her 80th.

We have just had our meeting in the hall and our speaker presented a history of Bristol Zoo, with a slide presentation of black and white and colour photographs.

Some of you may remember Alfred the gorilla and many of the animals back in time: the monkey temple, Rosie the elephant, the many smaller species, Johnny Morris and the beautiful gardens. I remember myself being taken there as a little girl by my parents and remembering the old big pennies when you wanted to spend one.

It also seemed to coincide with Sir David Attenborough's 100th birthday celebrations. We were all captivated for an hour and half, after which there were many questions our speaker was happy to answer over coffee and cake with us.

We were also delighted to receive eight visitors this time, who have now become Dollies.

June will commence with our visit to St Nicholas Market underground tour. We are going to congregate in the Commercial Rooms across the road at around 10.30am and meet up with our guide at 11am. The following week in the hall we have 'Gentle Moves' - more about this next time.

Our monthly pub lunch at the Lamb in Mangotsfield is, as always, very well supported: our thanks to Kate and her team.

For more information on our group email carol@appliance.co.uk.

Carol Coombes

**NEWS: EMAIL US AT:
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SHORTWOOD VILLAGE WI

IN April we welcomed Will Stevens and his lovely wife, who came to talk us through 'Art for Beginners'.

This was a great success, and it showed that we have a surprisingly talented group of ladies, who all went home with their masterpieces.

Our May meeting is our Resolutions Evening, when we will vote for or against this year's National Federation of WIs resolutions, which are on accessible public toilets facilities and action on women's homelessness. The evening will finish with a game of bingo.

In June, we look forward to welcoming Emersons Green Town Council's 'Perfect Pollinators' to talk about local community nature reserves and taking care of community spaces.

Shortwood Village Chapel has a 150 year anniversary this year. They will be holding a cream tea event on June 6 and a flower festival on July 4 and 5, when we will have a Shortwood Village WI display.

We are a small friendly bunch: if you would like to see for yourself, we will welcome you to our next meeting, on June 11 at 7.30pm, in the vestry Shortwood Village Chapel, Main Road, Shortwood.

For more information, questions or just a chat, please email millhousejoinery@aol.com, with the heading Shortwood Village WI.

Lynne Miller

BEECHMERE BELLES WI

AS we head into summer, it's lovely to see colour appearing in gardens and parks; the spring flowers may have gone, but we've got lots to look forward to.

We had a very relaxing time at our last meeting. Linda came along and guided us through a Shibashi Tai Chi routine.

She very kindly said we were all very good, and picked up the forms very well.

We changed things up at this meeting and had our tea and cake after this exercise, instead of on arrival. What a lovely way to end our meeting - there was lots of chatter and laughter.

In June, our speaker will be giving us a fascinating look into a famous historical site, the Roman Baths. I'm sure we'll all learn something new.

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

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

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

If you would like to know more about our WI please email beechmerebelles@gmail.com or follow our Facebook page.

Wendy



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Join us on a stroll through time

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

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

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

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

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



Romans from the Legiivg reenactment group will be in Downend

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

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

There will also be a food market on the day,

so you can tuck into all sorts of tasty goodies.

CHAP has been awarded funding from South Gloucestershire Council's Creative High Streets Fund for this event, which aims to bring creativity and vibrancy to local high streets.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Annual Meeting of Electors & Community Champion AWARDS 2026



Our Annual Meeting of Electors on 29 April brought together residents, councillors and community organisations for an uplifting evening celebrating the people and groups who make our parish such a vibrant place to live.



The meeting offered a valuable opportunity to reflect on the past year and look ahead, with an annual report from the Town Clerk alongside updates from the Youth Work Committee and Open Spaces Committee. Attendees also enjoyed a presentation from Great Western Air Ambulance Charity, highlighting the vital work they carry out across the region.

The event concluded with the Community Champion Awards, presented by the Mayor, recognising outstanding individuals and groups who go above and beyond for our community.

Award Winners:

Young Volunteers of the Year (Joint Winners)

Olli & Lenni Langreiter
Recognised for outstanding dedication - Olli for his impactful litter-picking work, and Lenni for creating the Emersons Green Audio Tour celebrating local heritage.



Volunteer of the Year

Liz Gray - The Music Train
For over 12 years of bringing inclusive, uplifting live music to the community and tackling social isolation.



Community Group of the Year

Lyde Green Chatty Café Team
For creating a welcoming space that combats loneliness and brings people together.



Outstanding Contribution to the Community

Janet McBride - Citizens Advice
For providing vital weekly support to residents, helping hundreds navigate challenging circumstances.



Mayor's Special Recognition Award

Friends of Emersons Green Park
For their ongoing dedication to improving biodiversity, maintaining the park, and creating a thriving community space



A heartfelt thank you to all nominees, winners and volunteers. Your dedication continues to make a real difference across our community. With thanks to Downend Men in Sheds and SteveBLaser for their help in creating the beautiful engraved wooden awards presented on the evening.

Static bikes clock up £4,500

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

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

Volunteers took to the saddle and cycled the 940 virtual miles from Mangotsfield to

Lisbon to support St Peter's Hospice and Pancreatic Cancer UK.

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

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

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

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

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



How Mangotsfield avoided the plague

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

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

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

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

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

Matthew found that, despite the city council in Bristol imposing quarantines on people travelling from infected cities, disinfecting goods and forcing sick people to stay in their homes - known as 'locking up' - within months of the first outbreak in London, hundreds of people were dying in the city each week.

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

Matthew, who is now a history

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

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

Bristol University associate professor in economic history Dr Evan Jones, Matthew's dissertation supervisor, said: "The most enduring legacy of Plague, which devastated Britain many times between 1348 and 1665, was that it set the conditions for how we deal with outbreaks.

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

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

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

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

Water works

BRISTOL Water has announced plans to spend £5.75 million on improvements to three reservoirs, including one in Pucklechurch.

The company, which supplies fresh water to homes across South Gloucestershire and Bristol, says the money is to "safeguard raw water storage" at sites including Pucklechurch Service Reservoir, at Blagdon Lake Tower and Barrow.

It is part of a £66m programme to improve pipes, treatment works and reservoirs that supply drinking water across the region over the next four years.

The company says keeping reservoirs in good condition means water arrives at treatment works cleaner and needs less processing before it reaches taps.

Richard Stanbrook, General Manager for Drinking Water Services at Bristol Water, said: "Much of the investment takes place out of sight, so customers understandably want to know how it benefits them.

"These improvements are about protecting the reliability and quality of our water supply."

The Voice has asked Bristol Water about the area served by the reservoir, the timescale for the work at Pucklechurch and whether it will cause any disruption.

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School hosts youth boxing tournament

MANGOTSFIELD School was the venue for a tournament showcasing young boxing talent from across the region.

A large audience enjoyed 13 bouts of high-quality boxing at the event, organised by Downend Boxing Club.

The afternoon included the debut of 14-year-old Dylan Powell, who took part in a skills contest against Charlie Butcher of Synwell Boxing Club, Wotton-under-Edge.

Dylan's father, Matt, boxed for Downend 25 years ago, and is now one of the club's volunteer coaches, making it a proud family moment.

Another Downend coach also had a proud day, as his son competed for the 11th time.

Miley Conors, 13, faced Bradley Fisher of Worcester Boxing Club in an exciting contest, with both boxers giving everything.

Sharp boxing and accurate long shots earned Miley a well-deserved points victory, much to the pride of his father, Jimmy.

Making his first competitive appearance was Louis Stevens, 14, who boxed Henry Davis of Warminster.

Louis made a strong, fast start, taking the contest to his opponent, before the final two rounds developed into a toe-to-toe battle. Henry claimed the points verdict, but it was a valuable learning experience and a positive debut for Louis.

Next, Kael King faced Stuart Hope of Worcester in a tough, all-action bout. The more experienced Worcester boxer stayed the busier throughout, to secure a points decision.

UWE student Morgan Horne, 21, boxed Jake Rodd of Barum Boxing Club, who came determined to fight. Clever movement and well-timed changes of pace earned Morgan a clear unanimous points victory.

Also making his debut was Flaviu Juravle, 19, who faced Muhammed Ibrahim of Grange Boxing Club, Cardiff. The strong Welsh boxer started aggressively and forced a referee's protection count. Flaviu showed great resilience and skill, boxing intelligently, and although he lost on points, it was an impressive first performance.

Bristol University student Louis D'Abreo, 19, had his second contest against Abdul Wardak of Barum Boxing Club. Wardak displayed exceptional fitness and strength, but Louis countered effectively with slick counter-punching and smart shot selection to take a unanimous decision.

Other Downend boxers in action were Paddy Connors, who lost on points to Harrison Hopkins of Penhill, and Ollie Mitchell, who lost on points to Lee Litherland of Yeovil.

An excellent afternoon of boxing



Coach Jimmy Conors with his son, Miley

concluded with Bristol University student Alex Richardson, 20, against Obi Cridland of Watchet Boxing Club. After an even opening round, Alex settled into his rhythm, landing fast, straight punches that brought a standing protection count for his opponent. Alex secured a unanimous points victory.

Every boxer gave 100%, and it was fantastic to see the generations coming through the club, from father to son.

Craig Turner, Head Coach

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Flyers celebrate a successful season

DOWNEND Flyers are celebrating a season of success for teams across the women's and girls' football club.

The women's First Team secured their place in the South West Regional Women's Football League with an impressive 2-0 home victory over Gloucester City Reserves, ensuring the side will continue competing at regional level next season.

The women's Reserve Team also had plenty to celebrate following a fantastic 6-1 win against Cinderford Town, securing an excellent fourth-place finish in the Gloucestershire County Division 2. It has been a hugely positive season for the squad under the guidance of Matt Smith, in his first season coaching women's football. His leadership and ability to bring the team together has been evident throughout the year.

There was more success for the Women's A Team, who ended their season in style with a remarkable 12-0 victory over Ashton Keynes. The result secured a solid mid-table finish and highlighted the strength and depth developing throughout the club.

The Under-15s Harriers enjoyed another memorable campaign, narrowly missing out on back-to-back Division A titles. Despite battling hard and showing tremendous sportsmanship and dignity throughout, the side lost a top-of-the-table clash 3-1 away at Hutton, confirmed the title for the hosts.

There is no doubt the team will return even stronger next year.

Tournament season is now underway and the club has already enjoyed a hugely successful start, securing no fewer than six pieces of silverware during the opening weekend.

Younger age groups continue to enjoy the fun, friendship and non-competitive spirit that tournament football brings.

Good luck to all Flyers teams taking part in tournaments over the coming weeks: the club's own annual tournament takes place on June 27 and 28, and is always one of the highlights of the local football calendar.

Steve Poole

Play-off defeat ends Cleve's outstanding season

CLEVE RFC's promotion campaign ended with defeat in their second Regional 2 Severn play-off away to Chippenham.

Following a hard-fought win over Keynsham, the match was played in bright sunshine in front of a large and boisterous crowd.

Play followed a similar pattern to the two league games, with both sides playing attractive attacking rugby, with very physical defence.

Cleve opened the scoring on five minutes, with a try from Henry Williams after a Chippenham attack broke down just outside their 22; Matt Jarvis converted.

The home side quickly struck back, with a converted try from a driving maul following a lineout. Following pressure from Cleve, Matt Lane scored a try wide out, with the conversion missed.

Chippenham then scored a converted try following a penalty on Cleve's 5m line and quickly followed this with another converted try on 20 minutes. The next try was scored and converted by Matt Jarvis, after excellent interplay by Cleve forwards and backs.

After 30 minutes the score was 21-19 to Chippenham and the game was very competitive and close.

However the home side then scored three converted tries before half-time, to build up a 42-19 lead and leave Cleve facing a huge task



Matt Lane scored in Cleve's defeat at Chippenham

in the second half.

Cleve attacked from the kick-off and put the home side under pressure. Josh Davis and Theo Garnett scored tries and Matt

Jarvis converted both, bringing the score after 55 minutes to 42-33 and all to play for.

However it was not to be Cleve's day: Chippenham scored a further two tries and a conversion, plus a penalty, to make the score 57-33 after 68 minutes.

Cleve then scored a push over try from their dominant pack, which Jarvis converted, but Chippenham had the final say with an unconverted try to end the game with a 62-40 win. They went on to beat Tiverton in the next round before losing the final to Chew Valley.

This has been an outstanding season for a relatively young Cleve side, who gained promotion to this league last season and achieved success against established clubs, finishing third and losing just four games all season, with two of those against runaway league winners Trowbridge.

On the way, huge wins of 93-0, 110-5 and 113-7 were the standout results, helping Cleve become top scorers in the league with a massive 1,109 points and only 418 conceded.

Matthew Jarvis's kicking was outstanding all season, scoring a record 329 points from only 20 games.

Massive thanks to the coaches, players and supporters. We can look forward to next season - onward and upward!

Lyn Smith

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Don't let gardening give you growing pains

THERE'S something magical about this time of year. The sun comes out, the grass starts growing at what feels like double speed and suddenly the garden you've been politely ignoring all winter is calling your name.

Like clockwork, as if we're in tune with the changing seasons, we see the same thing every year in clinic... a rush of patients on Monday morning with sore backs after a weekend of "just a bit of gardening."

Before we go any further, it's worth saying this clearly, we love gardening as a form of exercise. It's one of the best things you can do for your body and your mind. You're outside in the fresh air, moving in lots of different ways, building strength, improving flexibility and getting that sense of achievement that only comes from seeing the results of your own hard work. Done well, it's brilliant for keeping you active and resilient.

The reality? Gardening rarely amounts to just "a bit." It usually involves three weeks of digging, lifting, pruning and hauling, squeezed into one ambitious weekend. Sound familiar?

The good news is you don't need to choose between a beautiful garden and a happy back. With a few smart habits, you can enjoy the whole process and the fruits of your labour.

Gardening is a marathon, not a sprint

It's tempting to go all in when the weather turns, but your body is sometimes not quite as enthusiastic as your ambitious gardening plans.

Pace yourself

Break down jobs into manageable chunks and spread them over several days. Set a timer if you have to – you'll find that 25 to 30 minutes of work followed by a short break works wonders. Not only will your back thank you, you will also enjoy it more.

Little and often wins the race

Long, continuous periods of bending and lifting are what really aggravate the back.

Instead, consider taking regular breaks before you feel you need one, change positions frequently and mix heavier jobs with lighter tasks. Think of it like training for a marathon – you wouldn't go from zero to running 20 miles in one go would you?

Work smarter, not lower

If you have ever watched Monty Don on Gardeners' World, you will notice he does a lot of prep work at waist height. There's a reason for that.

Use potting tables or benches, raised beds, long handled tools and kneeling pads or garden stools. The less time you spend bent over, the happier your back and hamstrings will be.

Bend your knees, not your back

A classic mistake is bending from the waist for prolonged periods. That is when we start to see not just back pain, but tight, sore hamstrings too.

Instead, squat or kneel where possible, keep the load close to your body and use your legs to do the work. Your back is brilliant, but it's not designed to do everything alone.

Share the load

If you're tackling heavier jobs, such as lifting pots, shifting soil, or moving sleepers, don't attempt to go solo.

Grab a friend, rope in family members, or hire a bit of help. Splitting the load doesn't just halve the effort, it massively reduces your risk of injury. It's also a lot more enjoyable.

Warm up like you mean it

We often forget that gardening is exercise.

Before you start, take a few minutes to loosen up. Gentle stretches for your back, hips and hamstrings, along with a few squats or lunges, can make a big difference.

And when you finish, a quick stretch down helps your body recover ready for the next day.

Listen to your body

This might be the most important one.

If your back starts to ache, pay attention. If pain creeps above a 2 or 3 out of 10, that is your cue to stop, rest and reassess. When it comes to looking after your body, pushing through rarely ends well.

A good rule of thumb is that if it feels worse the next morning, you probably did a bit too much.

Dress the part

Gardening might not feel like extreme sport, but the right kit still matters. Wear gloves to protect your hands, supportive footwear for stability and eye protection if you're cutting or strimming. And on sunny days, don't forget a hat.

I admit it... when it comes to garden headwear, I have gone for the full Monty Don look. Would I wear it out? Absolutely not. But in the garden, it does the job perfectly.

Enjoy the process

Remember, gardening is one of the best things you can do for both your physical and mental health. Fresh air, movement and a real sense of achievement – it ticks all the boxes.

So slow it down, take your time and make sure you enjoy it. Your goal should be not just to create a perfect garden, but to be able to enjoy it pain free when the job is done.

However, if your back does decide to protest despite your best efforts, we're always here to help. But, as ever, prevention is better than cure.



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Early silverware to start cricket season

THE first Carsons & Mangotsfield side to take the field in anger this year were the Under-19s, who finally got to play their rain-delayed 2025 Gloucestershire Youth Cricket League U19 Development Cup final.

Batting first, they made up for lost time with a commanding 171-5 from 20 overs, Ollie Catton's unbeaten 50 and Harry Ravenscroft's 46 setting the tone.

The job wasn't done, but regular wickets kept opponents Stoke Bishop in check.

The Buckingham brothers led the squeeze: Max with 2-23, Isaac miserly with 1-13, as the reply stalled at 133-5.

A deserved win and a trophy in the bag - not a bad way to open the season!

Having spent game week one as unpaid Met Office consultants - poring and pondering over perpetually poised precipitation - the senior sides finally put the weather apps away and enjoyed a full weekend's cricket in game week two.



The 1st XI set the tone with a commanding seven-wicket win over Winterbourne.

Craig Woodland was the pick of the bowlers, with a superb 4-8 as Winterbourne could only muster 93 all out.

Kieran Gallagher then eased through the chase with an unbeaten 52: a fine start to life in Division 3.

The 2nd XI followed suit, seeing off Whitchurch by 32 runs. Harry Ravenscroft's

captain's knock of 102 set things up before a middle-order wobble left them on 209-8.

A disciplined bowling effort finished the job, with George Clatworthy's 4-33 the standout from a young and promising attack.

The 3rd XI endured a tougher afternoon in their local derby, losing to newly-promoted Bristol Aces.

However, the evergreen Mike Norris rolled back the years with

a stylish 54 to go with his earlier two wickets.

The Sunday XI wrapped the weekend up with a convincing 127-run win over Hampset, the Woodland duo stealing the show: Jack's 4-9 narrowly outshining dad Craig's 4-16. Household bragging rights may be lively this summer!

This year marks a milestone with the launch of the CMCC Women's team: softball cricket for all experience levels.

Four friendlies and several festivals are already lined up; training is Wednesdays, 6.30-7.30pm, with informal Saturday nets.

Whether you're brand new or returning to the game, come down and get involved in the club's first ever all-female cricket team!

If you want to be part of a growing, family club, contact info.carsonsandmangotsfield@gmail.com or follow us on our social media pages.

Jake Lane

Mangos honour season's stars

MANGOTSFIELD United celebrated the top performers of the 2025/26 season at its awards night.

The club hosted a three-course dinner at its Cossham Street ground in May to celebrate the men's team and women's team, as well as the people who keep the club running and its wider community.

Award winners included Archie Morris, who was voted the Players' Player of the Year, Josh Dempsey, who was the Manager's Player of the Year and Archie Morris, who was voted the Supporters' Player of the Year.

Lewis Powell was presented with the Golden Boot for the first team's top scorer and Frankie McKay was the Young Player of the Year.

Recognising work behind the scenes, Rich Iles won the Andy Milne Volunteer of the Year Award.

The club said: "We are grateful for the

teams we've had this season, the dedication they've put into the game and the attitude they keep, win or lose.

"Congratulations, and thank you to all our award winners.

"We thank all of our amazing supporters, sponsors, volunteers, staff, committee and anyone associated with Mangotsfield United.

"We also want to thank our current manager Ollie Price and previous manager Glyn Ashton, for all their continued hard work around the team and the club."

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