

# henleaze&westburyvoice

December, 2025 Issue 132

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## Children's compassion is recognised

Bristol Dementia Action Alliance chair Tony Hall visited Westbury on Trym CE Academy to present the school with the Barbara Award in memory of his late wife in recognition of the work it has done over seven years to raise awareness of the condition.

Report: Page 12



## Westbury remembers

The village turned out in force for the 2025 Poppy Day parade, with churches and youth groups playing their part in paying tribute to the Fallen.



PAGE 9

## Council vows to act on vans mess

The human waste from some van dwellers on the Downs is now rated by the council as having 'high impact' on residents and action is promised.

PAGE 3

## Further row over new fence

Another war of words has erupted after Cotham School complained about vandalism to its new fence on the playing fields at Stoke Lodge.

PAGE 3

## Parking charges loom

RESIDENTS are being urged to have their say over the long-planned charges for in the Westbury Hill car park.

The council has finally issued the legal notice for the fees and people have until Friday December 12 to respond.

Westbury on Trym Society (WoTSoc) hopes that a flood of objections might delay the introduction, or even force a rethink.

It says the proposed charges will affect local businesses and damage village life.

The plan is to allow for parking spaces to be reserved for business permit holders, medical staff and electric vehicle charging, but WoTSoc says this will further reduce the number of public spaces available.

The Order, which also applies to nine other care parks across Bristol, can be viewed on the council website at [www.bristol.gov.uk/trafficorders](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/trafficorders), where there is also information on how to make an objection.

WoTSoc concerns: Page 4

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## Henleaze & Westbury Voice contacts

### Publisher

**Emma Cooper**

0117 908 2121 / 07715 770448

sales@henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk

### Editorial

**Linda Tanner**

**Rosie Watson**

news@henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk

### Advertising sales

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sales@henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk



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## January deadline

Our December edition deadline is December 10. To ensure your news or letter is included, please contact us by this date. Advertisers are also asked to contact us by the same date.

## Your views

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## NEWS

# Council pledges action on Downs health risks

BRISTOL City Council has promised to take immediate action to tackle vehicle dwellers defecating on The Downs.

Senior Councillors Barry Parsons and Stephen Williams said in a statement that officers had found several sites being used as organised toilet facilities.

"We recognise that the increasing number of lived in vehicles on the Downs presents significant social, health, and environmental challenges, and with this in mind, we have recently received evidence to classify the group of vehicles living around the Downs as 'high impact' under our current policy.

"Quite simply, this is not acceptable and presents a significant public health issue," they said.

"Clearly, we cannot just stand back and allow this to happen. We have a duty to make sure the Downs is accessible to all and that we are not allowing parts of it to become 'no go' zones. Human waste represents a serious hazard to anyone using the Downs, particularly young children and pets who may play in bushes.

"We have taken some immediate actions to mitigate these initial public health risks. Bristol Waste have been on site to clear

the affected areas and will return regularly to remove any further waste, and we are looking at what additional measures we can take.

"We appreciate this is not a long-term solution, and we are currently working on an enforcement plan to begin to move the group of lived in vehicles from the Downs. We appreciate that moving such a large group is not going to be an easy task, and will require a lot of coordination, but we cannot allow a public health risk to continue.

"We are also aware that most vehicle dwellers will not be engaging in this sort of behaviour, but now that this issue has been identified and confirmed, we have to take action to put an end to this behaviour and make sure the Downs remains open to everyone."

Housing chair Cllr Parsons and Cllr Williams, chair of the public health committee, said they were working towards longer term solutions. Two engagement workers will work with vehicle dwellers and further moves towards 'meanwhile' sites with facilities are under way.

Sharon Scott, Vice Chair of Protect The Downs, said: "We believe that through



Sharon Scott: 'Pressure is paying off'

our sustained efforts and the pressure we have applied to Bristol City Council, the authority has finally recognised that the vehicle dwellers on the Downs constitute a 'high-impact' encampment. While this acknowledgement is a step in the right direction, we want to ensure the council follows through on its commitments and addresses additional concerns, including unauthorised vehicle parking on the highway and the need to support those who are genuinely homeless.

"There is still considerable work to be done behind the scenes, so our efforts are far from over. We extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has supported us in this cause — your backing has been essential to achieving this progress."

ST Peter's Hospice has announced that its popular Christmas tree collection service will return for another year this festive season, with even more households now able to benefit.

The hassle-free service offers residents across Bristol and North Somerset a convenient and eco-friendly way to dispose of their real trees, while helping to raise necessary funds for the

## Tree recycling returns

city's only adult hospice.

From 9-11 January, volunteers will be collecting trees directly from doorsteps across Bristol BS6, BS8 and BS11 postcodes have been added this year, while BS3 was a new postcode last year.

In return, residents are asked to make a suggested donation of £20-£25 per tree, with every penny helping St Peter's Hospice continue supporting patients and their families as they deal with serious illness and bereavement.

The trees collected will be recycled sustainably. Taking part is simple: sign up online using your postcode, leave your tree outside your home on 9 January, and St Peter's Hospice will handle the rest. All trees will be collected by the end of the day on 11 January.

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## NEWS from Westbury on Society (WoTSoc)

### Westbury Hill Car Park

The City Council has made an Order to introduce parking charges at the council's Westbury Hill car park, following the Transport committee's decision of last December. The Order also applies to car parks in nine other district car parks from Shirehampton to Brislington.

There is now a public consultation period which only lasts until 12 December, for objections to be made. The Order and reasons can be viewed on the council's website at [www.bristol.gov.uk/trafficorders](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/trafficorders) which also sets out how to make an objection.

Earlier local opposition initially led to the proposals being dropped, due to the local impacts that were recognised, while in Westbury there was a particular impact in that it would have discriminated against users of the medical centre which is accessed from the car park. The proposals were amended with two concessions to the original scheme secured, a free first hour of parking, which would be available without the need to resort to a mobile phone or app, which would have been particularly troublesome for some elderly users.

### The Village economy

Earlier this year the council's Economy and Skills Committee set up a 'Task & Finish Group for High Streets' to guide the development of a strategy to support the City Centre and High Streets across Bristol. Although one of Bristol's important second-tier 'town centres', Westbury on Trym has recently suffered a series of body blows: three bank branches in quick succession; shops becoming vacant; the sudden loss of parking in Carlton Court and emerging proposals to remove some of the shops there, as mentioned last month.

When Westbury still had three of the big four banks, a survey of the Westbury Hill car park by the Society discovered that aside from visiting the medical centre, the primary reason for those using the car park was to visit the banks. Having lost three banks in quick succession, footfall in the village has consequently diminished.

Whilst the notion of free car parking may be seen as contrary to current transport thinking, there is a clear disconnect between supporting High Streets and introducing charges for car parking in the district centres affected by the proposal. In Westbury this problem is exacerbated by the

age of its population, which has double the number of elderly residents compared with Bristol as a whole. There is much anecdotal evidence that trade in Westbury is suffering, footfall is declining and charging will only make things worse. Of course, Westbury is not alone in this, as the same trends will be repeated at the centres served by the other car parks.

Westbury suffers further by its proximity to the abundant free parking at the Mall and the nearby discount Aldi and Lidl foodstores. **Social and community concerns** The Westbury Hill car park also serves the Village's vibrant array of voluntary services, many of which are hosted in the two adjacent churches and the Village Hall, for which Westbury Hill is the only available parking site. Many who benefit are the elderly and lonely and need to travel by car. Both they and those providing the services report that charging will cause them difficulties and may deter them from using them to the detriment of all concerned.

The WoTSoc survey concluded that charging would not lead to a shift to public or sustainable transport, partly because of the top-heavy age-profile of car park users, but

would rather lead to fewer coming to Westbury or coming less frequently. Little or no spare on-street parking is available close to the village centre in the narrow residential streets either. So, drivers trying to avoid fees will either adding to road-miles and carbon emissions driving around looking for a space in competition with residents, or leave for other places.

The Council states it wants the measures to improve turnover in the car parks which serve short-term shoppers. However, with high turnover and occupancy levels, Westbury Hill is that already, but the proposals come with a longer charging period – up to 4 hours, rather than the current 3 hours, together with reserved spaces for businesses which can buy annual permits. These changes can only further reduce the availability of car parking in Westbury on Trym.

The council also says that it wants us to change how we travel by using buses and cycles and walking. However, the charges will also apply on Sunday when buses are infrequent.

The Society would encourage you to respond while the consultation period is still live – by **12 December 2025**.

**Andrew Renshaw**



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## NEWS

# Cheers, m'dears! Centenary beer hailed

THE beer brewed to mark the centenary year of the St Monica Trust has been officially launched.

The event took place at Wiper and True, the Bristol-based brewery used to convert the hops grown at the trust's retirement villages in Westbury on Trym and elsewhere into beer.

The residents hope that sales of it will let others join them in gaining the benefits of gardening, brewing and social connections.

The new brew resulted from sessions run by Hoppiness Brews, a Bristol-based community interest company which is pioneering ways to enrich the lives of older people and people living with dementia by encouraging creativity, outdoor activity and healthy ageing.

More than 150 residents living in the St Monica Trust's retirement villages and care homes have taken part in



A St Monica's Trust resident samples the beer, which was officially launched by brewers Wiper and True

planting, nurturing and harvesting the hops used to make the best bitter now being marketed as Hundred Not Out.

The project began with residents holding a ceremony at the St Monica's Trust Garden House Care Home in Cote Lane to 'wake' the hops when they were first planted. The good weather this summer helped to create a bumper harvest, with



Wiper and True commenting on the outstanding yield.

Wiper and True will be selling it in their taproom and via its online shop. The beer will also be available to buy in the St Monica Trust's restaurants and cafes.

Other outlets are also being sought with any profits from sales being reinvested by Hoppiness Brews into expanding its work with care

homes, hop gardens and brewing partnerships in Bristol and across the South West.

Among the St Monica Trust sites involved are its retirement villages and homes in Keynsham, Westbury-on-Trym, Sandford and Bedminster, with extra hops coming from care homes in Filton, Redland and Soundwell, and from Alive Activities' dementia-friendly allotments.

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## NEWS

# Vining Hall redevelopment approved

PLANS to convert a nursery in Westbury Park into a shared house and a community hall have been given the go-ahead in spite of fears of parking pressures.

The Vining Hall, on Etloe Road, was built in 1891 and most recently used as a nursery. An extension will be demolished and replaced with a three-storey house in multiple occupation (HMO) with six bedrooms.

Councillors on Bristol City Council's planning committee B voted to approve the plans on November 19. They were put forward by the owner of the former nursery, Samantha Packer, who faced problems with recruitment, new laws and high building costs.

Colin Pemble, a planning agent representing the applicant, said: "She's found it increasingly difficult to operate there for a number of reasons — difficult to get staff, changing legislation, a very costly building to run. For



How the Vining Hall could look after the changes

her, it's no longer viable and so it closed. She thinks she can put the historic former chapel to good use as a community building."

The businesswoman operates another nursery nearby but finds recruiting staff difficult due to high housing costs. The plans to convert part of the building into an HMO could solve this problem, accommodating staff who would then work in the nursery that's still open. Mr Pemble added that an HMO would create less parking pressures than the former

nursery.

Neighbours opposed the plan.

Professor Robin Hambleton said: "This application is a classic example of what urban planners call 'town cramming', meaning massive overdevelopment of a small site. This is a giant, towering three-storey building which will be overbearing. There's no need for a community hall, we've got plenty of community halls. The road safety conditions in this area are really troubling."

Liberal Democrat Councillor Caroline Gooch added: "There

was an accident not too long ago on the junction right by this, because there are people trying to use it as a cut-through literally all the time. It's an absolute nightmare of a road. There's a lot of Chelsea tractors and cars parked on the pavement. It's the whole congestion part that really worries me."

Rules on the nursery building mean that it must be retained for community use.

The surrounding area could soon become a new resident parking zone, which would reduce parking pressures by issuing permits.

Voting in favour were Labour Cllrs Lisa Durston and Don Alexander; Green Cllrs Abi Finch, Mohamed Makawi and Lisa Stone; and Conservative Cllr Bador Uddin. Voting against were Cllr Gooch and Green Cllr Guy Poultney.

*By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service*

A PLANNED extension in Redland described by neighbours as a "concrete hell" has been given permission.

Councillors in City Hall approved the plans despite hearing how neighbours feared their "little patch of paradise" would be ruined.

A homeowner on Cranbrook Road is planning to build an extension behind their house for an elderly relative. The houses along that road have very steep back gardens, and a lot of ground has already been excavated with giant retaining walls put up.

Neighbours have reported the works to the council, prompting visits from council enforcement officers. Both sides of the row were heard by councillors on the planning committee B on November 19, who were

## Extension objections overruled

warned their powers to intervene on issues were limited.

Graham Pears, who lives next door, said: "This is the wrong project for the wrong area. If it were a flat plot, it would be completely different. It'll transform our little patch of paradise into a concrete hell, because it's a really green, verdant area, and it's going to be a concrete pit with concrete walls all round it. It goes entirely against the character of the area in every respect."

Dhanesh Singh, the applicant, said: "We feel victimised and all we want is a resolution to all of this."

"Financially, it's been a strain. We're not asking for the world, we just want somewhere for our kids to play with their grandad."

Voting in favour were Labour Councillors Lisa Durston and Don Alexander, Liberal Democrat Cllr Caroline Gooch and Conservative Cllr Bador Uddin. Voting against were Green Cllrs Guy Poultney, Lisa Stone, Mohamed Makawi and Abi Finch. As the vote was tied, Cllr Alexander used his casting vote as chair of the committee to approve the plans.

*By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service*

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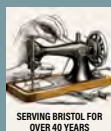
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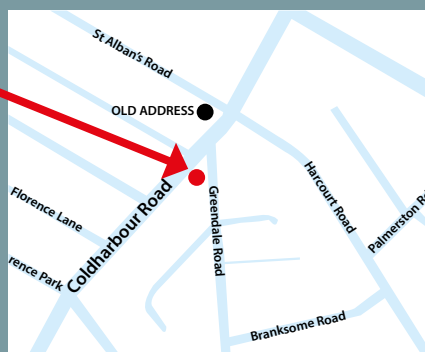
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## ■ FROM BRISTOL NORTH WEST'S MP

# Arts and culture for the many

THANK you to everyone who joined me in early November for my first 'in conversation with...' event, where the need to open up opportunities in the arts and culture for the many, not just the few, was the topic of discussion.

The event was held in the portrait gallery of Kings Weston House, with the exquisite artwork on the walls being very much on-theme for the discussion.

I was pleased to be joined by two prominent figures in Bristol's arts and culture scene to discuss the topic: David Sproston, the Co-Founder of Aardman Animations – the studio behind Wallace & Gromit and Morph – and Simon Wales, the Chief Executive of the Bristol Beacon – a charity that not only hosts big city centre performances, but also leads on music education in the West of England.

The event was a great networking opportunity, with many creatives from across Bristol

North West gathered together in one room. And the attendees continued to connect in a dedicated post-event WhatsApp group that was set up to hear people's thoughts after the event, once they'd had time to mull over what was discussed. This is something new for my events, with the link to the groups only emailed to attendees. So, please keep a lookout for this if you come to one of my forthcoming events. (Subscribe to my monthly newsletter to hear when the next 'In conversation with...' is announced at [darren-jones.co.uk/contact](http://darren-jones.co.uk/contact).)

I like that the WhatsApp groups will give attendees a chance to chat with each other. As a society, we're living increasingly individualistic lives. But it is important that we continue to get to know our neighbours and build strong community bonds.

With this in mind, my next constituency event is an informal

Winter Social on Saturday, 13th December at 3pm. It will be held in the BS6 area, but it is open to everyone in the Bristol North West community.

There's no agenda or Q&A at this event, just some mince pies, hot drinks (or something stronger if you want to buy a drink at the bar) and the opportunity to chat with me and meet other people in our local community. I'll need to be a good host and try to chat with everyone, so please don't keep me talking too long! To book a ticket, visit [darren-jones.co.uk/events](http://darren-jones.co.uk/events) or call 0117 959 6545 if you're not online.

Finally, on the topic of community spirit, thank you to everyone who helped with the Remembrance display at Southmead Hospital that marked 80 years since the end of World War II. I hear this became a Bristol North West-wide effort to finish knitting and crocheting the 1,945 small poppies and 80



**Darren Jones**  
writes for  
the Voice

large poppies needed for the installation!

• As always, if you need my help or have a question, you can get in touch with me on e-mail at [darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk), by calling my office on 0117 959 6545 or by writing to me at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

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## ■ NEWS

# Crowds turn out for Remembrance

BENEATH darkening skies, but with the rain holding off, the community of Westbury-on-Trym and surrounding areas paid tribute to the Fallen at its Remembrance Day parade through the village on Sunday November 9, as it does so movingly each year.

The parade set off from Holy Trinity Church, followed by an introduction and prayers from Dave Murray of the Baptist Church.

At precisely 11am, the powerful sound of the Last Post rang out. The Standards were dipped by representatives from local Scouts and Brownies groups, who stood lining the parade area in commendable reverence. The two-minute silence concluded with the Reveille and the Exhortation, by Robin Wright from the Royal British Legion.

Colonel Jane Thompson, Deputy Lieutenant, laid a wreath on behalf of the King. Representatives from the RBL, the Royal Navy, the Air Force, the Army, the Churches of Westbury-on-Trym and the young people of the village were then invited to lay a wreath at the War Memorial, with an opportunity for any other organisation not in the parade - including our Emergency Services - to also lay a wreath. The Kohima Prayer followed, read by Colonel Thompson.



**Wreaths were laid at the War Memorial in Westbury on Trym as part of the annual Remembrance Sunday parade**

As part of the Act of Remembrance, two names were remembered from each of the 1st and 2nd World Wars, with their poignant stories told by Phil James and Dianne Yeandel from the Parish Church. Following a reading from Rev Teddy Kolongo from the Methodist Church, hymns and prayers, the parade concluded with the singing of the National Anthem.

As ever, the parade attracted a large crowd from our communities, with people young and old joining together to pay tribute and remember. One



commented afterwards: "What a moving and special morning", noting: "in the final minutes of the service, a few golden leaves fluttered down amongst the crowd. It was beautiful and also surreal."

The event was organised this year on behalf of the community by the PCC of Holy Trinity Church. The Vicar, Father Andre Hart, has been instrumental in ensuring that this long-established Act of Remembrance continues. The cost of staging the event fell on the PCC of Holy

Trinity Church, which continues to welcome any contributions towards the cost from the community (see the QR code here).

However, it is important to note that any money collected on the day will go to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal.



THE arguments over Stoke Lodge Playing Fields show no sign of abating.

Cotham School, which leases the council-owned open space, began re-erecting a fence around the site following a court decision in October.

It wants to make the fields secure so its pupils can use them again for games lessons.

The school has now applied for planning permission for eight CCTV cameras to be installed to help it manage the site.

But this has irked those residents who have long campaigned for the public to have more access to the public open space, particularly outside school hours.

The issue escalated when the school put out a press release highlighting vandalism to the fence, particularly near the Cheyne Road access points. It said large sections of the fence had been deliberately destroyed by people using power tools.

Head teacher Jo Butler said: "I am extremely upset and frustrated by these constant attacks on Cotham School's property. This is not an isolated incident;

## School and campaigners in new war of words

our school field fence has been repeatedly targeted over a number of years now, and it is having a significant impact on our resources and our ability to provide the best facilities for our students."

"The fencing was only reinstated over the last few weeks to secure the site and enable our students and the local community sports groups to get back to using the fields safely with our permission. The damage will cost thousands of pounds to repair - money that should be spent on education and resources for our children."

We Love Stoke Lodge campaigners said the school was exaggerating the cost of the damage,

A spokesperson said: "We Love Stoke

Lodge does not condone criminal activity in any form, but neither do we condone inflammatory and misleading claims, which only serve to increase division between the school and the community. We note that the school has applied to install eight, 6m tall CCTV towers around the parkland; it has been suggested to us that the school may wish to publicise claims of this nature in a bid to justify that application."

The spokesperson went on to say that Cotham School had chosen to build a fence around the whole 22-acre site, rather than just the area it needed for PE lessons.

The campaign group is also fighting on to ensure that the public rights of way over the site are protected.

## ■ ADVERTORIAL

# Local writer launches *Carrina's Book*, a biography company established in memory of her sister

Rosia Curtis – a local writer based in BS6 – has just launched a biography and memorial book company. The company, 'Carrina's Book', will bring people's stories to life, preserving memories for generations to come.

The company provides a complete ghostwriting service for clients, overseeing the writing process as well as the printing and delivery of beautiful hardback books.

Rosia has worked as a ghostwriter for over a decade, most notably as a Senior Writer for a London-based biography company. She has ghostwritten for a broad array of clients – including a politician, an author, a freedom fighter, a war veteran, a number of high-profile businesspeople, and the general public. She has also written several memorial books, in honour of those who have died.

The memorial book work resonates with Rosia, who lost her big sister Carrina in 2006, aged just 23. Rosia says, 'Over the years, I've thought about ways to commemorate my sister. After working on memorial books, I've realised how natural and important this work feels to me. It is a real honour to work with bereaved families and friends to preserve the memories of their loved ones, and this work also connects me to my sister and to my own experience of loss.' A proportion of each book fee will also go to charities that feel connected to Carrina.

As she embarks on her new venture, Rosia will create 'Carrina's

**Five covers of books ghostwritten by Rosia**



**Rosia and Carrina in 2005, the year before Carrina died**

Book' itself, collating stories, memories and photos of Carrina, and helping her children learn more about the aunt that they never got to meet.

Rosia envisages that most books produced by her company will record the lives of living people. She says, 'My typical clients are individuals who want to record their parents' life stories, or people who feel ready to share their own story. Everyone has a story to tell. We all contain a unique and fascinating story; my job is simply to bring these to life.'

Carrina's Book currently offers three book packages, ranging from 15,000 words to 40,000 words, with bespoke options available. The packages include client interviews and the planning/writing of the

draft, as well as the creation of hardback full-colour books. These are professionally proofread, designed and printed, before being sent to the client. Rosia says, 'We work with each client to ensure that we are creating the exact book that they want. This includes honouring their decisions on the outline/ style/ tone of the book, plus having regular check-ins to ensure they are happy with everything.'

Rosia believes that there are certain things that set her company apart. She says, 'As some biography companies embrace automation and AI, Carrina's Book is all about humanness. It's about working sensitively and empathically with each client, putting their needs and desires at the heart of all we do, and ensuring that each draft is written by a human!' She also

believes that the memorial book focus sets it apart, 'Biography companies will always write books about people who have died, but I think it's essential that writers can understand and relate to bereavement. When we're working with such sensitive material, that personal experience makes a big difference.'

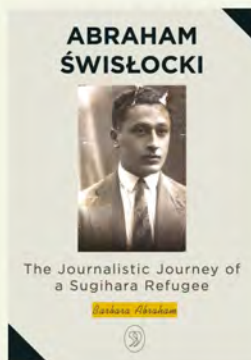
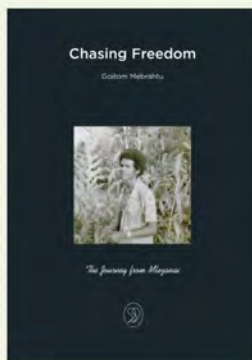
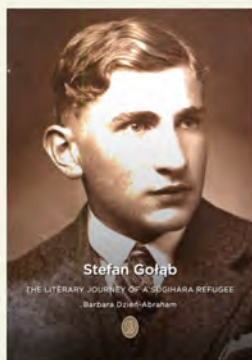
Rosia is excited to be embarking on this new venture. She says, 'It makes such a difference to people's lives when they share their story or the story of a loved one. The process is very reflective, and it can also be healing and cathartic. The books leave a legacy, and that is priceless. They are treasured by individuals, their children/families, and generations to come. I cannot wait to bring more hidden stories to life.'

For more information, please visit: [www.carrinasbook.co.uk](http://www.carrinasbook.co.uk)

Rosia also provides writing services to charities and businesses. See here: [www.rosiacurtis.co.uk](http://www.rosiacurtis.co.uk)

***What she created from those sessions blew me away. Somehow, Rosia took hours of rambling, half-formed memories and turned them into a story that felt completely me – warm, funny, and full of life. The book was beautifully written, personal and true. It captured who I am, thanks to such incredible skill and care. Carrina's Book doesn't just tell your story, but helps you rediscover it.***

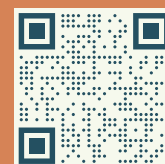
– Shaun



**Do you have a story to share?**

Contact us to start your memoir, or give the gift of a biography this Christmas.

[www.carrinasbook.co.uk](http://www.carrinasbook.co.uk)





## NEWS

# Really buzzing ...

LINDSEY Bowles and Vicky Cox have raised £2,615 for Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity by organising a pub quiz and raffle evening held at the Beehive Pub, Henleaze.

Lindsey and Vicky gathered family, friends and members of the local community to see how much money they could raise for the Bristol Haematology and Oncology Centre which had supported Lindsey after her recent cancer diagnosis and treatment.

Lindsey and Vicky said: "We'd like to extend our thanks to the local businesses of Henleaze and Westbury on Trym, who when approached for donations, gave so generously and showed such community spirit.

"The event was such a success because of the support of the Beehive Pub and those who attended. An enjoyable evening was had by all!"

Jo Howarth from Bristol &



**Lindsey Bowles supported by a staff member at the Beehive pub**

Weston Hospitals Charity said: "A big thanks goes to Lindsey, Vicky and all at the Beehive Pub for a fantastic evening of entertainment. You've helped bring more moments of joy, comfort and hope to patients at your hospitals."

For more information about Bristol & Weston Hospitals Charity, go to: [bwhospitalscharity.org.uk](http://bwhospitalscharity.org.uk).

# Blooming great!

EDITH Wilmot Florist in Westbury has been named the best flower shop in Bristol for 2025.

The shop, first established in 1895, is the city's longest-running flower shop.

Edith Wilmot has been at its current premises in Carlton Court since 1983. Its experienced florists enjoy serving the community, advising and guiding on flowers for all occasions. They pride themselves on using locally grown, seasonal flowers and environmentally friendly methods of wrapping.

The ThreeBestRated analyst team were impressed by the florist's consistent high-quality service and recognised them after a thorough 50-point inspection—covering everything from reputation and customer satisfaction to trust and excellence – awarding them 4.9 stars out of a possible 5.

With so many businesses in the village closing down recently and controversies regarding the future of the shopping centre at Carlton Court, the shop is grateful for all the support of its customers, stating: "A huge thank you to our wonderful customers for your continued support—you're the reason we do what we love every day."

Judit Kurmai, who started working there as a florist in 2014 and took over running the shop in 2023, was keen to praise the hard work of all those involved over the years, telling us: "This is not just my work; the previous owners and all my colleagues built the shop's reputation over decades. I am just working hard to keep it at the same level or maybe even increase it."



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## NEWS

### Barbara Award 'such an honour'

FOR over seven years, Westbury on Trym CE Academy staff and children have worked closely with the Alzheimer's Society to deepen understanding of dementia and explore how children and adults can support those affected. Through dedicated learning programmes, the school has raised awareness and built a culture of empathy and care.

This year, its efforts were recognised in a special way—the school was nominated for, and proudly won, The Barbara Award.

This award honours Barbara Hall, who founded Bristol Dementia Action Awareness (BDAA) with her husband Tony after her own dementia diagnosis. Barbara, a former nursery nurse, devoted her life to supporting families and children.

The Barbara Award is presented annually to a school or children's group that has made the greatest impact in promoting awareness and supporting those living with dementia.

Following a formal ceremony, the school was thrilled to welcome Tony, to an assembly, where he presented the award to all the children—recognising their commitment and compassion.



BDAA chair Tony Hall with Radio Bristol's Joe Sims and guests at the awards event



## 'You make Bristol a better place'

BRISTOL actor and BBC Radio presenter, Joe Sims, hosted the Bristol Dementia Awards for the second year running.

Joe kept everyone entertained as he shone a light on all the brilliant individuals, groups and organisations making a difference to the lives of those affected by dementia.

Joe said: "Isn't it nice to come to an event to hear about so many amazing people who do so much... You make Bristol a better place to be and I'm proud of you all."

Local charity Bristol Dementia Action Alliance (BDAA) was overwhelmed by the number of nominations received this year. The awards highlight the fantastic work taking place across the city to raise dementia awareness and support those impacted by dementia. The deciding panel included experts from organisations other than BDAA.

Finalists were treated to an afternoon tea at the Awards Ceremony at the Aztec Hotel & Spa which supported the event.

Award winners were:  
**MEDICAL PRACTICE - Armada Practice**  
**ACCESSIBLE SPACE - Charlotte Keel Medical Practice**  
**CHURCH/PLACE OF WORSHIP - All Saints Clifton**  
**RESEARCH - BRACE Alzheimer's Research**  
**INNOVATION - Avon & Somerset Police**  
**CORPORATE - Wessex Water**  
**SMALL BUSINESS - Harold Stephens**  
**DEMINTIA HERO - Carol Ellis & Doris Fu**  
**FAMILY CARER - Wendy Hellings**  
**CARE PROVIDER - Home Instead Bristol North**  
**VCSE/ORGANISATION - Bristol Brunel Lions**  
**VOLUNTEER - Lyn Griffin**  
**SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD - Jenny Walmsley**

**THE BARBARA AWARD - Westbury on Trym Primary School.**

BDAA Chair Tony Hall said: "We can't thank Joe enough for making this a laughter-filled afternoon. There is so much tremendous work going on throughout the city raising dementia awareness and actively supporting those affected by the disease. It was wonderful to receive such varied applications for the different categories."

"BDAAs aim is to make Bristol a dementia aware city – we can't do that alone but together we can have a positive impact on the lives of those affected by dementia."

"Everyone in this room is a dementia hero."  
 Any businesses, organisations or groups wanting to apply for the awards next year can contact BDAA on office@bdaa.org.uk to express their interest and book a dementia awareness session.

## Chef Darren's recipe for success

A CHEF at a local care home made the shortlist for a national award.

Darren Nelson, who works at Care UK's Trymview Hall, on Southmead Road in Westbury-on-Trym, was shortlisted for Care Chef of the Year in the National Care Awards 2025.

Darren, who has years of experience in restaurants and was previously executive chef for the Royal British Legion, joined Trymview Hall in 2019. He has an extensive knowledge of every resident's food preference and is committed to ensuring meals are tasty, well presented and of high quality.

Darren said: "I truly love working for Care UK at Trymview Hall. The best part of my role is interacting with the residents. Seeing them happy and smiling

makes everything we do worthwhile."

Darren is passionate about residents maintaining a nutrient-dense, healthy and balanced diet that allows them to live fulfilling lives. He enjoys getting residents involved, so offers show plates and grazing menus to help them choose their preferred meals.

One resident said: "Eating here is like going to one's favourite restaurant knowing that the patron will never have an off day."

Nicole Anderson, home manager at Trymview Hall, said: "We were thrilled that Darren was shortlisted for a national catering award. It's a true testament to his skills and culinary knowledge. "We are so proud of Darren and his kitchen team at Trymview Hall. They make such a positive difference."



**Darren Nelson**



## NEWS

### Following in famous footsteps

STUDENTS and staff from Badminton School visited Ronald McDonald House Bristol to hand over more than £2,000 they had raised.

The money came from events in school and from a team of staff who took part in the Great Bristol Run.

The school's donation will help Ronald McDonald House continue its mission of offering free accommodation and a supportive environment to families with children receiving care at Bristol Royal Hospital for Children.

Ronald McDonald House Charities was founded by Dr Audrey Evans, a pioneering paediatric oncologist and Badminton alumna who attended the school before the Second World War.

This historic connection added special significance to the school's fundraising efforts.



### Primary praised

COTHAM Gardens Primary has been praised by Ofsted for the progress it has made after being placed in special measures.

His Majesty's Inspector Dale Burr issued a report to headteacher Emmeline Smith and chief executive Chris Seaton after making a monitoring visit in September.

He highlighted improvements in leadership, teaching and learning, curriculum, expectations of behaviour, and support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The school welcomed the monitoring report and the improvements made in national tests in 2025. The school saw a rise of more than ten percentage points in SATS results in Reading, Writing, and Maths.

Mr Seaton said: "This monitoring visit confirms that the new leadership structure and governing body are both determined and ambitious in their plans for excellence at Cotham Gardens Primary."

### Fairfield earns maths accolade

FAIRFIELD High School (FHS) has once again been awarded The Prince's Teaching Institute (PTI) Mark for outstanding teaching in Maths.

Launched over 25 years ago, the PTI Schools Programme recognises excellence in the teaching of a wide range of subjects, regardless of pupils' backgrounds or abilities. The award highlights departments that strengthen subject knowledge, raise challenge within the curriculum and provide meaningful opportunities beyond the classroom.

Pierre Gerrard, director of mathematics at FHS, said: "Our commitment to actively engage learners through the demonstration of coherence in lessons has been a contributory factor to this year's prestigious award. I would like to thank our maths team who work relentlessly to deliver an interesting and varied curriculum, with extra-curricular opportunities."

In recent months, the maths department has demonstrated this commitment through enrichment opportunities, including trips to Oxford and the University of the West of England. These experiences enabled students to engage with mathematics in real-world contexts — from exploring historical scientific ideas to taking part in workshops showcasing the modern applications of maths.

### Troubled school to close

BRISTOL Waldorf School has announced it will close permanently on December 17.

Trustees of the independent primary school on Redland Hill cited an unsustainable financial position and falling pupil numbers as the main reasons for the decision, despite the school's alternative curriculum being a core strength for many families.

Founded as Bristol Steiner School in the 1970s, the school offers children aged three to 11 a "holistic and children-centred alternative to mainstream education."

Its curriculum combines academic studies with practical and creative learning, including woodwork, handcraft, music, movement, and outdoor learning in forest school.

Ofsted rated the school Inadequate when it visited in June 2025. Inspectors raised concerns about a weak culture of safeguarding, inconsistent curriculum delivery, particularly in early years, gaps in pupils' knowledge, a lack of consistent training and expertise in phonics teaching, and inadequate support for pupils with special educational needs and

disabilities (SEND).

Following the report, the Board of Trustees wrote to parents acknowledging the Inadequate rating while highlighting elements they said inspectors recognised, such as pupils taking "pride in their contributions to charitable projects, growing vegetables and composting" and routines that "support pupils' social and spiritual development ... helping them understand the value of teamwork". Trustees also noted governance challenges, with several members having recently stepped down, limiting the board's capacity.

A formal closure announcement has been published on the school's website, in which the Board of Trustees states: "Despite the dedication of our teachers, staff and families, it has not been possible to secure the financial and enrolment stability needed to continue operating the school into the future."

The school previously avoided closure in late 2023 after raising nearly £1 million through community fundraising and it celebrated its 50th anniversary last year.



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## NATURE WATCH

with Dawn Lawrence

# Log on for the ultimate slow entertainment

OUR Mesolithic ancestors must have felt great relief on reaching the Winter Solstice, an event they tracked by inventing stone circles and surely marked with a bonfire. The Yule log tradition continues to this day: a chocolate one will probably find its way, briefly, onto our Christmas table and a genuine one into the hearth (necessitating the gathering up of woodlice and the tracking down of that slightly creepy ginger-coloured woodlouse spider that ran behind the fire tongs).

But a log can make an ideal Christmas present – for our garden wildlife. If you are looking to add a certain bijou glamour to a garden already full of natural features then it may be just the ticket. For a log is far from being a simple lump of dead wood. It is a tempting buffet table for birds; a spring nursery for the larvae of beetles and hoverflies; a winter shelter for ladybirds; a permanent home for woodlice; and a hunting ground for centipedes and spiders. In amongst the tapestry detail of the lichens and mosses are yet more invertebrates such as springtails and tardigrades (eight-legged “water bears” under 1mm in size) though you will need a microscope to spot these. Most importantly



**Our front garden log, which is about three years old, with an attractive constellation of oysterling fungi bursting out of every surface**

Photo Dawn Lawrence

the log is food and home at once for wood-rotting fungi and, ultimately, a soil enhancer for your garden. It will eventually return its nutrients to the soil thanks to the actions of wild species that decompose the log in long, ancient silence.

A log also gives you the chance to watch one of nature's most essential processes – the successive stages of natural decomposition (the ultimate in slow entertainment!) When a

tree falls a new habitat is created – a vertical living trunk becomes a horizontal dead log. Almost immediately fungi move in, invisibly at first, attacking the softer cells under the bark and then the tough fibres of the wood itself. The stages of fungal decay are varied and can be dry or wet, firm, soft or even gelatinous. During one stage it is possible to pull out a handful of “wood” and squeeze the water out of it – it has become soft and spongy due to the breakdown of lignin in the cell walls. The log becomes a palimpsest of overlain fungal colonies. And look out for slime moulds – as their delightful name suggests they spend part of their lives looking more or less like the result of a productive cough (sorry!) but at a mysterious signal the colonial creature organises itself into bead-like rounded structures, sometimes in a matter of hours, in order to reproduce by spores.

So celebrate Christmas by leaving that fallen apple tree that went over in Storm Amy! We grabbed a couple of sections of lime trunk when our nearest street tree was felled about three years ago; the photo shows how one is doing. Pop your log into a sheltered part of the garden, sit back and enjoy...

## NEWS FROM SusWoT

**SusWoT's second Warmer Westbury Homes Fair**, supported by Retrofit West, attracted more than 100 people finding out how to make their homes more energy efficient.

The fair connected residents with trusted local experts and suppliers, helping them understand the best next steps for their property. Visitors could explore the full spectrum of solutions—from simple, cheap DIY fixes to the latest technology in solar panels, battery storage, heat pumps, and ventilation. They could also read residents' presentations and talk to them about their experiences. Many attendees signed up for practical follow-ups, including free advice calls, home visits, and discounted energy surveys.

The fair was valuable for everyone, whether they had a specific plan or were just starting to think about their energy use.

Last year's fair successfully helped residents move from planning to doing. We're delighted to hear that some of this year's



**The Warmer Westbury Homes Fair in the Village Hall**

attendees have already started putting their new energy-saving plans into action.

As we plan future Warmer Westbury Homes events, we have one question: what would help you move forward with your energy-saving plans?

### What's going on with our river?

Riverfly volunteers sample the Trym every quarter to check its health. Despite dry conditions for much of 2025, the five-year trend is slightly improving. Excellent! The Hazel Brook is faring worse, possibly due to silt from building sites upstream damaging the habitat. The Environment Agency (EA) is investigating.

Freshwater shrimps, caddis flies, olive mayflies, freshwater limpets and water snails are regularly found in the samples. Careful observation has confirmed that eels, brown trout, roach, bullheads and three spined sticklebacks live in parts of the river with flounders and mullet visiting the tidal section near Sea Mills. Herons, kingfishers and egrets are often seen and otters are known to pass through.

Trout in the Trym volunteers continue to remove rubbish (400+ tonnes to date) and have controlled Himalayan balsam.

Pollution remains a problem and we welcome Wessex Water's

five-year plan - to improve 10 Combined Sewer Overflows (CSOs) into the Trym by 2030. It's not the whole answer though and a grassroots Outfall Safari is commencing. Volunteers will survey the whole river to identify misconnected drains. These are a real issue in our rivers, trickling in nasty effluent. Escalating the worst ones to the EA and Wessex Water for action will plug a gap - no map of these currently exists.

All of us can help protect our river. To prevent blockages and environmental damage, never put oil, fat, paint, chemicals, or wipes down drains or toilets. Businesses must also take responsibility, as their potential impact is greater. Examples include car washes, construction sites (controlling mud runoff), and golf clubs (managing fertiliser runoff).

So, some hard work is being done and there is some amazing wildlife to enjoy – we need to use our drains correctly to see more. Abusing the drainage system is just as bad as dropping litter.

**Liz Viggers and Peter Coleman-Smith**



# Merry Christmas!





## NEWS

# Make The Ardagh green again

A WELL-LOVED and well-used former bowling green in the heart of Horfield Common has become the victim of its own success, with its green having become, well, distinctly not so green.

As a result, the Ardagh Community Trust (ACT), the popular community charity based on the common, has been crowdfunding to try to repair and rejuvenate the grass, future-proofing the space for a range of inclusive community events and activities.

Chrissie Storry, CEO of the trust, explained of the fundraising initiative: "We are now the proud custodians of the former bowling green. It's the most wonderful

space, right in the middle of our facilities. It's the jewel in our crown, with the cafe above, community veg gardens to the right, free-to-use tennis courts all around. We've even got a community sauna.

"But bowling green grass doesn't make a great play area surface, and definitely not after the hottest and driest summer on record. Despite our best efforts to keep it in a decent condition, it needs some serious attention, which is what this fundraiser is all about."

She added: "We have lots of plans for the future, for which the green (formerly 'the bowling green', currently 'the brown'!) is

central, but we urgently need to raise money for repairs and future-proofing. Think community gatherings, wholesome activities for mind and body, music nights, cinema screenings, and lots and lots and LOTS of opportunities for kids to run wild and play in a safe environment, right next to our gorgeous cafe and busy veg garden."

As a small charity, run by a tiny team and a dedicated core of volunteers, the ACT hopes to raise as much as possible to improve the green and create the best possible use of its space for the community. If you wish to donate, please visit: <https://tinyurl.com/4994dupx>

# Luna aims high for foodbank

## 12-year-old's charity challenge

A YOUNG charity fundraiser from Stoke Bishop is embarking on her seventh challenge to support the work of Bristol North West Foodbank later this month.

On December 15, 12-year-old Luna will be walking the highest peak of each continent on a treadmill to raise as much money as she can for the cause.

Her mum, Patricia, told the Voice: "Luna is a very big supporter of the local Foodbank; she has always questioned poverty, especially children not having the same as her. Her primary school supported the Bristol North West Foodbank during Harvest and that's how she learned about it. During lockdown she wanted to do more and started arranging food collections amongst neighbours. Next thing, she gave up her presents for her birthday and asked family and friends to give food and homebank donations, which she does every year now."

In recognition of her efforts, Luna was then invited for a volunteering day at the Foodbank and enjoyed it so much that, for almost five years, has volunteered regularly during school holidays (she even helps at Community supermarket collections). Always thinking of different ways she can help to

raise money, she has also had a stall at school fairs to sell books, toys and handcrafted items.

Asked how she is feeling about the challenge, Luna explained: "I feel very happy about doing this challenge because I know that the money raised from this will go to a really nice cause. I love helping and volunteering as well as spending time with the volunteers during my holidays."

This will be Luna's seventh fundraiser challenge for the charity. Previously, she skipped 1,000 skips ever day for a month in a kangaroo outfit, walked between the five Foodbank outlets in a Buzz Lightyear outfit, rowed 2,000 metres every day for a month, turned into a 'Jumping Bean' doing 1,000 jumps per day on her pogo stick for 30 days, cycled the distance from Lands End to John O'Groats on her static bike and swam the length of the English Channel in a swimming pool (2,276 laps).

Anyone wishing to support Luna on her seven-peak challenge may do so at the following link and donations are appreciated. <https://www.gofundme.com/f/lunas-week-7-peak-fundraiser-bristol-north-west-foodbank>



Luna, 12, hard at work at the Bristol North West Foodbank

## NEWS

# Councillor quits 'anti-democratic' Greens

COUNCILLOR Paula O'Rourke has assured readers of Clifton Voice that she remains committed to serving and representing them despite her decision to quit the Green group at City Hall.

Cllr O'Rourke said she felt she had to step away because she disagreed with some Green councillors who had staged walkouts and displayed signs when gender critical comments were made by members of the public at council meetings.

Her fellow ward councillor Jerome Thomas did not take part in the actions.

Cllr O'Rourke said she did not "deny, diminish, or question the validity of transgender identities" but wanted to uphold the right of those with gender-critical beliefs to express their views to their elected representatives.

In a statement explaining her decision further, she said: "I am taking this step to defend free



**Councillor Paula O'Rourke**

speech, to uphold the democratic process, and to reaffirm that councillors must be able to hear from all citizens—not only those whose views are comfortable or convenient.

"Councillors, unlike private citizens, do not have a right to be protected from offence. We

are elected precisely to listen to those we represent, including when what we hear is difficult.

She said the debate around sex and gender had become "reductive, binary and hostile".

"I reject the notion that one must stand in one camp or the other. We can, and must, hold two principles at once: that trans people deserve full equality and respect, and that women who fear the erosion of their rights deserve to be heard—not caricatured, dismissed, or shouted down.

"I remain committed to environmental justice, to social fairness, and I am grateful for the support I have had over the years, but I cannot continue within a group that chooses symbolic protest over democratic responsibility.

"My hope is that by standing apart, I can help to restore a more honest, plural and respectful political culture—one in which we face disagreement,

rather than flee from it."

In response, the Green group said: "We would like to thank Cllr O'Rourke for her time representing the people of Clifton for the Green Party, and are disappointed that she has chosen to see out the rest of her term as an independent.

"While we agree that members of the public have every right to make statements to their elected representatives, we also believe that councillors have every right to feel safe in their place of work. Expressing a point of view does not mean ignoring the impact words have on people.

"Local politicians everywhere cannot be expected to stay in a room if they feel under attack for their very existence or for the existence of their colleagues."

"The Green Party stands firmly in support of trans people and will continue to fight for all those most marginalised in our community."

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## ■ ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Mediating in probate disputes

In many contentious probate matters, court proceedings are more likely than not inevitable. Litigation places significant strain on family relationships, often widening existing rifts and creating new animosities that can persist long after the legal issues have been resolved. It is also costly, time-consuming, and frequently unpredictable.

Mediation and other forms of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) offer a constructive alternative that can keep such disputes under control and, in many cases, avoid the need for a full trial.

One of the key benefits of mediation is that it allows the parties to retain control. In proceedings, the decision ultimately rests with the Judge, who must apply legal principles even when they may not align with what the parties consider fair.

By contrast, at mediation, a neutral third party, typically an experienced barrister or accredited mediator, facilitates discussions without

imposing a decision. Parties are usually placed in separate rooms, each supported by their legal representatives. The mediator moves between the rooms to convey proposals, test the strengths and weaknesses of each party's case, and encourage constructive negotiation. This shuttle process helps the parties to focus on realistic outcomes and often diffuses tension, enabling progress that might be impossible in a joint meeting.

Cost savings are another significant advantage. Contentious probate claims can involve extensive correspondence between parties, disclosure exercises, expert evidence, valuations and multiple hearings. Mediation can dramatically reduce these costs by enabling early resolution, sometimes after only limited exchange of documents and correspondence. Even where a case does not settle on the mediation day itself, the process often narrows issues, clarifies misunderstandings, and lays the groundwork for a later settlement.

Speed is also an important consideration. Court proceedings can easily take 12 to 24 months or more to reach trial, with further delays if appeals arise. Mediation can take place at any point and can resolve matters within days or weeks if the parties are willing to engage constructively. This can be particularly valuable where estate assets are deteriorating, where beneficiaries require clarity for financial planning, or where executors are unable to complete their duties until the dispute is resolved.

Finally, mediation helps preserve, or at least prevent further erosion of, family relationships. Even where reconciliation is impossible, a respectful negotiated settlement is far less damaging than adversarial court proceedings. Parties often find that being heard in a facilitated environment reduces hostility, allowing them to move forward more easily after an emotionally charged dispute.

For all these reasons, mediation and other means of ADR should be



**Martin Hall Solicitor**

viewed as an integral part of the contentious probate process, offering a practical, humane, and efficient means of resolving probate disputes. If you require advice or representation concerning a mediation in a probate dispute, our Contentious Probate team is available to assist.



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## NEWS

# Police recruited criminals

AVON & Somerset Police recruited officers who had criminal records or cautions without properly considering the risks when vetting them, government inspectors found.

A report by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services said the force needs to improve vetting procedures, professional standards and counter-corruption arrangements.

The government inspectors said that of 37 cases investigated on vetting new recruits over the last three years, the force did not "consider identified risks or relevant risk mitigations" for 10 of them.

One of these recruits posed "several significant corruption risks" and was initially refused clearance by the vetting unit, which "correctly highlighted the relevant corruption risks". But this decision was overturned by senior officers and the person was employed, and only years later – immediately before HMICFRS's inspection – were they granted clearance, without the correct procedures being followed.

The report, published on October 29, said: "Given the corruption risk posed, this isn't acceptable. We brought this case to the personal attention of the chief constable."

The regulator concluded that the force needed to improve the way it made vetting decisions, handled complaints and allegations of misconduct, and monitored its IT to identify potential misuse.

A police spokesperson said the force had "invested significant resources – money, technology, and some of our best people" into its Professional Standards Department, Counter Corruption Unit (CCU), and vetting. The force said it accepted the inspectors' findings with "humility and determination" and had already taken action in response to the recommendations.

Deputy Chief Constable Jon Reilly said: "We are committed to continuous improvement and welcome ongoing scrutiny. The vast majority of officers and staff dedicate their lives to keeping the public safe. There is no place in policing for those who don't share our values."

*By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service*

# Commissioner role to be axed

AVON & Somerset's Police and Crime Commissioner will be scrapped, the government has announced.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said in November that all PCCs across the country will be abolished in 2028.

She said the move will save the taxpayer "at least £100 million" and help to fund frontline officers.

Ms Mahmood said: "The introduction of police and crime commissioners by the last government was a failed experiment."

"I will introduce new reforms so police are accountable to their local mayoralties or local councils. I would like to recognise the efforts of all current and former police and crime commissioners, and thank them. These individuals served their communities and will continue to do so until they have completed their current terms."

The Home Office says public understanding of PCCs remains low, despite efforts to raise their profile, and two in every five people are unaware PCCs exist.

Avon & Somerset's Labour PCC, Clare Moody, was elected in 2024, narrowly defeating Conservative Mark Shelford in an election that had a turnout of just over 23%.

Ms Moody said: "It is important to stress that this is not an immediate change. The current system remains in place until 2028, and all the important work under way, including commissioning vital support services, scrutinising police performance and building safer communities, continues as normal."

"The relationships and partnerships built across our communities remain central and will be maintained throughout any transition. This will not be a rushed process. It will be carefully planned, and more details will be shared as they become available. My focus is the same – working with police to keep people safe, supporting victims and working with partners and communities to prevent crime and harm."

A spokesperson for Metro Mayor Helen Godwin, who would take over the PCC's responsibilities, declined to comment.

## MESSAGE FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

# To all on duty, as we celebrate

AS we approach the festive season, I find myself reflecting on what binds us together as a community.

Christmas is a time when our streets and towns are lit up, not only by decorations but by gestures of kindness, moments of understanding, and traditions shared with families and friends.

It is also a moment to pause and appreciate the often unseen work that holds our communities together throughout the year.

I want to express my deepest thanks to the volunteers, community groups, support workers and charities across Avon and Somerset who give their time and their compassion to others.

They support families in need, offer warmth to those

who feel alone, guide young people through difficult moments, and provide care when crisis strikes.

Their dedication is not seasonal – it continues long after the decorations are taken down – but at Christmas, it feels especially important to acknowledge it.

I also want to thank the police officers, staff, and volunteers who will spend the festive period working to keep us all safe.

While many of us will be celebrating around the table with our families, they will be on duty – answering calls, protecting the vulnerable, responding to emergencies, and offering reassurance when people need it most.

Their work places significant demands on them and their families, and I am

deeply appreciative of the role they play in maintaining the safety and stability of our communities.

This time of year reminds us of the strength that comes from looking out for one another.

It is easy to feel divided in the age of online conflict and instant commentary, but the real character of our communities is found in how we treat each other face-to-face: in the conversations we have, the support we offer, the neighbour we check in on.

Small acts of kindness have the power to bring people together and remind us that we share more than we disagree on.

As we celebrate, I encourage everyone to take a moment to think of those who may be struggling, those

who are grieving, and those who feel isolated. If you are able, reach out, listen, and make space for someone who might need it. That is how community cohesion is built – person by person, gesture by gesture.

I wish you and your loved ones a safe, peaceful and enjoyable festive season.

May it be a time of warmth, connection, and hope for the year ahead.



**With Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody**



## NEWS FROM THE METRO MAYOR

# We need to lift children out of poverty

SIX months have now passed since my election as Mayor of the West of England.

I'm proud to be doing things differently, and have taken the time to reflect on what we have already achieved together in this new chapter for our region.

Kids Go Free this summer saw more than 910,000 free journeys for children and young people across our region, putting almost £1 million back into the pockets of parents or carers.

We've already secured the best part of £1 billion for our region – including £752 million for better buses, more trains, and mass transit plans.

On top of that, the government is investing £40 million into Twerton and Hartcliffe, devolving £25 million for us to grow our creative industries, and funding solar panels for two dozen schools.

Working with council leaders and partners, we're investing in new and existing train stations, rolling out green electric buses, and launching new routes.

Regional funding is supporting better walking and cycling options across the West, and investing in parks and high streets.

Together, we've launched an ambitious new Growth Strategy, with a plan for 72,000 new jobs over the coming decade.

Our new business board will help secure investment, while the Youth Guarantee gets more

young people into work and training.

We've made a strong start but there's more to do, and the best is yet to come.

One of the issues that we can – and must – tackle together is child poverty.

The West is seen as an affluent, progressive region but that reputation belies a painful reality.

In Bristol, 35% of children are growing up in poverty. In some parts of our towns and cities, every other child faces that daily uphill battle.

Our rural areas face similar challenges, with between one in four and one in five children in poverty, compounded by isolation and a lack of opportunity.

This means hungry children unable to learn or play, families bouncing between temporary accommodation, parents blocked from work by constrained childcare, and people cut off from family, services, and social life by unaffordable travel.

This month, building on the commitment in our Growth Strategy, I will be publishing a regional child poverty action plan to complement the work of government and use local levers to help lift as many children as possible out of poverty.

Working with amazing local organisations, we can make a generational impact on the life chances of our most precious asset: our children



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

and young people.

National reforms including the extension of free childcare, school meals and breakfast clubs, funding for new nursery places and 1,000 family hubs, are already making a difference that families can see and feel here, even before a national child poverty strategy is published.

From next April, 2,000 more schools will join the breakfast club scheme and, from September, another 500,000 more children will get free school meals.

I'm determined as your mayor to use every possible lever to try to break the cycle of poverty and give people hope.

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## ■ FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

### W-o-T & Henleaze: Stephen Williams, Caroline Gooch and Nicholas Coombes (Lib Dem)

#### Westbury Hill car park charging

Unfortunately, Bristol City Council have started the legal process to charge for parking in the Westbury Hill car park. The charging plan was passed by Labour and Green Party councillors voting together on the Transport Committee. Nicholas was able to secure 1 hour of free parking by amending the motion. A Traffic Regulation Order has now been advertised, with objections possible until 12 December 2025.

Fees would apply between 8am and 6pm every day, with parking restricted to 4 hours only. Charges are £1.50/hour, with the first hour free. You can find the details online, including how to object, by searching for 'Bristol TRO'. Some permits will be available to the medical centre.

Your Liberal Democrat councillors have opposed the introduction of charging in neighbourhood car parks. We think fees would displace parking onto nearby residential roads, and ultimately discourage drivers from visiting and shopping in our village.

#### Vehicle dwellers around the Downs

Over the last year Stephen has been working with the chair of the Housing Committee and senior officers to develop a new approach to lived-in vehicles. The new policy starts with the premise that living on the highway is unsustainable. It is a terrible situation for those living in vehicles and the impact on settled residents and the city's open spaces can be detrimental. The new policy will go to housing committee the week before Christmas. It will set out the objective of providing managed sites for the relocation of a large number of lived in vehicles. It will also accelerate personal engagement with the people living in vehicles, to assess their needs and help them find more suitable accommodation.

Enforcement action has continued throughout the year, without waiting for the adoption of this new policy. Caravans are regularly towed away from around the Downs and from other locations across the city. These actions are taken when caravans are deemed to be abandoned or where there is clear evidence of criminal activity or high impact anti-social behaviour.

In several places around the city Neighbourhood Enforcement Team officers have been able to trace public defecation to groups of caravans. In mid November Stephen (as chair of the Public Health committee) and the chair of the Housing committee agreed that enforcement action needed to be taken, classifying the roads around the Downs as "high impact". The council will be seeking from the court an extension of the powers obtained earlier this year, so that people can be served notices to move. It is important to state that many vehicle dwellers act responsibly with their sanitation needs but a large enough minority of them act without reasonable con-



sideration for the rights of other people who use the Downs and other Bristol parks. At the time of writing this is a dynamic situation, a further update will be given in the media and of course in our next column in January.

#### Vining Hall planning application

Cllr Caroline Gooch has escalated a planning application at the Vining Hall to the Planning Committee. The owners of the building on Bayswater Avenue are seeking to build a six bedroom House of Multiple Occupancy adjacent to the Vining Hall. Caroline asked for this application to be heard by the committee owing to the number of local objections received. The planning committee met on 19th November and approved the plans, despite the objections and issues raised by local residents.

#### Report street improvement suggestions online

Bristol City Council is launching a new map-based website to collect ideas for improving our streets. The website allows residents to mark their ideas on a map, and look at other peoples ideas. This would include requests for traffic calming, new signage, parking restrictions or to identify road safety concerns. This will allow the Council Highways team to consider requests together, and create plans for neighbourhoods, instead of fixing issues one at a time. Your local councillors have already transcribed several requests from members of the public into the new service. You can find the page by searching for 'Bristol improve my street'.

#### Coldharbour Road zebra crossings

Cllr Nicholas Coombes has requested that all three zebra crossings on Coldharbour Road are repainted. The crossings at Bayswater Avenue, Devonshire Road and Cairns Road are faded and worn, causing safety concerns for local people. We have previously had success getting crossings repainted in Westbury on Trym Village, and Henleaze Road, so are

optimistic that these can also be brought up to standard.

#### Lyndhurst Road sign

The no through road sign at the end of Lyndhurst Road has been replaced. It had been missing for several years, but two residents wrote to Cllr Nicholas Coombes in the space of a week to raise the issue. He reported this to the Council, and a new sign was installed within the month.

#### Drain unblocking

At this time of year, we find out which road drains are blocked. Nicholas has reported blocked drains and their very large puddles on Kellaway Avenue at the Cairns Road junction, and on Springfield Grove at the Owen Grove end. It can take a frustratingly long time to resolve if the drain is damaged, or if parking blocks access for unblocking. Please do get in touch with your Westbury & Henleaze local councillors if you have reported a drain to the council and nothing has happened.

#### Parrys Lane closure

Cllr Nicholas Coombes has been writing to Bristol University Estates Department around the closure of Parrys Lane, while the Wills Hall retaining wall is rebuilt. They now have plans to re-open the road in one direction only during construction works, and Nicholas is pressing for this to happen as soon as possible.

#### Council venue affordability

Bristol City Council has contracted out all of its catering operations, including functions and events held at City Hall. However, instead of attracting new business, the new contractor is just massively raising prices for existing users. As local councillors, we have been contacted by community groups who have seen their usage fees increased eight-fold. Stephen and several Liberal Democrat colleagues have formally raised this unintended consequence with the Chief Executive of the Council. Some short term compromises have been reached, in time to save events such as International Women's Day in 2026, but too late to save others such as the CAMRA beer festival. We will continue to campaign for fair rates for community groups. The whole sorry saga is an example of the impact on city life caused by the continued strangulation of local government finances by the national government.

#### Merry Christmas and best wishes for 2026

Caroline, Nicholas and Stephen wish all of the residents of our ward a happy and restful Christmas and very best wishes for the new year ahead.

#### Contact us

cllr.nicholas.coombes@bristol.gov.uk 07386 698 750  
cllr.caroline.gooch@bristol.gov.uk 07386 698 669  
cllr.stephen.williams@bristol.gov.uk 07386 698 772

## NEWS

# Victorian law halts mini golf proposal

A MINI GOLF course and padel courts for the Downs have been ruled out due to the limits of a Victorian law. Last year plans were revealed to set up a mini golf course and padel courts in part of a drive to get more income to help pay for the upkeep of the area.

But the Downs Act of 1861 prevents anything “enclosing” part of the parkland. While these two ideas have been scrapped, other proposals have now been put forward — including a new 10k race and an inflatable obstacle course too.

The inflatable obstacle course would be set up in May next year, and the 10k run would be held in October. Their potential locations are not yet known. The Downs committee faced questions about the mini

golf on November 17.

Conservative Councillor Henry Michallat, lord mayor and the chair of the committee, said: “In light of some issues that might crop up with the legalities of the mini golf proposal, it’s the current position that the Downs committee is not going to progress with the mini golf proposal at this stage.”

David Freed, a Merchant Venturer, added: “It will not be going ahead, full stop.”

The mini golf course would have been set up behind the water tower. Its operator would have helped maintain the public toilets there. Another potential option next year is for Forwards Festival to host a concert on the Friday night before the festival, on August 28. The Feast On food festival is also hoping

to hold concerts on an extra weekend next summer.

Susan Carter, from the Downs for People campaign, said: “That’s good news. The same thing happened with the padel court proposals that we spent time on explaining that you cannot enclose the Downs. That’s the nub of this. The Downs Act says you cannot enclose the Downs and the only exception is for ornamental purposes.”

Earlier this year, the campaigner previously warned the Downs committee that a mini golf course could spark a legal challenge. She said if the course were enclosed, this would be unlawful under the Victorian law, and a challenge would be “very expensive” to fight in court.

## Dog walker charges to be reduced

PROFESSIONAL dog walkers will pay less than other groups, an update on upcoming licence fees for Bristol parks reveals.

The fees are due to be rolled out early next year in parks across the city, although the exact level of charges has not yet been made known.

However, after pressure from dog walkers, Bristol City Council has agreed to reduce fees for their licences, compared to other businesses such as personal trainers holding bootcamp classes. These were initially proposed at £450 per business in one park, earlier this year.

The reduced fees were revealed by Lib Dem Councillor Stephen Williams, on November 21. This came after warnings that £450 would be unaffordable.

Rebecca Wilson, one affected dog walker, said: “There isn’t anywhere like £450 profit in an average, good, responsible dog walker’s business per year. It’s a hand to mouth business model. With fees anywhere above £100, this cost will be passed directly to your constituents using invaluable dog walking services.”

The primary aim for the licences, according to Cllr Williams, is to monitor what commercial activities are taking place in parks.

# Fitness class users oppose licence fees for use of Downs

PEOPLE who attend fitness classes on the Downs are opposing “unfair” new licence fees for personal trainers which they say threaten the survival of independent businesses.

The instructors could soon be charged £900 a year for classes up to 20 people and £2,600 for groups larger than 20.

The licence fees are planned after concerns about the large size of some bootcamp classes and loud music played. It’s unclear when they would be brought in, but a group of Bristol councillors and Merchant Venturers who are responsible for the Downs want to limit exercise classes.

The Downs committee was due to discuss the potential new fees on November 17. However the Downs manager, Luke Mackenzie, did not attend the committee meeting and so the fees will be discussed at the next one in January — leaving bootcampers on tenterhooks. Ahead of the meeting, several exercise class attendees sent in written statements on the fees.

Jo Cameron said: “I attend regular bootcamps on the Downs and they have kept fit and mentally and physically fit since retiring from the NHS. They become an important part of my life. It is professionally run, and my fear is that licensing is too much and not in line with other wards.

“Each instructor has to pay for a licence in the same

organisation, not just one licence per business, which makes no sense as they often may only take ad hoc classes and so are not financially viable. Potentially businesses [might be] unable to survive financially.”

Gabriella Russell added: “In an age of increasing social isolation, particularly as more people work from home, the bootcamp provides invaluable social connection, motivation, and mutual support. Many of us have made lasting friendships through the group — it has a profound positive impact on both physical and mental wellbeing.

“I have never felt stronger, fitter or happier than since I joined. It has given me a grounding and local community that I didn’t know I needed, but now completely depend on. I don’t know what I’d do if it was forced to close. The optics of imposing significant new fees on small, responsible local businesses — costs that will inevitably be passed on to participants — are not good.”

Another concern was that personal trainers would not be able to transfer their licences to other trainers. Some trainers occasionally need cover from another instructor so they can go on holiday for example, but under the non-transferable system this would add another £900 a year.

Rachel White is a personal trainer who has held bootcamp classes on the Downs for more

than 13 years. In a written statement, she said her classes are from 6.30am to 7.15am, with minimal impact on other users of the Downs, are far away from houses and never play music.

She added: “The utmost of respect is always given to the space and other users and we fully support the importance of contributing to the upkeep of this cherished green space. We always tidy away the equipment quickly and efficiently after the sessions and on some occasions have also cleared litter and dog waste left by other visitors to the space.

“I am hugely passionate about what I do and am immensely proud of the role I play in helping people experience healthier, happier lives. Our group is so much more than a fitness class — it is a positive, supportive, family-like community that relies on the Downs as a space to exercise, connect, and improve overall wellbeing.”

Separately, Bristol City Council is planning similar licence fees for businesses which use other parks across the city., (see story on right of page.)The council is not going to consult the public about the changes, but will reveal how much the fees will cost early next year.

*Reports by Alex Seabrook,  
Local Democracy  
Reporting Service*



## NEWS

# Unexpected lesson

A CLASS of university students caught a couple having sex in a car in daylight on the Downs. The amorous couple were parked on the Circular Road in between two vans and so the birds and the bees formed a surprise feature of the students' tour of nature in the area.

The car was parked next to the pavement along a row of vans which people live in. The prominent public display of affection has led to a warning that some people on the Downs "do things that you might not ordinarily do".

Anna Stevens, learning manager at the Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife team, told the Downs committee last month: "When I was out with a group of first-year university students, we had an incident where we were walking on the Circular Road, right next to the vehicles that are parked on the side. Right in between two of the big vans, we had a small car.

"As we walked past, we realised that there were two people having sex in the car.

And I obviously have 17 students with me, by the time we realise that it's too late. They weren't young, I could have been with 10-year-olds, but I wasn't, thank goodness.

"It's just something that people need to be aware of, if they don't go up on the site a lot. When you have got people living in a place where they feel that's a place where it's their home, it gives this idea that you can do things that you might not ordinarily do. They were in a public place, in broad daylight."

While it's unclear when the couple were caught, the warning came as Bristol City Council declared some parts of the Downs a public health risk. Two leading councillors said they had evidence of sites being used as "organised toilet facilities, filled with human waste".

An unnamed member of the public added: "I very strongly feel that Anna and her guests need protecting, and we're not protecting them."

*By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service*

## REVIEW

### How to End A Story: Collected Diaries by Helen Garner

WHY do I write down this stuff?' Helen Garner asks herself in 1984. 'Partly for the pleasure of seeing the golden nib roll over the paper as it did when I was ten.' A good enough reason to keep a diary but 'partly' does a lot of work here for one feels that Garner is compelled to write. Her diaries are practice for and assessments of her writing life, her art, they are records of quotidian moments made beautiful by careful attendance, insights into her deep love for her daughter, her alternate grim realism and despair as romantic loves go wrong, her piano playing, her cynicism and her dislike of herself at her most cynical.

The diaries extend over twenty years beginning in 1978 when Garner is thirty-seven, beginning a new relationship and has recently published her first novel *Monkey Grip*. Individual entries are not dated so the gaps between them are unknowable – could there be multiple entries for one day, weeks between thoughts that seem to follow closely? Some comprise a single short sentence, some a few lines of dialogue, some quotations from her own reading, some longer, more flowing narrative – often culminating in a sharp, humorous comment.

Reading them is like sitting before a giant box with twenty layers of delicious truffles. 'Oh just one more,' you think, 'this is only a small one... Perhaps I'll just polish off this row.' It is utterly addictive. You start writing down phrases you would like to remember and quickly realise that you cannot write out the whole book – it is 800 pages. You become invested in people whom you meet for no more than a few sentences and know only as 'the stranger,' 'the boy,' 'the diplomat and her daughter.' You hear the crushing silence after her love tells her to stop practising the piano when he is in, feel the warmth in her cheeks when her teenage daughter, cutting a moment before, silently goes to sit with her, laugh, roll your eyes and grow angry at the things people say and quite understand the need to smash a few plates, even if clearing up the shards is too melancholic.

There is nothing voyeuristic in the experience, nor gratuitous in the detail. Garner's observations make one consider what a diary is for – the pleasure of writing is one answer but so too is the act of keeping it a provocation – and will inspire reflection, conversation and perhaps one's own writing.

*Elizabeth Moss, Heron Books, Clifton*

## BOOK REVIEW

IF you enjoy a gripping horror story, then *Old Soul* by Susan Barker is the book for you. The novel starts in 2023 at Kansai International Airport in Japan where two strangers meet up having missed their flight to Amsterdam. Mariko is a single Japanese woman, who works as an International Relations Manager for a Tokyo bank. Jake is a primary school teacher who lives and works in London.

Over a meal, they discover that they each have lost someone dear to them in brutal and unfathomable circumstances. Jake's best friend Lena and Mariko's twin brother Hiroji both died in 2011,

# Old Soul by Susan Barker

shortly after encountering the same mesmerising dark haired woman. On the night that he died, Hiroji calls Mariko, to tell her that he had entered the mind of a higher dimensional God. In the morning, she discovers that Hiroji is dead. His naked body is found in an abandoned shrine in a bamboo forest. The post mortem reveals that his internal organs had been reversed from left to right.

Lena earns money as a life drawing model in Stoke Newington. She is befriended

by Marion, a dark haired woman who gives Lena her sketch of her. Lena, moves in with Jake and his partner, Simon. Lena tells Jake she feels a dark force, reaching inside her, groping in her internal organs. Jake and Lena argue and she moves out. Her body is found a few days later. The post mortem revealed she also had her internal organs reversed from left to right.

Jake is determined to find out more about this woman who is known as the Old Soul and he travels across the world gathering testimonies from the loved ones left behind by her many victims.

The testimonies are interspersed by a third person account of a woman and a young girl travelling across New Mexico, deftly revealing how it connects to Jake's quest to find and stop the Old Soul before she



kills any more victims. This is an utterly addictive and beautifully written horror story which slowly reveals its dark secrets. It is full of engrossing characters including the highly complex, beguiling and gorgeously drawn Old Soul whose journey we follow for over 200 years. For this book, and many more visit your library. *Review by Bob Deacon of Bishopston Library*

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**Wednesday** (11am-4pm)  
**Thursday** (11am-4pm)  
**Friday** (11am-4pm)  
**Saturday** (11am-4pm)  
**Sunday** (closed)

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**Friday** (1pm-7pm)  
**Saturday** (10am-5pm)  
**Sunday** (closed)

## FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

### Southmead: Kaz Self and Kye Dudd (Labour)

#### Safety for women and girls in our parks

This November, councillors unanimously approved Labour's plan to make parks safer and more inclusive for women and girls. Women are three times more likely than men to report feeling unsafe in parks, and 93% of women say they feel unsafe after dark in their local park, compared to 20% during the day. As a result, the council will now work on improving parks through measures such as improved lighting and sight lines, a more visible staff presence and will produce an annual Safe Parks Progress Report to Council, to include feedback from women and girls.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

Area Committees have been meeting to progress the CIL projects for the 25/26 period. In Southmead we have been able to secure funding for new benches at Elderberry Walk park and small improvements to Fonthill park. The process for identifying projects for 26/27 has started. After a fallow year for potential transport related improvements, we can consider these in this round. If you have any projects, please contact your local councillors as soon as possible. The online tool 'Improve my Street' is being used to identify potential highway improvements, if you are online please consider using this to log a request, the link is <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/streets->



travel/tell-us-about-a-road-safety-concern

#### Road centre line painting

The Transport and Connectivity Committee voted to adopt a policy of not repainting white lines in the centre of some of our roads. This policy was brought forward based on very limited research, on the basis roads may be safer for cyclists by doing this. Labour councillors on the Committee (including Cllr Kaz Self) are very much in favour of improving safety for cyclists but weren't prepared to make this a policy without concrete evidence, hence voted against it.

#### Libraries

The Green /Lib-Dem led administration have stated that they will protect the funding for libraries, but when inflation is considered, this actually means a real term cut. We are concerned that some of the less well used libraries (like Southmead) may be closed in next year's Council budget.

A petition against library closures started by Labour got nearly 5000 signatures and was debated at November's council. Stephen Williams is the councillor in charge of our libraries, in that debate he was unable to state that no libraries will be closed.

#### Council waste

Did you get a letter saying that there was a "typo" mistake in your last council tax bill? The council were legally obliged to write to residents about this at a total cost of almost £200,000! Bear that in mind if you hear councillors complaining they don't get enough funding from central government.

#### Season's greetings

Best wishes for the festive season and a happy new year.

**Kye & Kaz**

[cllr.kye.dudd@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.kye.dudd@bristol.gov.uk) 07795 509 531  
[cllr.kaz.self@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.kaz.self@bristol.gov.uk) 07386 698 716

## DOUBLE NFA25 AWARD WINNERS!



**We're incredibly proud of our very own...**

**Adam Smith:** Office Manager of the Year  
**Bradley Barber:** Young Person of the Year

Both received national recognition in competitive categories at the 2025 National Fenestration Awards, with tough competition from nominees across the UK.

Their hard work, passion & dedication reflect everything The Window Hub stands for and we couldn't be happier to see their efforts recognised.



**G25  
AWARDS  
FINALIST**

The excitement doesn't stop there as we're also one of the TOP 4 Installers in the UK & the only company short-listed in Bristol, Gloucestershire, Somerset & Gwent for the G25 Awards this November.

**Wish us luck!**



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## ■ PHARMACY COLUMN

# Colleagues and customers help us turn challenges into success stories

As we approach the end of 2025, December often feels like a whirlwind of deadlines and tasks to tackle. I hope that as you read this column, you find a moment of calm amidst the chaos.

First and foremost, I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our wonderful community for your unwavering support of Kellaway Pharmacy and the NHS over the past year.

It remains an incredible privilege to be part of your healthcare journey, and we take that responsibility to heart. As we reflect on this time of year, we also remember those we have lost. Their memory remains in our hearts.

This year has presented its challenges—medicine

shortages, and seasonal pressures (which felt like a year-long season!) and another every well attended vaccination programme.

As I reflect on the year, for our very diverse Kellaway Pharmacy team has also been impacted this year by local and national campaigns, sparking broader conversations about identity and belonging.

Each hurdle brought its own set of complexities, but what truly made the difference as we navigated these challenges was you. Your patience during our busiest moments, your kindness when things didn't go as planned, and your humour and trust in us to provide care and support mean the world to us.

We also acknowledge

a failure. While colleagues have celebrated milestone achievement's such as Ade's Honorary Doctorate from the University of Portsmouth, we have not been able to improve our pharmacy team's work-life balance as much as hoped. While we faced longer hours and shorter breaks, the fulfilment we find in our work has been immense.

Our affordable weight-loss treatment offer, travel health vaccinations, the ever popular NHS Pharmacy First treatment service all continues to provide accessible and convenient care.

Looking ahead, our mission remains steadfast: to do our best for our community while enhancing the NHS offerings with equity and excellence.



**0117 9246579**  
18 Kellaway Avenue,  
Westbury Park, BS6 7XR

If there's anything we can improve, please don't hesitate to let us know. If we've fallen short in any way, we want to apologise, make it right for you and improve.

Thank you for allowing us to be an integral part of your journey. Here's to a bright and healthy new year ahead,

## LOOKING TO LOSE WEIGHT?

**WE OFFER SUPER AFFORDABLE WEIGHT LOSS CARE**

**WE ALSO NOW PRESCRIBE NHS-APPROVED WEIGHT LOSS TREATMENT**

**Pop in to Kellaway Pharmacy and talk support, plans, costs and expectation**

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**18 Kellaway Avenue, Bristol BS6 7XR**  
**Tel no: 0117 9246579**  
**Find out more on:**  
**[www.bristolweightlossclinic.co.uk](http://www.bristolweightlossclinic.co.uk)**

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## WHAT'S ON

### DECEMBER EVENTS

#### ■ LA SCALA DELI HENLEAZE

The Italian Hub of Henleaze. Join us for our **3 YEAR ANNIVERSARY EXTRAVAGANZA ON DECEMBER 10TH**: Starting with a welcome Spritz or Prosecco, come and sample 10 Italian liqueurs/wines while we graze on Aperitivo style spreads of Mediterranean nibbles (from cheeses to imported meats, and extra surprises from our kitchen). Unlike our wine tasting events, this is a standing evening with limited seating. So there'll be plenty of opportunity to work your way around the room, sampling nibbles and wines from some of our favourite regions & having a chatty evening. Each ticket comes with x5 raffle entries for the La Scala Anniversary draw, we will be calling out winners on the night.

#### La Scala Anniversary Prize

##### Draw:

- x2 Wine & Dine La Scala tasting menu vouchers (£190)
- The Big Christmas Hamper (VA£150)
- x2 Wine Tasting La Scala vouchers (£80)
- Jeroboam Dogajolo, Tuscan red wine 3L (£70)

Our 2026 Wine Tasting events dates Jan - April are now live on our website

#### SPECIAL EVENTS - Wine & Dine

Tasting Menu Dinner Parties - 5 courses - 6 wines  
Dec 13 - Umbria  
Jan 17 & Feb 28 - Lombardia  
Mar 14 & Apr 4 - Lazio

Tickets at [www.lascaladeli.com/tickets](http://www.lascaladeli.com/tickets) or book in store. Private enquiries welcome

#### December 15th

##### ■ FILM CLUB CHRISTMAS

**PARTY, 2.00pm.** Live musical entertainment from a member of the Mini-Concerts team, performing a range of well-known and loved Christmas songs. With festive refreshments and plenty of opportunities to sing along! Booking required. Carers welcome, easy access Refreshments £4. St. Peter's Church Hall, The Drive, Henleaze BS9 4LD. For more information, please call 0117 435 0063.

#### Friday 12 December

##### ■ THE FILTONES CHRISTMAS

**CRACKERS CONCERT**, at St Andrew's Methodist Church, Elm Park, Filton, BS34 7PS 7.30 p.m. Tickets £10 from choir members or by cash or cheques at the door please. Doors open 7.00 p.m. Raffle and retiring collection in aid of the charity "inHope".

#### 12th December

■ **THE 2025 WESTBURY SINGERS CHRISTMAS CONCERT** will be held at Westbury Baptist Church in Reedley Road on Friday December 12th, starting at 7:30pm. Doors 7.00pm. Our exciting programme includes well known carols (some with the opportunity for you to join us!) and a variety of other delightful seasonal pieces. Adult tickets are £10 (Young folk are encouraged so it's free for under 19s) and will be available from members or on the door. Ticket enquiries to [wotsingers@gmail.com](mailto:wotsingers@gmail.com). Free refreshments are included.

#### February 15th

##### ■ MASSIVE SOUND - FAURÉ'S

##### REQUIEM WORKSHOP AT BRISTOL BEACON

A Singing Celebration of the Britton Organ. 9am - 4.30pm & concert performance 6pm - 7pm. £28.00 - £72.80 Incl. booking fee. Join a choir of 350 voices, to unleash the mighty power of Bristol Beacon's newly-refurbished Britton Organ and sing Fauré's Requiem, plus other organ-choral masterpieces. No experience needed - just bring your passion! We'll rehearse, then close with a relaxed concert alongside professional soloists in Beacon Hall. Find out more and book at [bristolbeacon.org/whats-on/massive-sound-workshop](http://bristolbeacon.org/whats-on/massive-sound-workshop)

## REGULAR EVENTS

### Various days

■ **WESTBURY WILDLIFE PARK** The park's peaceful setting, with children's play area and cafe, is open for you to enjoy with your friends and family from Fridays to Sundays from 10am to 4pm. Refer to the website [wwp.f.uk](http://wwp.f.uk) for events, activities and volunteering opportunities.

#### ■ WEST OF ENGLAND BRIDGE

**CLUB** meet at the RAFA Club, 38 Eastfield, Henleaze. Thursday afternoon is for improvers, and Monday and Friday afternoons, are for more capable players. These are EBU recognised sessions. You may come alone to any afternoon session or Wednesday evening when a partner will be

found. The two evening sessions are Wednesdays and Fridays. For more information go to our website at [www.woebridgeclub.co.uk](http://www.woebridgeclub.co.uk) or contact our Secretary Alan on 0117 4526947.

#### Monday

■ **PLAY BOWLS** at Canford Park in a friendly, social atmosphere.

Qualified coaches and equipment provided. Contact: Les on 07305695579

■ **TEATIME CHURCH** - Children and families are welcome to join us once a month at the back of Holy Trinity Church in Westbury-on-Trym for crafts, games, stories and songs, followed by supper for all the children. There is also a baby/toddler area and a monthly Lego challenge. This is a very informal service, where children/adults can learn a little about God and the church in a fun and friendly environment. All are very welcome! Please visit our website for further information and monthly dates <https://www.westbury-parish-church.org.uk/teatime-church/>



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PREGNANCY & POSTNATAL  
@GOLDFINCH CREATE AND PLAY  
WESTBURY ON TRYM  
STARTING MONDAY 3<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER

POSTNATAL 12.30PM  
PREGNANCY 10.30AM

FOR MORE INFO & TO BOOK  
[www.pilateswithsylvia.com](http://www.pilateswithsylvia.com)  
[pilateswithsylvia@gmail.com](mailto:pilateswithsylvia@gmail.com)

#### ■ CANFORD BOWLING CLUB

season has started again, and new members of any age or experience would be very welcome. Free coaching is available. If interested please email [canfordbowlingclub@gmail.com](mailto:canfordbowlingclub@gmail.com) or ring 07504254499. Come and give it a go.

#### ■ BRISTOL HOME LIBRARY SERVICE

- We are a free service for any adult who lives in Bristol and who can't get to their library but still wants books or audio books. Volunteers call monthly. Contact us if you would like to volunteer or know someone who needs us. [BHLSVisits@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk](mailto:BHLSVisits@royalvoluntaryservice.org.uk) or 07714 898558

■ **BRISTOL STITCHERS** - a friendly, independent creative members group which meets three times a month at Helliwell Room (Horfield

Parish Church Hall, Horfield) offering Talks, Meet and Stitch sessions, Meet and Stitch Plus and Workshops. More information here: <https://bristolstitchers.wordpress.com/about/> Contact Joanne our Chair here: [bristolstitcherschair@gmail.com](mailto:bristolstitcherschair@gmail.com)

■ **WESTBURY SINGERS** - If you love singing and a varied repertoire, do try our friendly, non-auditioned, 4-part choir. We're especially keen to attract Tenors and Basses. We sing on Monday term-time evenings from 7:30pm - 9:30pm at Carey Hall, Westbury Baptist Church (far left entrance off the car park). Reading music is helpful but by no means essential. Simply come along one Monday evening (three free taster sessions available) and/or see [www.westburysingers.org](http://www.westburysingers.org) for more info and recordings, or email us on [wotsingers@gmail.com](mailto:wotsingers@gmail.com).

#### ■ ASSASSIN FITNESS CLASS

- Mondays 6:15pm, St Peter's Church Hall Henleaze. 45min Class £6. ASSASSIN is a Brand New Choreographed Combat style fitness class that allows you to let go of stress, whilst realising your inner SASS! It combines many elements of fitness including conditioning, cardio and plyometrics for a complete workout! Are you ready to become an Assassin? Aim, Shoot and Fire! Special September Offer - Your First Class is FREE!!! For more info and bookings please contact me: instructor. [izzyy@gmail.com](mailto:izzyy@gmail.com) or on Instagram @assassin\_izzyy

■ **DICKENS SOCIETY.** 7pm, at Leonard Hall, Henleaze URC, Waterford Rd, Bristol BS9 4BT. Talks, costumed readings, book club and social events. New members welcome. See [www.dickens-society.org.uk](http://www.dickens-society.org.uk) or phone Roma on 0117 9279875 for further details.

#### ■ WESTBURY ON TRYM WOMEN'S

**INSTITUTE** meets on the third Monday of the month in the Westbury Village Hall, Eastfield Road, BS9 4AG, from 2.00 - 4.00 pm. We have interesting speakers, and extra activities of crafts, lunch club, skittles and outings. Our lively, friendly and inclusive group welcomes visitors at any meeting. For more information call Sascha on 07961619806 or Traci on 07766073917

#### ■ BRISTOL GOOD AFTERNOON

**CHOIR** rehearses at Westbury-on-Trym Methodist Church (BS9 3AA) 2-4pm (term time only). We are a fun and friendly, non-audition, commu-



## WHAT'S ON

nity choir for both male and female voices - one of 32 Good Afternoon Choirs who 'sing in the afternoon' around the South West and further afield. New members are always welcome and, whether you come alone or with a friend, we will be very pleased to meet you! For further details please visit our website - [www.goodafternoonchoir.org](http://www.goodafternoonchoir.org) - or contact us on 01761 472468 or via e-mail at [gac@grenvillemusic.co.uk](mailto:gac@grenvillemusic.co.uk)

### Tuesday

■ **WESTBURY PARK WOMEN'S INSTITUTE** meets on the first Tuesday of every month in the Girl Guide Hut on Westmorland Road from 7.00 - 9.30pm. We are an active and friendly group with a varied programme plus extra sessions for craft, coffee, book clubs, walks etc. Visitors are always welcome and for more information do call Sue on 07813795936 or email [westburyparkwi@gmail.com](mailto:westburyparkwi@gmail.com)

■ **COMMUNITY SIGHT LOSS HUB**, First Tuesday of each month, 11am-1pm at Trinity Church, Henleaze. Join our coffee morning for blind and partially sighted people to socialise with others and receive advice and guidance from our experienced advisors. Tailored support also available by appointment by calling Sight Support West on 0117 322 4885.

■ **CARERS' SUPPORT GROUP** run by Bristol Dementia Action Alliance, held on the first Tuesday of each month, St Peter's Church, Henleaze, BS9 4LD, 2pm-4pm. A chance for carers to share stories and gain support from each other. For further information, contact Tony Hall, [office@bdaa.org.uk](mailto:office@bdaa.org.uk)

■ **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP** meet on Tuesday mornings at Westbury-on-Trym Methodist Church, 10.30am-noon. An interesting programme of speakers; come along to make friends. For more details, ring Kate 07905 064720.

### ■ SCOTTISH DANCING TO KEEP FIT AND HAVE FUN.

Bristol Westbury Scottish Country Dance Club. Beginners taster package, (phone Tina: 07568 537154): £20 for 4 wks starting Sept. For new-to-us dancers, first night free, then £6pw. (Email: [maggiekirkup@gmail.com](mailto:maggiekirkup@gmail.com)). All classes are at St Peter's Church Hall, Henleaze, Tuesdays 7.30 - 9.30 pm. Details at [www.westburyscottish.org.uk](http://www.westburyscottish.org.uk). SC dancing also possible with RSCDS Bristol: see Thursdays columns.

■ **BRISTOL HARMONY WEST GAL-**

**LEY CHOR AND BAND** sing and play lively church and village music from the 18th century. St Edyth's Church Hall, St Edyth's Road, Sea Mills, 7.30 pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday each month. All voices (SATB), string, wind and reed instruments welcome. No auditions but ability to read music helpful. [www.bristolharmony.wordpress.com](http://www.bristolharmony.wordpress.com) or call Fritjof 0117 924 3440. Contact before attending.

### ■ WESTBURY FOLK/COUNTRY

**DANCING** - come along to have some fun folk dancing on Tuesdays 1.30 - 3.30pm at Westbury College in College Road. All dances are called and refreshments are available. FFI contact Christine on 07775 628524 or [codonnell100@btinternet.com](mailto:codonnell100@btinternet.com).

### ■ COMPANION VOICES BRISTOL

is recruiting new members. We meet in Easton on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7 to 9 pm to learn soothing and uplifting songs by ear and build skills in sensitivity/compassion/loving presence to sing at the bed-sides of people nearing the end of life. To join or support us in this work, contact Valerie on [bristol@companionvoices.org](mailto:bristol@companionvoices.org). Visit [www.facebook.com/CompanionVoicesBristol](http://www.facebook.com/CompanionVoicesBristol) and [www.companionvoices.org](http://www.companionvoices.org).

■ **BRISTOL A CAPPELLA:** Tuesdays 7.30pm, Victoria Methodist Church. Bristol A Cappella is an award-winning mixed barbershop chorus of around 30 members who love to sing close harmony a cappella. Our songs are mainly from pop music, with a bit of rock and some musicals. [www.bristolacappella.co.uk/](http://www.bristolacappella.co.uk/) Contact: [membership@bristolacappella.co.uk](mailto:membership@bristolacappella.co.uk)

### Tuesday and Saturday

#### ■ BRISTOL HF RAMBLING CLUB

We are a friendly sociable club with a variety of walks. We have 2 Tuesday walks of either 8-9 miles or 5-6 miles. On Saturdays we have varying length walks including a hill walk eg Brecon Beacons once a month. If you would like more information please visit our website.

### Tuesday, Wednesday & Thursday

■ **FRIENDLY BRIDGE SW** is a Bridge Club operating on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 10am to 1pm at Stoke Bishop Village Hall. We also offer online bridge and face to face tuition. New faces are always welcome. Please email [friendlybridgesw@gmail.com](mailto:friendlybridgesw@gmail.com) or call Gareth on 07921-788605 for further information.

### Wednesday

■ **HENLEAZE CHORAL SOCIETY** meets at Henleaze Bowling Club, Grange Court Road, Wednesdays

7.30 to 9pm. A small, unauditioned choir singing varied music. New members welcome. For info, contact Kathy, 0117 949362 <http://www.henleazechoralsociety.org.uk/>

■ **HENLEAZE CHESS** From 2.45pm - 4.30pm on selected Wednesdays in Coffee #1 on Henleaze Rd for informal chess with your coffee and cake. Typically twice per month. All ages and abilities welcome. No membership or fee. Please join us if you spot us or contact us at [markRthwaites@gmail.com](mailto:markRthwaites@gmail.com) for expected forthcoming dates.

### ■ GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT SUP-

**PORT GROUP:** Meets on the third Wednesday of the month from 2.00 pm - 4.00pm. In The Goronwy Room, St. Peter's Church, The Drive, Henleaze. BS9 4LD

### ■ A CLASS FOR EVERYBODY!

**KEEP FIT**, St Peter's Church, Henleaze, Wednesdays, 10-11am, £8. Improve your health and wellbeing with this low-impact exercise class. With music from the 60s to today's pop to enjoy a supple strength workout. Call Louisa: 07725 091429. Email Louisa: [chairaerobicslouisa@gmail.com](mailto:chairaerobicslouisa@gmail.com)

### ■ WELCOME WEDNESDAY

Friendly and free coffee afternoon on the last Wednesday of the month, 2-3.30pm at The Beehive Pub, Wellington Hill West, BS9 4QY. Meet new people, have fun, and find out what's happening in your local area. Call 0117 435 0063 for more information.

### ■ A GENTLE WAY TO KEEP FIT & HAVE FUN! CHAIR AEROBICS,

St Peter's Church, Henleaze, Wednesdays, 11.15am-12.15pm, £8. Maintain and progress your strength, stability and balance at our seated and gentle standing exercise class. Songs from every era to enjoy and complement a workout for mind and body wellness. Call Louisa: 07725 091429. Email Louisa: [chairaerobicslouisa@gmail.com](mailto:chairaerobicslouisa@gmail.com)

■ **GOLDEN HILL WI** Meets the first Wednesday of every month. 1-3pm. Golden Hill Sports Ground, Wimbleton Road, BS6 7YA. A vibrant, lively, afternoon WI in BS6. We have a

varied programme to offer members. Visitors and new members will be given a warm welcome. For more information contact Pam Scull at [goldenhillwi@gmail.com](mailto:goldenhillwi@gmail.com).

### ■ TEA AND TOTS - GROUP FOR

**UNDER 5s.** Wednesdays during term time, 10-11:30am, Newman Hall building, W-o-T, BS9 4DR. Free onsite parking. Toys for all ages, sensory play, and craft. £2 suggested donation includes refreshments. Email [toddlergroup.sacredheart@clifftondicease.com](mailto:toddlergroup.sacredheart@clifftondicease.com) Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61579193183721>

### ■ HENLEAZE BOWLING CLUB

Wednesday morning whist drives, 10.00 for 10.30, all welcome. £2.00 including tea and coffee. Located in Grange Court Road next to Newman Hall. Please see our website for information and all social events. <https://henleazebowlingclub.org.uk/social-events/>

■ **COME AND ENJOY** free tea and cake in a friendly atmosphere at Holy Trinity Church, Church Rd, Westbury-on-Trym every Wednesday 10.30-12. Call 0117 9508644 (mornings) for more information

### ■ HENLEAZE BOWLING CLUB.

Wednesdays from 10.00 - and Thursday's from 13.30 Short Mat bowls in the clubhouse all welcome. Other social events during the winter can be found on our website <https://henleazebowlingclub.org.uk/social-events/>. Phone, Tom Logan, on 0117 962 1669 or email [hbcsec@henleazebowlingclub.org.uk](mailto:hbcsec@henleazebowlingclub.org.uk) for further details.

### ■ BRISTOL SCRABBLE CLUB

meets every Wednesday evening at 7pm until 10pm at Filton Community Centre, Elm Park, Filton BS34 7PS. New members welcome- first visit free so come along and give us a try. For further information contact Tania by email at [tania lake@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:tania lake@yahoo.co.uk)

■ **HEALING** Spiritual Healing is available from 2pm to 3.30pm by the accredited healing team at Westbury Park Spiritualist Church, Cairns Road BS6 7TH. Just turn up or visit [www.westburyparksc.org](http://www.westburyparksc.org)

### ■ OPEN DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE

For those interested in developing their spiritual awareness and mediumistic ability. 7.15 for 7.30 start at Westbury Park Spiritualist Church, Cairns Road BS6 7TH. Just turn up or visit [www.westburyparksc.org](http://www.westburyparksc.org)

■ **SWIFTS INCLUSIVE SPORTS**

## WHAT'S ON

swimming sessions are for adults 18+ with any type of disability (hoist available) 7-8pm. £5 per session at Henbury Leisure Centre. Contact Karen Lloyd at 07734 335 878.

### Thursday

■ **TODDLERS TOGETHER** is a parent and toddler group for the community. It takes place every Thursday during term time from 10-11.15am at Westbury-on-Trym Methodist Church Hall, BS9 3AA. There are toddler toys, a baby area, a weekly craft activity, singing, drinks and biscuits and a final prayer to end the session. We ask for a £2 voluntary donation per family on the door. You can just turn up - no need to pre-book. To find out more about this group, visit <https://www.westbury-parish-church.org.uk/toddler-group/>

■ **EMMANUEL WESTBURY TODDLER GROUP.** A play group for children aged 0-4, their Parents & Grandparents. Every Thursday in term time, 10:15-11:45. Northcote Scout Hall, Great Brockeridge, BS9 3TY. £3 per family, payable on door. Includes homemade cakes, hot & cold drinks and all activities. Come along or look us up at <https://emmanuelbristol.org.uk/events/emmanuel-westbury-toddlers/> or enquire by email to [avbradley@outlook.com](mailto:avbradley@outlook.com)

■ **TRINITY HENLEAZE GUILD** meet fortnightly on Thursdays at 2pm in the Leonard Hall Trinity Henleaze URC Waterford Road. We have an interesting and varied programme of speakers and new members and visitors will have a warm welcome. For more information contact Jenny on 01179620108

■ **LEARN TO MEDITATE.** Four weekly sessions starting September 11th. Thursdays 4-5 p.m. at The Well Centre for Spirituality, 38 Church Road, W-on-T, BS9 3EQ. Learn to change yourself and so change the world - opening our hearts to the inner source of our being. For more info or to register [shelagh.layet@gmail.com](mailto:shelagh.layet@gmail.com) or 07983 594182.

■ **FRIENDLY CLUB** meets every Thursday from 2 - 4pm in the Methodist Church Hall, W-O-T. We are a lively group of older people who meet to chat, play Scrabble or cards. Trips out and entertainments are arranged, plus we have tea and biscuits. Do come and make some new friends.

■ **ARCHITECTURE & BUILDINGS GROUP U3A** meets at Henleaze United Reformed Church Meeting Room, Waterford Road, 2-4pm on the fourth Thursday of the month except July, August & December. We are a small shared interest group. No previ-

ous knowledge required. Contact Rod for further information. Email: [rodathey@gmail.com](mailto:rodathey@gmail.com) or call 07792 200949.

### ■ FRIENDS TOGETHER DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CAFÉ

A dementia accessible café for all on the first Thursday of every month, 10am-12pm; The Randall Room at All Saints Church, Pembroke Rd, Clifton. Support, guidance, information and friendship with complimentary tea, coffee and homemade cake. No need to book - just come along and be a part of our community! For more information contact All Saints Parish Office: 0117 974 1355

### ■ HENLEAZE BOWLING CLUB

Thursday afternoon short mat bowls, 13.30, all welcome £3.00, tea and coffee provided. Located in Grange Court Road next to Newman Hall. Please see our website for information and all social events. <https://henleazebowlingclub.org.uk/social-events/>

■ **WEST BRISTOL ORCHESTRA** is a small, friendly amateur group that enjoys music-making without public performances. It meets on Thursday nights in term time at St. Peter's Church, Henleaze at 7.15-9.15pm. We would especially welcome more string players. Please visit our website for further details at [maths.bris.ac.uk](http://maths.bris.ac.uk)

### ■ SCOTTISH COUNTRY DANCING

Join us for fun, fitness and friendship (singles welcome). First evening free! RSCDS Bristol. New/Inexperienced dancers 7-8.30pm (£4). Intermediate/Advanced dancers 7.30-10pm, (£6). St.Monica Trust, Oatley House Main Hall, BS9 3TN. [www.rscdsbristol.info](http://www.rscdsbristol.info). Contact Ruth 0117 968 3057. SC dancing is also possible on Tuesdays with (Bristol) Westbury SCDC: see Tuesday columns.

### ■ HENBURY SINGERS WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS.

Do you have a yearning to join a choir? Whether you are new to choirs, or returning after a short or long break, a warm welcome awaits you at Henbury Singers. We meet each Thursday 7.30 - 9.15 at Stoke Bishop Primary School, Cedar Park BS9 1BW during school term times. We perform a wide range of sacred and secular music under our conductor Barbara Rusbridge. No auditions. See our

website [www.henburysingers.org](http://www.henburysingers.org). Contact the secretary at [secretary@henburysingers.org](mailto:secretary@henburysingers.org)

### ■ HEALING FOR WELLBEING - NEW TIME 5.00 PM TO 6.15 PM

Feel more relaxed, peaceful, calmer. Drop in sessions (no need to book) with trained practitioners. Venue: Redland Meeting House, 126 Hampton Road, BS6 6JE. All welcome - donation basis. For more information, visit <http://www.facebook.com/BristolHealingGroup> or <https://www.thehealingtrust.org.uk/healing/healing-centre> or phone Selina 0117 9466434.

### ■ BRISTOL BACH CHOIR

are now recruiting new members. We are a friendly auditioned choir of between 30 and 40 singers. All voice parts are welcome. We rehearse on a Thursday evening at Bristol Grammar School from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. If interested please contact Julie at [membership@bristolbach.org.uk](mailto:membership@bristolbach.org.uk)

■ **SINGING TO REMEMBER** We meet on 1st, 3rd and 5th Thursday from 2 - 3.45 pm in The Bradbury Hall, Waterford Road, Henleaze. It is a friendly, supportive group for people with dementia and their carers. Anyone interested can phone me 0117 9426095 to book a place or discuss.

■ **HIGHBURY BADMINTON CLUB:** Pete Stables 0117 950 1524 or [www.pete4458.wixsite.com/highburybadminton](http://www.pete4458.wixsite.com/highburybadminton) Thurs 7:45pm mid September to End April, Westbury-on-Trym Village Hall

### ■ HENLEAZE FLOWER CLUB

welcomes new members. Annual membership £52. Demonstration meetings on 2nd Thursday of the month, 2pm, Bradbury Hall Waterford Rd. Henleaze. Plus optional Practice Classes on 4th Thursday. We meet every month except December and August. Please contact Jenny York, Club Chair [yorkjenny2@yahoo](mailto:yorkjenny2@yahoo) or phone/text 07880 700270

■ **FOLK NIGHT** every third Wednesday of the month at the Victoria inn Chock lane, Westbury on Trym. 7.30-10.30pm. All musicians and singers welcome or just pop in and listen. Call 0117 959 0834

■ **HENLEAZE LADIES' CHOIR** Come and join us at St Peter's Church Hall. We are a friendly choir and meet on Thursday afternoons in term time from 1.45 to 3.45. There are no auditions, and the ability to read music is not necessary. Contact Jeanette on 9685409 or Jane on 07752 332278.

### Friday

■ **BRISTOL SPANISH CIRCLE** -

Come and meet a group of friendly people and enjoy talks in Spanish, musical events and social evenings. We meet every month from September to June, usually on the last Friday of the month, at St Peter's Church Hall in Henleaze. For info, see <https://www.spanishcirclebristol.com/>.

### ■ WESTBURY ON TRYM COUNTRY MARKET

10:00 - 11:30 every Friday in the Westbury on Trym Methodist Church Hall. A cooperative of local producers selling seasonal items including baked goods, preserves, local honey, eggs, cheese, ham, plants, flowers and hand made craft. It's free to come in and view. New producers, particularly cooks, are especially welcome. More information [www.avoncountrymarket.co.uk](http://www.avoncountrymarket.co.uk), [mail@avoncountrymarket.co.uk](mailto:mail@avoncountrymarket.co.uk) or call 0117 950 3897.

■ **FOLK NIGHT** every third Wednesday of the month at the Victoria inn Chock lane, Westbury on Trym. 7.30-10.30pm. All musicians and singers welcome or just pop in and listen. Call 0117 959 0834

### Saturday

■ **SEA MILLS REPAIR CAFE** offers sewing, woodwork, general, electrical and cycle repairs at the Methodist Church, Sea Mills Square, from 10am-12pm, every second Sat (except August). Voluntary service run by experienced repairers. Donations welcome. FFI see Facebook @ seamillsrepaircafe or email: [repair-cafe.seamills@gmail.com](mailto:repair-cafe.seamills@gmail.com)

■ **FAMILY ART WORKSHOPS** at Goldfinch Create and Play, Canford Lane in Westbury-on-Trym. These take place on the first Saturday of every month from 10am - 11am and are designed for the whole family to enjoy together in a relaxed environment. Seasonal nature based crafts for older and younger attendees and fun, sensory trays for toddlers. Please visit <https://www.goldfinchcreateandplay.co.uk> to book your spot and view our other offerings for toddlers, children, teens and adults.

### Sunday

#### ■ BRISTOL ORCHESTRAL PLAYERS

are a friendly orchestra meeting monthly for workshop-style rehearsals. We enjoy exploring varied classical repertoire, from well-known symphonies to lesser-played orchestral works. Musical Director Nicola Ashton started with us in November. Join us on Sundays 6:30-9:00 in St Peter's Church Hall Henleaze. New members very welcome, particularly string and horn players. Contact [joannamellors34@gmail.com](mailto:joannamellors34@gmail.com) or check our website <https://www.bristolorchestralplayers.co.uk/> for further information



## ■ NEWS

# Charity cycle ride ends with a proposal

INSPIRED by a woman who spent her summers in Carcassonne picking grapes, her son and a group of friends and family have completed a 1400-kilometre charity cycle ride from Oxfordshire to the south of France in her memory.

Ben Last took on the challenge in recognition of the care his mum Sue and the family received from St Peter's Hospice in Bristol in the final stages of her life before she died in 2020.

"The care they provided for my mum, and the support they offered to us, her family, was incredible. It made a huge difference, and I wanted to do something to give back and honour her memory," said Ben, a financial analyst who lives in Redland.

"Mum spent several summers in her twenties in Carcassonne, where she would pick grapes in the vineyards and sell fruit in the local market in exchange for bed and board (and a two-litre-per-day wine allowance!).



"Carcassonne remained very special to her, and she often shared stories about the summers she spent there. Shortly before she passed away, Mum took us back and showed us the fields and streets that had brought her so much joy."

The cycling group, which

included Ben's father, Stephen, and brother, Tom, camped along the way and faced a couple of days nearly washed out by rain.

"We ate an incredible amount of baguettes, croissants and Haribo. And at the very end of the trip, I proposed to my girlfriend, Daisy, using one of

my mum's rings that my dad had kept in his bag for the entire journey – and she said yes!

"It was the perfect way to end the trip, and something I know my mum would have been so pleased about."

For Ben, the route held deep personal meaning, linking two places that had always been special to his mother.

"She went to live in Great Tew – an idyllic Oxfordshire village at the age of four; it left a huge impression on her, and she went back many times to visit. Her ashes rest by the cricket pitch and under the cedar tree at the top of 'Cow Hill'."

Along with his father and brother Tom, 31, the group included Archie Morfoot, 28, Max Heiberg-Gibbons, 28, Sam Milliner, 28, Dom Griffiths, 28, all from Bristol; Daisy Handford, 27, from Leicestershire and Ben O'Connor, 27, from Yorkshire.

St Peter's Hospice relies on donations and fundraising to deliver its services.

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## ■ VINEYARD NEWS with INGRID BATES

# Stripping the willow for the sake of our vines

WHILE we're waiting for the vines to go dormant, we've started pollarding the willow that grow around the vineyard. We try and keep on top of this every year to make sure that the growth never gets too thick. If we leave it for longer than a year, the willow stems become much thicker and pollarding becomes a much bigger task. We chop the main growth back because we don't want the trees to grow full size and shade the vines. Willow grow at an amazing rate of several metres per year and do a great job of protecting the vineyard from wind and maintaining a warmer, more stable environment which the vines love.

In other news, some of you may remember that we ran a crowdfunding campaign back in 2021 to raise funds to buy some land to complement our existing rented field in North Somerset. We're delighted to announce that we recently completed on the purchase of two acres of land near the villages of Bitton and Kelston between Bristol and Bath. The new vineyard sits on south facing, sandy slopes with incredible



views over the river Avon and surrounding countryside.

For those of you who supported our crowdfunding campaign with the 'adopt a vine' option, you should have received an e-mail but do get in touch if you missed it.

On the wine front we have sparkling white,

rosé, red available as well as still rosé so do get in touch if you are interested in free local delivery.

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## Helping local groups bring people together

At Harold Stephens, we believe that a strong community is one where people feel connected, valued, and supported - especially in later life. That's why we set up the Harold Stephens Community Fund, helping local groups across North West Bristol to reduce loneliness and social isolation among older adults.

Over the past year, we've been inspired by the creativity and compassion shown by the groups we've supported. From festive lunches to dance sessions and peaceful garden gatherings, each project has helped people reconnect, share joy, and feel part of something bigger.

Our funding helped provide Footprints group at Ebenezer Church a Christmas meal that brought people together in friendship and laughter. Attendees said they came along "to meet up with lovely people and enjoy a

hot meal" and for the "great community spirit" - simple words that show how powerful small acts of connection can be.

For carers supported by Alive Activities, a few hours at their allotment session made a world of difference. One carer said:

*"I'd had a particularly challenging start to the week so it was lovely to 'leave it all behind' for a couple of hours in such a calming and peaceful setting... I left feeling like I'd recharged my batteries ready to tackle the rest of the week!"*

We've also helped fund Flamingo Chicks, whose intergenerational dance sessions fill the room with smiles. As one participant put it:

*"It's a day full of joy! I particularly love the sessions which combine the generations and seeing those individuals who may be hesitant at the beginning of the session full of smiles at the end."*

This December, as many of us are lucky

enough to gather with friends and family, it's a reminder of how important connection is and why we're proud to continue supporting those who help to make it happen all year round.

Applications are open for the next round of Harold Stephens Community Fund grants until **15th January**. We're offering up to **£500** to support local groups working to reduce isolation and help older people feel more connected. If your project is making a difference, or if you have an idea for a new project, we'd love to hear from you.

Find out more and apply at [www.haroldstephens.co.uk/community-fund](http://www.haroldstephens.co.uk/community-fund)

Feel free to give us a call on **0117 3636 212** or email [community@haroldstephens.co.uk](mailto:community@haroldstephens.co.uk) if you'd like to know more about what we're doing in the local community.



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## When's your bin day over Christmas and New Year?

Collections pause on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Year's Day, so your waste and recycling will change for a few weeks.

### Normal bin day

### Festive bin day

Thur 25 Dec

Fri 26 Dec

Mon 29 Dec

Tue 30 Dec

Wed 31 Dec

Thur 1 Jan

Fri 2 Jan

Mon 5 Jan

Tues 6 Jan

Wed 7 Jan

Thur 8 Jan

Fri 9 Jan

Mon 12 Jan

Tue 13 Jan

Wed 14 Jan

Thur 15 Jan

Fri 16 Jan

Mon 29 Dec

Tue 30 Dec

Wed 31 Dec

Fri 2 Jan

Sat 3 Jan

Mon 5 Jan

Tue 6 Jan

Wed 7 Jan

Thur 8 Jan

Fri 9 Jan

Sat 10 Jan

Mon 12 Jan

Tue 13 Jan

Wed 14 Jan

Thur 15 Jan

Fri 16 Jan

Sat 17 Jan

Back to normal from Mon 19 Jan



## Christmas tree collections

Put your tree out with your first wheelie bin collection from Tuesday 13 January.

You can also take trees to your nearest Household Reuse and Recycling Centre or search online for local charities offering collections in your area!



## 2026 collection dates

Download your 2026 collection calendar from [bristolwastecompany.co.uk/festive](https://bristolwastecompany.co.uk/festive)



## Don't forget...

Garden waste collections and paid bulky waste services pause from Monday 22 December to Monday 26 January 2026.



Scan me!

For more info and festive tips, visit [bristolwastecompany.co.uk/festive](https://bristolwastecompany.co.uk/festive)



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## TURNER'S VISION

# See Christmas clearly!

### Five Winter Eye Care Tips You will be Glad to Know

Christmas is a season of joy, generosity and a little festive chaos. But while you are enjoying a well-earned glass of wine and laughing your way through family traditions, your eyes may not be having quite as much fun.

Bright daylight, chilly winds, central heating and long days out at Christmas markets can take a toll on your eye. So, as an early Christmas gift from all of us at Turners Opticians, here's our five-step guide to keeping your eyes healthy and your vision clear throughout the festive season.

#### 1. Stay hydrated (your eyes will thank you)

With Christmas parties, cozy festive drinks and mulled wine galore, December often brings more alcohol than any other month. It's all part of the fun – until dehydration strikes. This can leave you with tired, sore or irritated eyes. **Top Tip:** Keep a bottle of water with you at home and on the go. Blink & drink (water!) regularly to stay hydrated and keep your eyes feeling comfortable.

#### 2. Watch out for holiday hazard

From mischievous pine needles to airborne champagne corks and last minute home preparations for Christmas, December is full of surprises – and not all are good for your eyes. **Top tips:** Wear protective eyewear when doing last minute DIY and look out for children enthusiastically enjoying their new toys!

#### 3. Cut through the winter glare

The low winter sun can be dazzling, especially when it reflects off wet roads or icy pavements. It's particularly tricky when you are driving – and modern headlights do not make things easier at night either!

**Top Tip:** Keep sunglasses to hand and try our driving glasses with clear comfort lenses designed from the inside out to reduce driving glare & let you see clearly.

#### 4. Give your eyes a lens break

Cold air and indoor heating can leave your eyes feeling watery or dry, especially if you wear contact lenses; why not treat your eyes this Christmas and try our extra moist contact lens refreshing eye drops? **Top tips:** Switch to your glasses now and then to give your eyes a break.

#### 5. Don't forget your greens.

It is possible to power through Christmas on chocolates and savoury treats alone – but your eyes deserve better. Nutrient-rich foods help support healthy vision, especially during darker months. Omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins A, C and E all play an important role in keeping your eyes in great shape. **Top tip:** Add dark, leafy greens (sprouts), oily fish, walnuts and citrus fruits to your festive menu alongside the roasties and stuffing.

If your eyes are feeling the winter strain, our friendly expert team is here to help. We are proud to provide advanced eye care, specialist lenses and award-winning clinical expertise to families across Bristol. Book your appointment today by calling our Henleaze practice on 01179622474 or our Fishponds practice on 01179654434.

Thank you for reading, and from all of us at Turners Opticians, we wish you a joyful, eye-healthy Christmas.

*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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## SPORT

NEWLY promoted Clifton experienced a tough baptism to National League One rugby with early season clashes with top teams.

However, three successive victories since the end of October have placed them in mid table. A 55-29 trouncing of Bishops Stortford at Cribbs Causeway was followed by a hard fought away success at Leicester Lions.

Top of the table confident Londoners from Rosslyn Park arrived as visitors in mid November with a sizeable band of supporters who were to return defeated along the M4.

### CLIFTON 37 ROSSLYN PARK 29

The league leaders came unstuck against a resurgent Clifton who outplayed them in several aspects of this thrilling encounter with superior kicking, solid scrums and the ability to maintain greater discipline and composure as the pressure grew and emotions ran high.

However, Clifton turned the screw when it mattered most and put serious pressure on the visitors' line with flanker Naquan Smith

# Clifton find their feet



**Brad Talbot charging, left**

**Right: Harry Johnson with Simon Quarrie from Clifton Sausage**



crashing over for a vital try on his first start for the 1st XV. This came following a sustained team effort. During that period Clifton forced Rosslyn Park to concede several penalties and incur a yellow card.

Full back Harry Johnson, Clifton Sausage Man of the Match, was rock solid under the high ball and gained much ground with his line kicking.

An Ollie Millner penalty opened proceedings with a catch and drive then feeding debutant scrum half Joe Snow who sniped and weaved across with Millner adding the first

of four conversions.

With forwards and backs, often spearheaded by Will Owen gaining ground in midfield attacks the visitors were becoming unsettled. Their attacking options were limited with the Clifton pack strong in tight and loose play.

Brad Talbot, as formidable as ever, powered over two tries either side of half time from a catch and drive and a loose pick up extended the lead but the opposition fought back with two tries before Clifton settled the issue.

The coaching staff can take much credit for the development of this squad whose increased confidence is remarkable. The winning team showed quite a few changes through non availability and injuries from the previous weeks victorious selection and is testament to the depth of the club's playing resources.

**6 December** Tonbridge Juddians - home  
**13 December** Birmingham Moseley - away  
**20 December** Plymouth Albion - home

Roger Opie

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