

# henleaze & westbury voice

February, 2026 Issue 134

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The White Horse in Westbury on Trym

## Don't force us out!

"WE are here for the foreseeable future," declare the landlords of a pub in Westbury village as they strive to resolve a dispute with the brewery owners, Stonegate, over their lease.

Lee and Gemma Whitelock signed a temporary six-month lease 14 months ago for The White Horse, in the High Street, with consideration to take it to a full five-year lease, and have been on a rolling month-by-month lease since then.

However, they were dismayed to see the pub recently marketed for sale on property websites, as well as appearing on local news sites and on social media – without their knowledge.

"We only knew about this when several people told us what they'd seen," said Lee. "Stonegate did this without telling us. We have been in negotiations about signing the five-year lease, but  
**Turn to Page 5**



### School blazes inspection trail

A North Bristol primary was the first in the city to be inspected under Ofsted's new framework – and it came through with flying colours.

**PAGE 12**

### Playing fields ban sparks fury

Campaigners are furious that Cotham School has banned "all permissive public access" to Stoke Lodge playing fields, even though rights of way at the site are recognised by the council.

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### Church centenary celebrations start

St Peter's Church in Henleaze is marking its centenary and preparing for the retirement of its vicar, Rev Mark Pilgrim.

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

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## March deadline

Our March edition deadline is February 11th. 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

COTHAM School was able to bring back some games lessons to Stoke Lodge last month – but the battle over the playing fields is nowhere near an end.

Pupils returned to the site, which the school leases from Bristol City Council, on Friday January 16, for the first time in several years. This was after the school had locked all the gates, claiming that it was suspending “all permissive public access” following damage to the re-erected fence and threatening behaviour towards staff by local residents.

The We Love Stoke Lodge group, which has campaigned for continued public access to the 23-acre site, accused the school of “behaving in a hostile and aggressive manner”.

The two sides have been in conflict since the school, which does not have playing fields on its site, first installed a fence in the interests of safeguarding pupils. This had to be removed when the Stoke Lodge fields were declared a village green but was put back up last autumn after the High Court ruled against that decision.

The school brought in mobile security cameras and applied to the council for eight permanent cameras, but that request has been refused.

The war of words is likely to continue until at least October, when a public inquiry will look into a council decision to confirm four public rights of way across the playing fields.

In a statement released in the evening of January 16, Cotham School said: “The safety of our students and staff and the

# New battle as school bans public access to playing fields

security of our playing fields at Stoke Lodge are Cotham School's top priorities. In response to yesterday's and today's disruption by adult individuals seeking to prevent our lawful use of the site, the school has been left with no choice but to lock the gates and suspend all permissive public access. This suspension will remain in place until the school can be confident that the public and campaign groups will respect the school's use of the fields and maintain the security of the fencing.

“This action comes in response to more criminal damage overnight and significant disturbances that occurred yesterday and today. Yesterday this prevented the lawful use of the site and the delivery of physical education to our students.

Today the premises staff attending the site in the morning had to repair the fence and at 1pm after lessons ended they experienced verbal abuse and threatening behaviour from members of the public. This is completely unacceptable.

“Until now, Cotham School has always provided the public with access to the fields when not in use by the school, which is typically every afternoon and at weekends. Dogs have not been permitted on the fields.

“The public is reminded that the claimed Public Rights of Way over the Stoke Lodge playing fields have no legal standing at this time. These rights are only claimed and are not formally registered in law. The school will continue to take all necessary steps to protect our use of our site.”

In response, WLSL issued a statement, saying: “We are disappointed, yet again, that Cotham School is behaving in such a hostile and aggressive manner.

“It should surprise no one that when school representatives arrived at the field to lock the gates yesterday, there were people walking on the public rights of way, but they made it clear that there was no intention to disrupt any lessons...

“The school has now declared that it will lock all the gates, all the time. This is what many people believe they intended to do all along. It is completely unacceptable conduct.

“Many other schools in Bristol and across the UK have public rights of way across playing fields (or use open access land) and do not treat members of the public in the way that Cotham School does.

“The whole episode demonstrates the problems that the school has failed to plan for,

when erecting a fence all around the perimeter in full knowledge that four public rights of way lie within the fenced area.

“The school only uses the field for PE lessons of 45 minutes, once or twice a day. It could easily have resolved the whole situation by fencing a smaller area of the field.

“Under section 137 of the Highways Act, it is a criminal offence to wilfully obstruct free passage along a public right of way. The school keeps repeating that the public rights of way have no current status, but that is not correct. The High Court judge noted that the school's use under the lease is subject to ‘rights that the local community might have already acquired, such as a public right of way (which does not require registration to come into existence)’.

“The school's failure to respect the law impacts young children, who cannot now walk a safe route to Stoke Bishop School across the field, elderly people who could manage a short cut across the field but cannot walk a longer route, and thousands of others including those with mobility and other issues.

“It shows an absolute lack of good faith towards the council (which has said that these rights of way exist) and to the wider public.”

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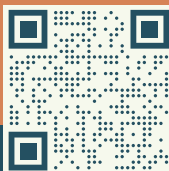
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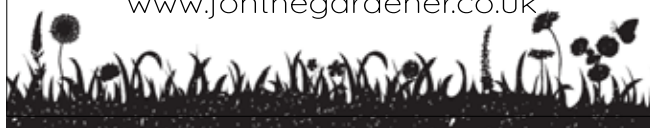


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## ■ FROM BRISTOL NORTH WEST'S MP

# No more damp and mouldy homes

WHEN we talk about feeling safe in our own homes, most people will think about securing their home from potential intruders. But for some, the everyday threat comes from living in hazardous conditions caused by severe damp and mould.

Constituents frequently contact me about damp and mould issues in their social housing. In the past, despite the best efforts of my team and I, we haven't always been able to get a successful outcome when we have urged a social housing landlord, including Bristol City Council, to undertake the necessary remedial work to put these properties in a liveable state.

But now, this government is putting a stop to social landlords not acting on reports from tenants about damp and mould and other emergency hazards.

The government has introduced Awaab's Law, which is named in memory of two-year-old

Awaab Ishak, who died after being exposed to mould at his Rochdale home in December 2020.

The new law came into force on 27th October 2025 and states that social landlords must fix emergency health and safety hazards within 24 hours of reporting. They must also investigate significant damp and mould within 10 working days of being notified and then make properties safe in five working days. They must also write to tenants with their findings within three working days of an inspection.

Since this is the law, this should mean it's case closed on all the casework my team is dealing with on constituents' damp and mould issues. However, I'm bitterly disappointed to learn that Bristol City Council has not sufficiently prepared to be compliant with this new law.

This is completely unacceptable. For my constituents living in

damp and mould-ridden properties, every single day of a delay brings further misery and potentially puts their health at risk.

I have written to the council about the need to comply with Awaab's Law and asked them to clarify the timeframe by which they will be fully compliant. I noted that this Government announced in December a radical overhaul of how local government is funded, with Bristol City Council getting a cash injection of £161.3 million over the next three years – a 30% increase in the council's core spending power compared to 2024-25. I hope the council uses some of this increase in funding to improve the housing stock in Bristol.

In my letter, I also shared the personal story of one constituent I had spoken to before Christmas, to share the grim reality of what it's like to be forced to live with severe damp and mould in your



**Darren Jones**  
writes for  
the Voice

home. I'll share the council's response in a future column.

• As always, if you need my help or have a question, you can get in touch with me on email 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

# Landlords' dismay at brewery's action

From Page 1

have been reluctant to do so as we'd have to bear the costs of repair and renovation, which have been quoted as around £50k, and we'd be unable to cover that.

"And so now we feel our hand is being forced by their threats to sell the pub. Even if we did sign, there is no guarantee it would be taken off the market."

Gemma, who ran pubs elsewhere in Bristol for seven years, and Lee, originally an electrician for 24 years, say that they have already spent around £30k of their own money on doing up the 18th-century building, which is listed in parts. Most of this is not visible as it involves the kitchen, cellar, damp-proofing, as well as buying fixtures and fittings.

The pub had been empty for some time following previous unsuccessful tenancies, and had fallen into disrepair and neglect.

The pub regularly holds music events, parties, hosts local groups and other functions, but Gemma explained: "We have had so many cancellations for the next few weeks, parties and other bookings. People aren't going to be confident about holding their event here, when they can't be sure we'll be here either."

"And we even had to close completely one

Friday evening – our busiest night of the week – when asbestos contractors couldn't agree whether or not there was a problem and couldn't provide the necessary reports."

The couple say they have had the pub twice as long as anyone else over the last 15 years but fear that it won't remain as a pub if it is sold. They described the plans they have for the place, including decorating, making a new outside space and regenerating the village's Christmas lights.

In statements issued on social media they said: "We truly value the support we get from each and every one of you, and urge you to stick with us as we continue to strive for pub excellence."

"We hope to have these issues resolved very soon so we can get back to improving and refurbishing the pub, step by step, and implement lots of exciting plans we have for the place. Thank you to each and every person who has supported us and continues to do so."

Discussions and negotiations with Stonegate remain ongoing, but Lee and Gemma are refusing to give up without a fight.

"We just want to be a community pub," they insist, "We cannot just let it close after so much work."

Stonegate was contacted for comment, but had not responded to the Voice's request at the time of going to print.

## Panto time

POPULAR local pantomime group, The Bartholomites, are back again with their 2026 panto offering.

'The Little Mermaid' will be presented at Horfield Methodist Church, Churchways Avenue, BS7 8SN, with performances on February 19, 20 and 21st at 7.30pm, and a relaxed performance at 2pm on the 21st. Tickets (£10/£6) are available online at: [www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-bartholomites](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/the-bartholomites).

## Second helping

INDIAN Kitchen in Westbury-on-Trym has again reached the finals of the National Curry Awards (NCA).

Following its success in 2025 in winning Curry Kitchen of the Year, it made the shortlist in the same category for 2026.

Indian Kitchen, in the High Street, is owned and managed by head chef, Suresh Sharma, who originally started off as a young chef at the five-star Taj Palace Hotel in Delhi.

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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### WESTBURY COMMUNITY FORUM

The meeting was held in Westbury Library on Falcondale Road, when about 30 residents took the opportunity to meet with our three local councillors. The meeting was chaired by Andy Renshaw, the chair of the Westbury on Trym Society.

#### Westbury Hill Car Park

While many residents have responded to the proposed Traffic Regulation Order, no response has yet been forthcoming. The rationale given for introducing charging was supposed to be to deter people from long-term parking (over 4 hours) and to increase turnover. However, the results of a recent survey were shared which showed that few vehicles stayed over 2 hours, that over a third stayed for less than 30 minutes, and that the occupancy rate was between 80% and 95% for much of the day. These results

mirrored those of a similar survey carried out a few years ago, before the closure of local banks and shops. A major concern was the imposition of charges on Sundays, when the car park is used by worshippers at the local churches but very few others.

#### Carlton Court Car Park

Again, many residents were known to have responded negatively to the public announcement of the proposed development of the car park and resulting demolition of three shops, but no formal planning proposal had been received by the council at the time of the meeting. It appears that the request for planning permission has now been made, and that there are no major changes form the initial proposals.

#### Community Infrastructure Levy Funding

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is money paid by developers when obtaining

planning permission from the Council. The majority is used to fund larger city-wide projects, but 15% is allocated to the areas in which the developments are taking place, with Westbury and Henleaze being one of seven wards in area 2, which has a total of about £50,000 available. Projects should be to improve facilities in your area and cannot be purely maintenance, eg repainting. If any group or individual has a project which they would like considered, the deadline for this year's applications is March 26th and they can find more information at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/people-and-communities/decision-making-in-your-area>

#### Open Forum

During this session, the issue of the lack of a pedestrian crossing across the Stoke Lane exit of the Village Centre roundabout, together with the narrowness of the pavement on that section was discussed. Concerns were also raised over the

possibility of dubious businesses setting up in local areas. The meeting was told that Trading Standards officers and licensing authorities are focusing on the activities of such businesses, and that any concerns can be raised via 101.

The recent spate of bad weather has produced the usual flooded roads, due to drains blocked by fallen leaves. We were advised to first report this via the FixMyStreet website but also to notify councillors if no action was then taken. The issue of parking on pavements was discussed, particularly where this obstructs people with pushchairs or those using wheelchairs or mobility scooters. There are also pavements which have been very badly damaged by tree roots.

Our next Forum meeting will be on Tuesday April 21st and I hope to see you then!

**Malcolm Neave**  
Forum Convener

### WESTBURY ON TRYM SOCIETY

#### Hanging baskets in Westbury Village in 2026

The Westbury on Trym Society has recently been informed that Blaise nursery will not be supplying and watering any hanging baskets in 2026. The Society has organised and paid for these through the donations of businesses, local people and Society funds for many years. The number of hanging baskets displayed above businesses has diminished in recent years, largely due to the council's concerns about the safety of the brackets that support them.

The council have cited difficulties in accessing some of the planters for installation, removal and watering, which we understand has been due to parked vehicles obstructing access. The council also says that 'the existing brackets are coming to the end of their life-span and we do not have anybody to replace them and also it is not something we would want to replace anyway due to the high level of risks involved'. Apart from the areas where we understand that basket displays were funded by Business Improvement Districts, such as the City Centre and Clifton, Westbury has been the only other area which



The 2025 displays in Westbury village

has kept up the tradition of 'Bristol in Bloom'. The displays provided and watered by Blaise nurseries were spectacular last summer despite the hot, dry weather.

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and watered by Blaise nurseries were spectacular last summer despite the hot, dry weather.

Westbury village flower displays, 2025

We understand that Blaise nursery will continue to plant up and water the many pots and troughs that the Society has provided throughout the village. The numbers of these have grown over the years and last year we added pots to four locations in the village. Our annual appeal for contributions to the flower fund will continue. The committee will be looking at other means of providing and watering hanging baskets for the businesses that have displayed them for so long.

Volunteers from the Society have resumed work in the sunken garden in Canford Park after a Christmas break. One of the first tasks was to clear the pond of the debris after it was iced over and from the subsequent storm. Lemon balm has been removed from one of the former rose beds so that rose bushes can be replanted. Parks department staff have dug up another bed, which had been planted with a wildflower mix, that had become full of couch grass. This will be replanted with suitable species by our volunteer team in the near future.

**Andy Renshaw, Chair,**  
Westbury on Trym Society

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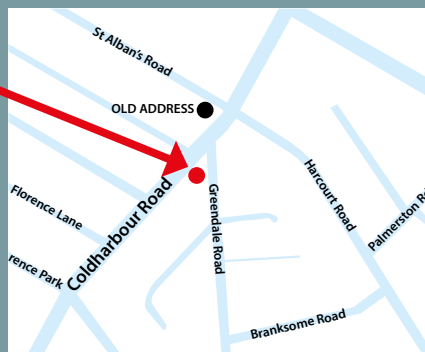
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## NEWS

# Fresh look at expansion of rail services

TRANSPORT planners are looking at the possibility of extending the Severn Beach railway line to Bristol Parkway train station. After reaching Parkway, trains would then turn around and head back the other way, instead of looping around the city as some councillors are calling for.

A study was commissioned by the West of England Combined Authority to look at options for increasing the number of trains going to the planned Henbury station. One option would be to allow passenger trains running from Avonmouth to use an existing freight line to Henbury.

This would connect up the west and north-west of Bristol with the north and the north-east, including major employment centres like the port with newly built housing estates. It's not clear when the study will be completed, but new details were revealed in a member forum meeting on January 13.

Green Councillor Ed Plowden, chair of the transport policy committee, said: "We've invested a lot in rail, we've seen the Ashley Down station and the Portway station, and these are really good things. They're actually busting our expectations so I'm really hoping that the way we do the appraisals of future things actually learns

from the success we've already had. I'm very concerned that we're ruling out options, for example to make it into a loop. They'll have to drive in and reverse out again and do some sort of complicated manoeuvre. We need to recognise that it's a highly regulated environment, it's an existing live line that we're talking about which has freight on it, and we have to listen to the experts."

The plan falls short of filling out the Henbury Loop, which would in effect create a circle line around Bristol. With this idea, the northern end of the Severn Beach line would connect to Henbury, which would then go down to Temple Meads and rejoin the line at its southern end.

The Severn Beach line calls at Lawrence Hill, Stapleton Road, Montpelier, Redland, Clifton Down, Sea Mills, Shirehampton, Portway Park and Ride, Avonmouth, St Andrews Road and Severn Beach. New stations are planned at Henbury and North Filton next to the new YTL Arena.

Conservative Cllr Mark Weston, who represents Henbury and Brentry, has long advocated for the Henbury Loop option. He tabled a motion for the full council meeting on January 13, seeking to get cross-party support for the Henbury Loop, although this

did not get debated due to a lack of time.

Cllr Weston said: "The last time we looked at the loop, the experts said that only eight journeys a day would loop from Henbury to Avonmouth. That's four return journeys, eight movements. So forgive me if I'm slightly sceptical when an expert says that."

Despite the motion not getting debated, the idea was supported by Green Cllr James Crawford, who represents Bishopston and Ashley Down, where the new Ashley Down station opened in 2024. He said residents were keen for investment in the railways.

Cllr Crawford added: "It has been proven that access to high quality public transport is key to strengthening local economies. It improves access to local services and housing. It brings communities closer together. And with the climate crisis progressing at pace, it enables a more sustainable and convenient lifestyle for residents."

"Expanding the Henbury Line will go a long way to meeting this untapped demand. There are obviously technical challenges to overcome, but provided the political will is there, I believe there is incredible potential in creating a true circle line for Bristol."

*By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service*



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## NEWS

# King honours Ardagh chief

THE CEO of a highly regarded local charity in north Bristol has been awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the King's New Year's honours list.

Christine Storry, of the Ardagh Community Trust (ACT), has been recognised for her services to Sustainable and Local Food Procurement as a procurement manager for Bath and North-East Somerset Council, where she worked until early 2025. The award was announced in the official public record, 'The Gazette', in December 2025.

Christine said: "I was so surprised and thrilled to receive this award. It's amazing to think that the work we did to encourage and secure short, local supply chains has become part of a national framework, rolled out across the country, ensuring all those small and medium-sized food producers have a secure route to their local



**Christine Storry gets the BEM**

markets."

Christine became CEO of ACT, a charity-run venue in the heart of Horfield Common, in May 2025, and has continued her food production and distribution-related work with her ongoing plans for the Ardagh's food bank collation and community garden. The garden recently won a Royal

Horticultural Society's In Your Neighbourhood award, and is home to the first café in Bristol to compost 100% of its food waste on site.

"It's so rewarding to be able to continue to put all I've learnt about the importance of good food in communities into action. Watch this space for more activities and events this year", added Christine.

Alongside its social enterprises (the café and plant nursery) ACT hosts a wide range of events and activities, including craft fairs, food pop-ups, t'ai chi classes, concerts and creative sessions for children. The site also features an on-site community sauna. It does all this with a tiny core team and the help of a small army of volunteers. It receives no central funding, so relies on grant applications, fundraising campaigns and on-site income generating activities.

# Medal for youth campaigner Serena, 21

A YOUNG Bristol woman who is playing a national role in making sure the voices of young people are heard by policymakers has been honoured by the King.

Serena Wiebe, 21, was given a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the New Year's Honours List for her outstanding work.

Serena, who grew up in East Bristol, is an anti-knife crime campaigner, boxing coach and mentor with the charity Empire Fighting Chance, where she also works as a Youth Voice Ambassador, helping young people bring about change.

Speaking about her award, Serena said it was an "incredible honour" to represent Empire Fighting Chance and the Bristol community, and she was proud to speak up for young people whose voices are often unheard.

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## NEWS

# Looking back on a century of worship – and ahead to pastures new ...

EMBARKING on a new year often brings much to celebrate and reflect upon and for the community of St Peter's Church, Henleaze, this is certainly true. Throughout 2026, the church is marking its centenary; it is also preparing for the retirement in October of its vicar, Rev Mark Pilgrim, after 24 years in post.

Built in 1926 when Henleaze became a separate parish from Westbury-on-Trym, the church was designed to be 'light and commodious' and was joined by its Hall in 1937.

With a long history of engaging with its local community, the church hall served as a military convalescent hospital during WWII. It was also a venue for dances, youth groups and amateur dramatics during the 50s, 60s and 70s, with a number of local residents meeting their spouses or cutting their musical performance teeth at events held there.

Like the building, the worship tradition at St Peter's has developed over time. The 1960s saw the installation of a splendid stained glass East Window and the suspension of a Cross above the altar made of aircraft steel, reflecting the significance of the aircraft industry (and Concorde) to the local community.

Central to St Peter's throughout these years was the contribution of Reg Parker, organist and choir master from 1951 to 2017 - an unbroken 66 years! While the choir was central to St Peter's for many years, the church's worship style has changed and developed and continues to do so today. The emphasis now is on everything happening at St Peter's being as open and accessible as possible, enabling everyone in the local community to enjoy life and thrive.

Key to this approach is, firstly, partnership with local charities and businesses to support



seniors in the community. A 'Later Life Hub' with St Peter's as its host and base, was launched in November 2024 and now offers some 36 activities per month. These include the Henleaze Seniors Film Club run with Home Instead, a FAB Café run with Age UK Bristol, and Grief and Bereavement sessions with Bristol Dementia Action Alliance, among others.

The second pillar of the church's current development is the appointment of a children's and families worker alongside the existing youth worker, to increase the opportunities it offers children and families. Mark, who served as Bristol Diocese's children's and youth officer, has always been keen to place children and young people at the heart of the church's life.

A programme of events is planned to mark the centenary, which can be found on the St Peter's website (<https://www.stpetershenleaze.org/news/st-peters-centenary-programme>). Highlights include Beating the Bounds in February and a Peace Feast and Eco Fair, both in April, along with a host of musical celebrations. The Harvest Festival in October will honour Mark's retirement.

Mark, his wife Gabrielle and their four now grown-up children say they have enjoyed their time in Henleaze immensely and will continue to live in Bristol.

Describing their plans for the future, Mark says: "We look forward to pursuing our passions



Mark Pilgrim with, from left, youth minister Simon Collins, lay minister Sarah Thomas, curate Kandice Douglas and lay minister Kathy Kilgour

for open water swimming in Henleaze Lake and, in my case, dinghy sailing in the harbour."

Mark found a question about his personal highlights over the past quarter-century tough, but he decided upon: "The Christmas Eve Crib Services attended by 600-800 people each year (before Covid), the development of the Later Life Hub, and

keeping the church open and welcoming daily during Covid – with art displays, something to come to and space for reflection."

His hope is that St Peter's builds in its second century on its reputation for being open, providing space for people across Henleaze and the surrounding area to thrive through worship and community activity.



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## NEWS

# 'Strong' school wins praise

A NORTH Bristol primary school was the first in the city to be inspected under the new Ofsted framework – and it has emerged with flying colours.

Oasis Academy Bank Leaze, in Lawrence Weston, was found to be strong in four of the seven inspection categories and to be meeting standards in the other three as well as for safeguarding.

The school, for children aged two to 11, was given the high rating for its leadership and governance, its inclusive ethos, children's academic achievement and their personal development and wellbeing.

The team of three inspectors visited Bank Leaze – described by pupils as “the blue school on the hill” – in November. They used the new framework developed by the watchdog with the aims of improving fairness and consistency, reducing pressure on staff and improving



information for parents.

There is no overall judgement but a “traffic light” system for the seven categories. The school's report was all green, with attendance and behaviour, curriculum and teaching and early years graded as meeting expected standards.

It said: “Pupils enjoy coming to this highly inclusive and welcoming school.”

The inspectors noted that children at the 214-pupil school, more than half of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, achieved well, with results in national tests above national averages.

“Leaders and trustees are highly ambitious for the school and the community it serves. They make decisions that are in the very best interests of pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged. Pupils thrive as a result.

“The support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those in receipt of pupil premium funding is a significant strength.” The inspectors highlighted the strong commitment to children's personal development, underpinned by the Oasis Trust's ‘Nine Habits’. They praised the wide range of clubs and activities

for children and the excellent pastoral care.

“The school promotes a positive and respectful culture. This supports pupils to feel happy and safe,” the report said.

The school's principal, Amelia Nelson, said: “We are delighted that Ofsted has recognised our academy as meeting a strong standard in many areas, under its new inspection framework. The report highlights our pupils' strong achievement in reading, writing and maths, our focus on personal development, and our unwavering commitment to inclusion. This success reflects the dedication and passion of our staff, who create a warm, nurturing environment where every child can thrive. We are incredibly proud of our pupils for their compassion, resilience and love of learning.

“We remain focused on enriching our curriculum and extending opportunities. Thank you to our families, the Oasis Trust and our community partners for their continued support - together, we're building brighter futures.”

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## NEWS

# Nursery earns high grades

LEADERS of Lake House Day Nursery and Preschool in Westbury on Trym say they are “incredibly proud” to have achieved a highly positive Ofsted report.

The nursery’s provision for children aged from three months to five years was rated as a Strong Standard in two areas and an Expected Standard in four areas in the inspection in

November, which was conducted under the government’s new Ofsted framework.

The report praised many key aspects of the nursery across the six core areas.

Positive comments included:

- Children enjoy being in this welcoming and inclusive nursery
- Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum that has a positive impact for children.
- Leaders and staff have high expectations for children’s behaviour and conduct

The inspectors praised the emphasis on staff development and well-being and highlighted the supportive comments from parents.

Leanne Bailey, manager of the nursery,



Staff and children at Lake House Day Nursery in Westbury on Trym

which is part of the Grandir group, said: “There have been many changes over the past two years, and without the Lake House team’s positivity and commitment, these achievements wouldn’t have been possible.

“I am incredibly proud of all we’ve accomplished together, which is reflected in our Ofsted report, with overwhelming

support from our parents, regional manager and early years specialist.

“Building a cohesive team takes time, and guiding staff to make the right choices for children is a privilege. Without this dedicated team, the children wouldn’t receive the care, love, and passion for learning and development they deserve.”



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Friday 1 May

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Friday 13 February

Friday 8 May



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## NEWS

# Young singers shine on the big stage

ST John's Primary School Singing Club have made an impressive start to 2026, following performances at two major venues.

In January, the children travelled to Birmingham Arena to take part in a glittering performance as part of the Young Voices Choir of 2026. Alongside more than 6,000 children from schools across the country, they became part of the largest children's choir in the world, celebrating the 30th anniversary of Young Voices.

The choir sang alongside the amazing Urban Strides street dance troupe and guest artists, including Aneesa Folds (Broadway) and Connie Talbot. Preparing for such a large-scale event required dedication and commitment, with pupils learning a substantial and varied repertoire during after-school rehearsals. Favourite pieces included a lively medley of sea shanties and unbeatable songs from *Wicked*!

Late last year, as well as a



busy programme of in-school Christmas events, the Singing Club sang at the Bristol Beacon as part of a 600-strong choir, accompanied by a professional band. The children enjoyed learning and performing a two-part repertoire, including works by renowned composers such as

John Rutter, Benjamin Britten and Jonathan Dove.

The St John's Singing Club is made up of children in Years 3 to 6, and continues to offer pupils valuable opportunities to develop their musical skills, build confidence and enjoy performing together in inspiring settings, in

line with the growing recognition of the value of singing in schools.

A special thank you must go to Lindsay Churchill, St John's music coordinator, a very talented and dedicated member of staff whose commitment plays such an important role in these experiences.

## NEWS FROM THE METRO MAYOR

# A positive start to the year

THE year is off to a positive start already in the West of England, with good news for families and young people from the festive period.

Our Kids Go Free scheme returned over Christmas, giving under-16s free travel on buses across Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Despite bank holidays and reduced services, children took 182,351 free journeys – a huge 50% increase on the number paying to travel during the same period the previous year.

This is even better than the 32% increase we saw during last summer's school holidays, compared to the same time in 2024.

Families have already saved around £1.1 million through Kids Go Free, and for some children, this scheme has opened the door to our region's attractions for the very first time.

It's fantastic to see how free travel can make a real difference – helping young people get to sports clubs, libraries, cultural events, or just explore their local area.

It also supports local businesses and visitor attractions, boosting our economy and giving more people a chance to experience what the West has to offer.

With child fares already among the cheapest in the country, we are making bus travel as easy and accessible as possible for families.

In the past few weeks, the West has celebrated another milestone: the UK's first Citizens' Assembly dedicated to culture publishing its report, setting out a vision for "a West of England where culture is for everyone as part of everyday life."

The assembly recommended opening up parks, libraries, schools, and heritage sites; embedding creative learning in schools; developing creative and accessible solutions to transport and creating opportunities for people to shape cultural priorities at a local level.

I'm delighted that the Citizens' Assembly will continue its work as the Citizens for Culture panel, with £100,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to try out their ideas.

On top of this, the West of England has been chosen as one of just six regions to receive £25 million from the Creative Places Growth Fund – a huge vote of confidence in our creative sector.

Together, these investments will help our cultural scene and put people back at the heart of things. Working together with our



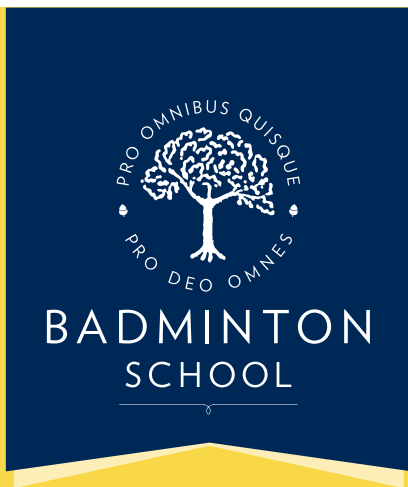
**Metro Mayor Helen Godwin**

writes for the Voice

local councils, creative organisations, and residents, we can make culture accessible for all – and build a West of England we can all be proud of.

Both Kids Go Free and Citizens for Culture show what's possible when we remove barriers.

From giving children the freedom to travel and explore, to empowering communities with a role in shaping cultural priorities, together we are opening doors and creating opportunities for everyone in our region – and helping more people shape the West of England's future.



# Badminton School Prep is growing!



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## NEWS

# Get set for Window Wanderland x 2

FED up with the gloom of a long dark winter? Relief is at hand at the end of this month when two Winter Wonderland events will take place in our area.

They are in Bishopston, where the idea of lighting up windows for a community event originated, and in the Chandos neighbourhood during the weekend of February 28 - March 1.

Both events, and others taking place in 2026, have the theme of Hope.

The festival's founder, artist Lucy Reeves-Khan, said: "I found out this year that thinking and acting hopefully can actually help your brain to be more resilient when times are bleak. Window Wanderlands are already incredibly hopeful festivals, so this theme seemed a natural fit for us."

Since Lucy organised the first Window Wanderland in Bishopston in 2015, the festival has spread across the country and beyond. Communities have

created almost 400 unique festivals involving more than 27,000 displays.

Lucy said: "I wanted to see if something simple could make a real difference to a community and bring out people's playful side. Anyone can participate. It all happens right outside your front door, but even if you find it hard to get out, you can still join in. It's all about doing as much or as little as you like."

"We have seen displays made by schools, grandparents, even pets! It's a proper grassroots community festival. Some roads had almost every house participating, using campervans, top floor windows and even decorating hedges with lights."

Both trails emphasise that designs can be as simple or complex as participants wish – the important thing is to take part in the community event.

Workshops to help people create designs are planned – look out for details on social media.

Artist Tracey English is providing a template of a simple image for people who are not confident art makers to download.

For those who want to create something more ambitious, anything goes – as long as it's family friendly.

A spokesperson for Chandos Neighbourhood Association, which is bringing back its trail after a year's break said organisers hoped for a wide range of designs.

"There are many sources of inspiration for our displays, with popular ones including nature and animals, and of course Bristol's famous suspension bridge and balloons. The Winter Olympics, World Cup, St David's Day or Chinese Year of the horse are all possible inspirations this year. Individual households choose whichever theme they prefer, and express a wealth of creativeness."

The Bishopston event is on Friday February 27, Saturday



**Decorated windows brighten up neighbourhoods during the long dark winter evenings**

February 28, and Sunday March 1 from 6-9pm while the Chandos one is on the Saturday and Sunday during the same hours.

Maps of participating properties will be available online. If you are taking part, don't forget to register!

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Dr. Henry Hardy

## ■ ADVERTISING FEATURE

# Executors: To Act or Not to Act

When someone makes a will they should have appointed an executor or multiple executors. The role of an executor is to administer someone's estate to ensure their assets are distributed in accordance with their wishes. As you might imagine, the duties involved impose important responsibilities on the appointed executor(s), which can be time consuming and stressful. In addition to this, executors can be personally liable if their duties are not carried out properly.

So what are your options as an executor?

**Act and instruct a solicitor** – The estate administration process can take many months, have unexpected complications and is often an emotionally difficult process, particularly if the executor has lost a close family member or friend. Instructing a solicitor to assist with the estate administration can pro-

vide an executor with comfort in the knowledge that whilst they are still responsible for the estate, an experienced professional is dealing with the day to day work for them, as well as the often complex probate applications.

**Choose not to act** – If you do not want to act as executor, you can choose to renounce your appointment. This means that you give up your right to act as executor. This is done by way of a Deed of Renunciation. However, it is important to note that if an executor has taken steps to deal with the estate or has 'intermeddled' they will not be able to renounce.

**Choose not to act, for now** – If you do not want to give up your power to act completely, you can choose to reserve your power. This can be useful if, for example, an executor lives abroad and it may

not be practical for them to act, but they would like to keep the option to act in the future. The other appointed executor(s) would carry on dealing with the day to day running of the estate and would apply for probate. If the executor with power reserved wanted to step back in at a later stage, they would need to apply to the Probate Registry for a 'double-grant' to be issued.

**Appoint an attorney** – If there is only one executor and they do not want to act but know someone who would, they could appoint them as their attorney for the purposes of dealing with the estate administration.

### Conclusion

An appointed executor may be more than happy to act, or may have been completely unaware the deceased appointed them an executor. Whatever the circum-



stances, the executor has various options to consider and is not necessarily bound to act. If you require advice regarding your appointment as executor under a deceased's Will our Probate team is available to assist. Please contact us on **0117 962 1205**, by email to **info@amdsolicitors.com** or through our website **www.amdsolicitors.com**.



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## NEWS FROM SusWoT

### Get involved

If this year you resolved to improve your local environment, spend more time in the fresh air, support local businesses, exercise more or meet new people, SusWoT may be able to help. With SusWoT you can:

Help keep the Trym, Hazel Brook and surrounding green spaces clean and tidy. You could do this as a group activity or look after a small area, perhaps your own street, when it suits you, maybe with another volunteer.

Sow, grow and nurture vegetable plants. You could sell some of the plants at the SusWoT stall at the May fair to help others to grow their own.

Help look after the Community or Library Garden. The Library Garden is a place where a number of different vegetables are grown to show what it is possible to grow. The Community Garden is somewhere place to relax with trees and flowers. Both need volunteers to look after them.

Support Westbury's pubs and eating places. Every month SusWoT organises a visit to a local restaurant and an evening



There is still a greengrocer in the village

in a Westbury pub. This is an opportunity to meet people and support these local businesses.

Join "Keep it Clean." This is a project to remove the historic litter in Southmead and Henbury, this will make it practical for local people to keep their streets and green spaces clean. There are twice weekly group activities to clean these areas and activities to recruit local people to "Keep it Clean." SusWoT has used a grant from Bristol Civic Society to buy 120 sets of litter picking

equipment for local people to use.

**The River Trym and Hazel Brook** Volunteers have removed tonnes of rubbish from these rivers.

Regular monitoring shows that water quality is improving and that wildlife is recovering. There is still a very serious problem. Silt is pouring into the river from the building sites between Henbury and Cribbs Causeway in South Gloucestershire. Silt smothers the habitat for aquatic plants, invertebrates, fish, and the rare

freshwater eels.

Bristol Avon Rivers Trust, Darren Jones MP, and Bristol City Council's Environment Chair Martin Fodor have chased South Gloucestershire Council for an update on what action is being taken. The local Environment Agency Area Director is arranging a meeting with BART and Trout in the Trym (of which SusWoT is a part) in the near future. Silt runoff needs to be controlled.

### Support local businesses

Last year Mogfords closed. Not long ago there was a bookshop in the village, and a butcher, delicatessen, fishmonger, and a complete set of banks. Westbury is not alone; town centres are dying everywhere. There are still some local businesses (and the library) battling to stay open. We will miss them when they are gone. Use them or lose them. A walk to the shops is good exercise, you meet people and you do a bit to keep Westbury alive. If you would like to get involved with any of SusWoT's activities, email [suswot2050@gmail.com](mailto:suswot2050@gmail.com)

Alex Dunn

## NATURE WATCH

with Dawn Lawrence

# Rich world of bees awaits your discovery

IT might seem a bit early in the year to be thinking about bees but this winter buff-tailed bumblebees could be seen on almost any day because so many more flowers are blooming through midwinter - local sign of continuing climate change. The mild weather also brings spring flowers into bloom earlier and so it is certainly not too soon to alert you to the quaintly named hairy-footed flower bee.

The bees that get the most press tend to be the sociable honey bee and the bumblebees. However, in the UK alone (brace yourself) there are around 270 species of bee and over 90% do not live in colonies. Instead the solitary female builds her nest and tends it herself without any help from worker daughters: the hairy-footed flower bee is one of these.

In our garden, when the lungwort comes into flower, it is time to seek the hairy-footed flower bee. Lungwort is a ground cover plant with blue to purple to pink flowers and rounded silver-spotted leaves and it is the bees' favourite. The males appear first, usually in February and dart and hover around the plants once they are in bloom, apparently setting up territories. The females appear a week or so later. Both sexes are about 1cm long and the males are a slightly dull brown with white



This female hairy-footed flower bee is just showing a hint of ginger-haired hind leg.

Photo by Gail Hampshire

hairy faces. The females are more distinctive with black head and body and fetching ginger hairs on their legs. This is the feature to look for - the contrast between ginger legs and black body. It is particularly obvious on the two hind legs which are generously provided with special hairs for collecting pollen. These "pollen brushes" hold the pollen as she flies back to

her nest where she uses it, along with nectar, to feed her brood.

In the city the hairy-footed flower bee makes her nest in a small hole in a wall though she might use a quarry face or even a rabbit burrow elsewhere (the males play no part, their role is simply to mate with the females). She builds a small nest consisting of a row of cells lined with a waterproof material. She stocks each cell with pollen and nectar, lays a single egg within and then seals it. She only makes a small number, perhaps 10 or fewer, though the books are reluctant to offer a firm opinion. This is a very different habit to the social honey bees which produce thousands of offspring in a large nest - usually an artificial hive.

If you can't find any lungwort, the hairy-footed flower bees also choose comfrey, wall flowers and other spring flowers. Once you have added flower bee to your bee list, you can look out for masonry bees, mining bees, nomad bees... there are even cuckoo bees with a lifestyle reminiscent of their namesake bird - there is a rich bee world out there to be discovered!

© Dawn Lawrence

## FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

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

#### **New SEND school to be built in Southmead**

In December it was confirmed that (thanks to funding from the Labour Government) a new school for children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) will be built on the site of the old Elmfield School for the Deaf, off Greystoke Avenue. With 164 places, this fantastic new facility will mean that SEND children will get the education they need, near to where they live. As a purpose-built facility, the new school will offer targeted education, including therapeutic and speech/language support.

#### **Van dwellers**

A planning application has been submitted for a temporary (up to 3 years) van dweller site with 21 pitches on Lanercost Road. There has already been an unauthorised encampment on this site for a year, one enabled by the Green-led council installing an access gate.

The vast majority of local residents who responded to the consultation objected to the application. There are families who moved into the new houses on Bramble Road expecting this land to be a play area or returned to grass land. We cannot support a proposal for a van dweller site on this land for a total period of up to 4 years and have



called-in the application so it is decided by a planning committee, rather than council officers.

#### **Bristol City Council budget**

By the time you read this, the Council would have met to try and agree a budget and the level of increase in council tax for 2026/27. It was announced in late 2025 that the Labour Government will be boosting Bristol City Council's core spending power by £161.3 million in a multi-year settlement lasting to 2028/29. After years of austerity this increase will go a long way to avoiding cuts to vital

services.

#### **Three weekly black wheelie bin collections and higher CAZ charges stopped**

Labour councillors prevented the Green-led council implementing three-weekly black wheelie bin collections and increasing the CAZ charge from £9 to £14.

#### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

A final reminder that we are interested to hear from ward residents & community groups on any local improvements for the 2026 round of CIL allocation. Last year we secured funding for improvements to Fonthill and Elderberry Walk parks. Your feedback is important to us to identify local projects like these.

#### **Residents Parking Schemes (RPSs)**

The Green-led council are looking to introduce more Residents Parking Schemes (RPSs) across the city. Currently it costs anywhere between £62/year and £186/year for a first resident permit, depending on vehicle emissions and/or city location, with second vehicle permits costing 162/year and third vehicle permits £390/year.

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[www.Greenway-osteopaths.com](http://www.Greenway-osteopaths.com)

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**Telephone 07976 313217**

**Opening Times: Tues / Weds / Thurs 8.30am - 6.30pm**

Greenway Osteopaths. Greenway Community Practice,  
Greystoke Avenue, BS10 6AF

## NEWS



# Air ambulance crew sets callouts record

BRISTOL'S air ambulance crew attended a record number of callouts in 2025.

With one helicopter and three critical care cars, Great Western Air Ambulance Crew (GWAAC) responded to 2,344 people in urgent need of care in Bristol, Bath and North East Somerset, Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, North Somerset, and parts of Wiltshire.

The team includes Critical Care Paramedics and Consultant Doctors from hospitals, bringing the skills, experience and equipment usually found in a hospital emergency department direct to the patient.

Serious medical-related incidents accounted for 56% of GWAAC's total call-outs in 2025 while trauma-related injuries accounted for 44% of missions.

GWAAC's Operations Officer, Tim Ross-Smith said: "We're getting more requests for assistance from our local land ambulance crews on top of the traditional air ambulance call-outs for incidents like road traffic collisions and cardiac arrests.

"This could be due to the outreach work our crew are doing, educating land paramedics about when we can add value to patients who are in urgent need of care."

The crew were called to 521 people in cardiac arrest, meaning it is still the biggest single reason that GWAAC's service might be needed.

One cardiac arrest patient was Pam, 66, who said: "I'm here today because my husband immediately called 999, the paramedics gave me CPR and defibrillation, the GWAAC team kept me stable and got me to a specialist heart hospital. I'd encourage anyone to learn

how to do CPR and find where their nearest defibrillator is so they know how to help in an emergency."

GWAAC's crew were called to help 668 people in Bristol (28% of all callouts), making it the second busiest region for the charity. Gloucestershire was the busiest region with 677 people in need of urgent medical care. South Gloucestershire came next with 323 people in urgent need, followed by North Somerset (281), Wiltshire (138), Bath and North East Somerset (121), and Somerset (90). GWAAC's crew were tasked to 46 patients outside of its usual region, such as in Wales.

Only 2% of patients were conveyed to hospital by air. More often, their crew continue treating patients in the back of a road ambulance, where there is more space to work, while transporting them to the hospital best suited to their needs.

Anna Perry, chief executive, said: "Demand for our lifesaving service has never been higher and I feel very proud that GWAAC has been able to help a record number of people for a consecutive year.

"I'm especially proud because our charity has been facing increased operational costs and an increasingly tough fundraising environment. So, thank you to everyone who has donated, volunteered, taken part in sponsored events and bought from and donated items to our shops.

"We're asking for support from our communities again in 2026. If you can, please donate and help us be there for more people in the future."

For more information about GWAAC visit [www.gwaac.com](http://www.gwaac.com)

## ■ FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

### University re-opens Parrys Lane uphill

Parrys Lane, outside Wills Hall, has been partly re-opened by Bristol University. The section of highway at the Saville Road end had been closed for more than a year while the retaining wall is rebuilt. Cllr Nicholas Coombes has been writing to Bristol University Estates Department pressing for re-opening as soon as possible. A pedestrian route and one lane of uphill traffic have been cleared while the wall works continue. The lived in vehicles that were parked on the road have moved on.

### Helping to clean up the Downs

Local councillors Caroline Gooch and Nicholas Coombes joined the Friends of the Downs and Avon Gorge on a litter pick. Dozens of bags of waste were collected from the area around Westbury Park and Westbury Road. Thank you and well done to the dozens of volunteers who joined in on a cold January morning.

### Late night licence breaches

Cllr Stephen Williams has been supporting Westbury on Trym residents disturbed by the unlawful late night operations of a take away business. Enforcement officers have attended and confirmed the breach of licence, and legal proceedings may follow. We hope that this will bring the premises back to their licenced hours and prevent further sleep disturbance to residents.

### New Stoke Lane zebra crossing sought

Your local councillors are calling for a new zebra crossing at Stoke Lane. This is the only arm of the war memorial roundabout in Westbury on Trym without a safe crossing – there isn't even a dropped kerb. Research by the Westbury on Trym Society shows that this route is just as popular with pedestrians as the other sides of the roundabout. Cllr Nicholas Coombes has logged a request with the Council and will investigate funding routes. Elsewhere, Nicholas has been pushing to get zebra crossings repainted on Coldharbour Road and Wellington Hill West, following maintenance success on Henleaze Road and Falcondale Road.

### Neighbourhood Forums and Downs update

We were happy to speak at both the Westbury and the Henleaze Neighbourhood forums in January, taking questions from local residents. In Westbury on Trym, the main discussion was around the recent consultation on charging for Westbury Hill Car Park. Like most of the audience, we had also sent in our objections to



the proposals, and will continue to try to block the charges.

Residents were updated by Stephen on the council's various actions and policy changes on vehicle dwellers, both around the Downs and across the city. The council has asked all vehicle dwellers around the Downs to vacate the area due to the high impact of their presence, particularly mounting evidence of unsanitary activity. Separately, the council has applied for a court order that will allow the immediate removal of lived in vehicles that arrive at the roads around the Downs. This is similar to the court order obtained in the summer of 2025 for the grassed areas. The council is now implementing its new policy that was adopted in December, stating that living on the highway is unsustainable and offering support for vehicle dwellers to either move their vehicles to council managed temporary sites, for which rent will be charged, or to move into more suitable fixed accommodation.

### Road maintenance

We have reported several road defects for repair around the ward. On Northumbria Drive, Stephen has escalated reports of crumbling concrete at the zebra crossing from Waitrose to Henleaze library. A repair order has now been issued, as the large crack that has appeared in the concrete is a trip hazard on this very busy crossing.

On Falcondale Road, Caroline has again reported subsidising paving slabs at the pedestrian refuge opposite Westbury Library. Nicholas has

reported the deteriorating road surface at the top of Parrys Lane for repair. Please do contact us if you have reported any other issues to the council that haven't yet been dealt with.

### Community cohesion

Stephen is leading the council's cross-city work on community cohesion. After the violent disorder in the summer of 2024 the council commissioned a report on Bristol, called Reflections on Community Cohesion in Bristol, which was published in October 2025 and can be found on the council's website. This was discussed at the January meeting of the Public Health and Communities Committee, which is chaired by Stephen. One of the findings of the report was that many people feel disempowered and also ignored by city leaders. In response to this the leader of the council and Stephen have been hosting listening meetings across the city. Last month community groups from across north west Bristol, including the Westbury on Trym Society, gathered in Lawrence Weston to discuss the sources of tension in Bristol and what can be done to diminish them. One idea that is being taken forward is for an enhanced Bristol Communities Festival, celebrating the work done by volunteers across the city. Look out for details of the events being held in June this year.

### City Budget

Just before Christmas the government announced changes to the funding of local councils. Just for once, it was relatively good news for Bristol as we can now keep most of the approximately £280million business rates collected in Bristol, whereas previously about £110million was taken by Westminster for redistribution elsewhere. However, much of the gain is wiped out by the withdrawal of government grants and the continued rise in costs of care for vulnerable adults and children with additional needs. At the January meeting of the full city council Stephen pointed out that local government is too reliant on two property taxes, with council tax being much less fair than income tax. The council will be setting its budget during February and we will report back in the March edition of Voice.

### Contact us

[cllr.nicholas.coombes@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.nicholas.coombes@bristol.gov.uk) 07386 698 750  
[cllr.caroline.gooch@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.caroline.gooch@bristol.gov.uk) 07386 698 669  
[cllr.stephen.williams@bristol.gov.uk](mailto:cllr.stephen.williams@bristol.gov.uk) 07386 698 772

■ **Briz, a new digital assistant designed to make it quicker and easier for residents to access Bristol City Council services launches today.**

The new service is available across Bristol City Council phone lines and on the council's website, [bristol.gov.uk](https://bristol.gov.uk).

This innovative tool is part of the council's ongoing commitment to improving service delivery,

including embracing new technology to better meet citizen's needs.

Councillor Tony Dyer, Leader of Bristol City Council, said "By embracing new technology, we're making it easier and quicker for residents to get the help they need, anytime, day or night. It allows us to focus more time on complex queries while still providing instant answers to

everyday questions."

Briz will be available via the council's phone lines and website, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If Briz does not understand the question, it will transfer residents to the main switchboard to speak to an advisor.

For more information, including videos on how to effectively use Briz, visit Bristol City Council's website.



## BOOK REVIEW

# Our Wives Under the Sea

By Julia Armfield

LEAH and Miri are a married couple. Leah is a deep sea research scientist whilst Miri works from home, writing grant applications for non-profit organisations.

The novel opens with the return of Leah from a deep sea mission, that was supposed to last three weeks but saw her absent for six months. We are presented with a dual narrative with Leah looking back at her

life changing mission and Miri providing the reader with her perspective of life since her partner's return home. Miri finds Leah much changed from the woman she married. Leah spends much of her time, submerged in the bath tub, vomiting seawater, her skin developing a strange oyster sheen, changing from white to blue and green.

We discover that Leah was accompanied on the submarine

by two colleagues, the Catholic and saint worshipping Jelka and a former fisherman Matteo.

The submarine dropped to the bottom of the ocean with all communication cut with the surface world. We also piece together the backstory's of Leah and Miri. We hear about Leah learning to swim at the age of seven, when her father chucked her into the deep end of the local swimming pool and how she fell in love with the ocean whilst reading about Challenger Deep, the deepest point of the Pacific.

We discover that Miri is still in grief from the loss of her mother, who lived alone by the sea, until moving into a hospice. This is an intriguing and thought provoking book, with two unreliable narrators, tackling issues of love, loss, grief



and trauma. The ending is both poignant and beautiful and will stay with me for some time to come.

Why not visit your friendly and welcoming local library? You will walk out with a library card giving you access to over two million books, as well as the internet, study space, wifi and printing.

*Review by Bob Deacon, from Bishopston Library*

## OPENING HOURS: WoT

Monday	(2pm-7pm)
Tuesday	(11am-4pm)
Wednesday	(11am-4pm)
Thursday	(11am-4pm)
Friday	(11am-4pm)
Saturday	(11am-4pm)
Sunday	(closed)

## OPENING HOURS: HENLEAZE

Monday	(11am-5pm)
Tuesday	(11am-5pm)
Wednesday	(1pm-7pm)
Thursday	(11am-5pm)
Friday	(1pm-7pm)
Saturday	(10am-5pm)
Sunday	(closed)



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## Let's talk about dementia

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email **troy.baker@careuk.com**

## SPORT

# Clifton proves hotbed of young talent

OVER the years Clifton has produced many players who have progressed to play for Premiership clubs and even international teams. Joe Owen, now an established item in the Bristol Bears starting squad, played his early senior rugby in the lavender and black shirt.

In December he was selected for the England A XV against Spain. His ability to play as a flanker or second row forward is due to his sensational pace. In recent Bears victories over Newcastle and Sale his performance in securing good ball in the line outs was a key ingredient. Against Sale Joe muscled his way over to score his team's first try. He also led a young Bears team against an Argentine XV at Ashton Gate.

Making his debut that evening was teenager Ollie Harris, a current Clifton winger, who has developed his game this season with club. Harris scored his first Bristol try against the South Americans and has won a Clifton Sausage man of the match award after some great breaks and lightening speed to outpace defences.

Another Clifton product who earned his first start for the Bears against Newcastle is George Taylor, who was a former captain of the Clifton Mini & Juniors section and then

further grew his game during his time at Loughborough University. Like Owen his pace around the pitch makes him flexible enough to play in either the back row or as a lock.

As a National 1 team Clifton 1st XV had a long break before 2026 activities were scheduled to get under way with the long four-hour haul to face leading promotion contenders Rotherham in South Yorkshire during the cold spell. Having checked with the Yorkshire club that a 07.15-pitch inspection had decided the pitch was fit, the team coach set off to find that on arrival the match was called off. Questions must be asked about how their hosts had failed in communications especially as most other rugby fixtures nearby were called off on the Friday. The only consolation was that no injuries were sustained!

To consolidate their league continuation the club must aim to win at least five of their remaining fixtures before the season ends in April. Two home matches in January should have provided some useful points.

Two away fixtures in February at Reading Rams and Bishops Stortford will be followed by a home match at 3pm on Saturday 28th February.



Ollie Harris in action for Clifton



Roger Opie Joe Owen in his lavender and black days

GLOUCESTERSHIRE stalwart Matt Taylor has signed a two-year contract extension, keeping him at the club until 2028.

Fifteen years on from his debut at the Cheltenham Cricket Festival in 2011, Taylor made 220 first team appearances for the Club.

A consistent performer across all formats, he has taken 236 wickets in red-ball cricket, 51 in List A, and 84 in the Vitality Blast. His performances in 2023 and 2024 earned him the GCCC's Bowler of the Year award in consecutive seasons.

## Delight as Taylor remains loyal to Glos

In the 2025 County Championship campaign, Taylor claimed 18 wickets in eight matches.

Taylor, 31, led the attack in Gloucestershire's run to the quarter-finals of the 2025 One-Day Cup, finishing as the team's top wicket-taker with 14 scalps, his best return in a 50-over campaign.

He has been an integral part of Gloucestershire's Vitality Blast history, and is currently

fourth on the list of all-time T20 wicket takers for the club.

Taylor played a major role in the club's first T20 trophy, taking 29 wickets across 17 games at a rate of just 6.91 when Glos won the Vitality Blast in 2024.

He said: "I'm really pleased to be extending my contract at Gloucestershire, it's been my home for 15 years or so now, and it is a place that holds so many special memories."

"I'm excited about the next few years to see what we can achieve as a group."

GCCC's director of cricket, Jon Lewis said: "We're delighted that Matt has extended his time at Gloucestershire, which we hope will take him into his 16th, 17th and 18th seasons at the club."

"A Gloucestershire man through and through, he pours his heart and soul into the Club and is a true team player."



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## COMMUNITY NEWS

### DIFFERENT STROKES

Hopefully, you have never needed to come across Different Strokes. But if you are a younger/working-age stroke survivor (or have a family member who is), this national charity may be able to help. Set up in 1996, it responds to the need for younger stroke survivors to reclaim their lives, challenging the common perceptions of stroke recovery and changing the term from 'victim' to 'survivor'. Most of the staff, volunteers and trustees have personal experience of stroke – for themselves or a family member – and champion younger peer support as a means to active recovery. It advocates self help with gentle exercise, consulting with survivors regularly to ensure that services are relevant and personalised.

The Bristol group has been active for over 20 years and runs exercise sessions for stroke survivors twice a week. Although Different Strokes is aimed at younger stroke survivors, it does not discriminate against any age and welcomes all survivors who

are interested in taking part in activities.

The group meets in the coffee lounge in the Sommerville Building at Westbury Fields Retirement Village, Cricket Lane, Westbury-on-Trym BS10 6TW on Saturdays at 10.30am for group exercise and at Redland Green Tennis Club, Redland Green, Bristol BS6 7HF on Thursdays at 1.45pm for gym sessions.

Both sessions have qualified instructors in attendance. Members can attend either or both as they wish, and an introductory free session for either of these is provided should you wish to consider joining in. All members, along with partners/carers, are encouraged to take part in other activities such as ten-pin bowling, day trips and visits. The group has an active voluntary management team and welcomes any members who would like to join this team.

If you are a younger or young-at-heart stroke survivor and are interested in joining, contact the coordinator, Len Curthoys, on: 07970 684417 or email [bristol@differentstrokes.co.uk](mailto:bristol@differentstrokes.co.uk)

### FRIENDS OF REDLAND LIBRARY

The Friends of Redland Library is a voluntary group set up to support Redland Library. We organise talks and panel events.

On **Thursday 5 February**, we are celebrating Bristol: City of Culture. This is quite topical given the possibility of Bristol bidding to be UK City of Culture in 2029.

On **Tuesday 17 February**, we are holding an event on Ireland, covering its people, culture and history.

For full details of our February and future events, please visit our website <https://FriendsOfRedlandLibrary.org.uk>

### FRIENDS OF BISHOPSTON LIBRARY

**Non-Hormonal Support for Perimenopause and Beyond: Tuesday 20 January 6.30pm - 7.30pm**

Join Dr Sam Morgan for an empowering session designed to help you navigate every stage of menopause with confidence.

Discover evidence-based strategies for perimenopause through to postmenopause, focusing on nutrition, supplements, exercise, sleep, rest, and meaningful connections.

### Understanding Hormone Replacement Therapy : Tuesday 24 February 6.30pm - 7.30pm

Join Sam for a practical overview of HRT – from the different types available and how to get the best from each product, to recognising when testosterone may be helpful. We'll explore benefits and risks, address common myths, discuss how long HRT can be used, and share tips on how to navigate shortages of your usual prescription.

Book by via Eventbrite.

Please join our mailing list or check our Facebook page for more information. We would love a few more people to join in the Friends of Bishopston Library group. If you'd like to get involved planning and running events, you will get a warm welcome. Get in touch: [friends@bishopstonlibrary.org.uk](mailto:friends@bishopstonlibrary.org.uk)

## WE CARE LIKE FAMILY



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## ■ PHARMACY COLUMN

# Try a 10-minute walk after eating

LIKE many people, we start each year full of ambition, convinced that this will be the year of massive and dramatic change. Unfortunately, our track record of seeing things through may not bear testament to our worthy goals.

So this year, why not try something doable: small, incremental, sustainable changes that actually bring success.

One of those changes is remarkably simple. You've probably heard that going for a walk after eating is "good for digestion". Research suggests this modest habit may also help control blood sugar levels and protect long-term heart health—even for people without diabetes.

After we eat, our blood sugar naturally rises. When this rise is too high or lasts too long, it's known as post-meal (postprandial) hyperglycaemia. Repeated spikes in blood sugar

can damage blood vessels, impair circulation, and increase the risk of cardiovascular disease over time. While this problem is well recognised in people with diabetes, studies show that temporary blood sugar spikes can also negatively affect otherwise healthy individuals.

Exercise is one of the most effective ways to reduce these post-meal glucose rises. Physical activity after eating helps muscles absorb glucose more efficiently, reducing the amount left circulating in the bloodstream.

The good news is that this doesn't require gym memberships, Lycra, or heroic levels of motivation. Several studies suggest that in healthy adults, even a brief 10-minute walk after each meal can offer similar benefits to a single 30-minute walk done once a day. For people with type 2 diabetes, walking for 20–30 minutes around half an hour after eating

significantly reduces post-meal blood sugar levels, with very little risk of low blood sugar.

But what about walking immediately after eating? Many people worry that this might cause discomfort or be less effective. Research comparing timing options found that a 10-minute walk immediately after a meal reduced blood sugar levels as effectively as waiting 30 minutes and then walking for longer. Importantly, participants reported minimal stomach discomfort, suggesting there's no need to rest before heading out for a gentle stroll.

Why does this matter? Elevated post-meal blood sugar levels are linked to a higher risk of heart disease—even in people without diabetes. Regular short walks after meals could therefore be a simple, accessible way to lower that risk. Even better, studies suggest that slower walking speeds still help, making this approach suitable for older



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Westbury Park, BS6 7XR

adults too.

The message is clear: moving your body after eating matters. A short, relaxed walk—even just 10 minutes—can support better blood sugar control and contribute to long-term health.

So perhaps we can all take a leaf from Julien, the great king of Madagascar's lemurs, and "...like to move it, move it" (especially after meals). The Kellaway Pharmacy Team are ever ready to support every positive change. Sometimes the simplest habits make the biggest difference. Let's move it!

## WEIGHT LOSS?

### Looking to Lose Weight?

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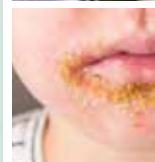
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## WHAT'S ON

### FEBRUARY EVENTS

#### ■ LA SCALA DELI HENLEAZE

Join us at the Italian Hub of Henleaze for our new series of wine tastings for 2026! Led by our in-house sommelier, includes 5 wines accompanied by a small aperitivo board - small plates available

#### JANUARY

15th & 30th - Piemonte  
16th & 31st - Winter Reds  
17th - Wine & Dine Dinner Party - 5 regional courses paired to 6 wines - Lombardia

#### FEBRUARY

13th & 14th Valentines Day  
26th - Piedimonte  
27th - Winter Reds  
28th - Wine & Dine Dinner Party - Lombardia

#### MARCH

6th & 12th - Liguria & Valle D'Aosta  
7th & 13th - Spanish Tasting - La Scala Exclusive  
14th - Wine & Dine Dinner Party - 5 regional courses paired to 6 wines - Rome

#### APRIL

2nd & 9th - Liguria & Valle D'Aosta  
10th & 23rd - Spanish Tasting  
4th - Wine & Dine Dinner Party - Rome

#### February 23rd

■ **HENLEAZE SENIOR FILM CLUB**, Conclave (12) 2pm Conclave follows one of the world's most secretive and ancient events - selecting a new pope. The Church's most powerful leaders have gathered from around the world, locked together in the Vatican halls. Tasked with running this covert process, Cardinal Lawrence (Ralph Fiennes) finds himself at the centre of a conspiracy and discovers a secret that could shake the very foundation of The Church. Also starring Stanley Tucci, John Lithgow and Isabella Rossellini. Carers welcome, easy access. St. Peter's Church Hall, The Drive, Henleaze BS9 4LD. For more info, call 0117 435 0063

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

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

#### 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)

#### February 18th

■ **BRISTOL OPERA CLUB** is delighted to continue our inaugural year with a screening of David McVicar's superb production of Donizetti's Maria Stuarda, with Joyce di Donato sublime as Maria. This will be shown on the newly installed improved equipment and introduced by Andrew Borkowski. All are warmly welcomed in The Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral, Worcester Road Entrance. 6.30 for 7.00. Entrance £8.00. Dedicated parking Bar Details: [borkmail@gmail.com](mailto:borkmail@gmail.com) 01275 848526

#### March 21st

■ **BRISTOL BACH CHOIR** with Bristol Ensemble Baroque at St George's Bristol. 7.30pm, Mass in B minor, J.S. Bach. Tickets: from £12. [www.bristolbach.org.uk](http://www.bristolbach.org.uk) 0117 214 0721. The acoustics of St George's will be the ideal place in which to hear this work with its wide-ranging textures of arias, ensembles and choruses.

### 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



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[pilateswithsylvia@gmail.com](mailto:pilateswithsylvia@gmail.com)

10am to 4pm. Refer to the website [wwpf.uk](http://wwpf.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/>

#### ■ 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.

## WHAT'S ON

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, community 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 Thursday columns.

**■ BRISTOL HARMONY WEST GALLERY CHOIR 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 bedside 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/>

### ■ 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)

**■ 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

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

**■ GOLDEN HILL WI** Meets the first Wednesday of every month. 1-3pm. Golden Hill Sports Ground, Wimbledon 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 [goldenhill-wi@gmail.com](mailto:goldenhill-wi@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@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:toddlergroup.sacredheart@cliftondiocese.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

Send details of your events and activities in the following format:

email us at: [news@henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk](mailto:news@henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk)

## WHAT'S ON

**■ 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://henleazebowling-club.org.uk/social-events/>. Phone, Tom Logan, on 0117 962 1669 or email [hbcsec@henleazebowling-club.org.uk](mailto:hbcsec@henleazebowling-club.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** 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 Bickeridge,

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.

**■ 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

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

**■ 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://henleazebowling-club.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)

**■ 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)

**■ 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.

**■ 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/Bristol-HealingGroup> 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.

**■ HENLEAZE FLOWER CLUB** Visitors are very welcome at any meeting £8. No need to book just come to The Bradbury Hall BS9 4BT on the second or fourth Thursday in the month, except August and December. Demonstrations on the second Thursday start at 2pm. Practice class on the fourth Thursday starts at 1.30pm. Contact Jenny York 07880 700 270

**■ 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

## WHAT'S ON

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.spanish-circlebristol.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.westburyontrym.co.uk](http://www.westburyontrym.co.uk).

[avoncountrymarket.co.uk](http://avoncountrymarket.co.uk), 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: [repaircafe.seamills@gmail.com](mailto:repaircafe.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

[bristolorchestralplayers.co.uk/](http://bristolorchestralplayers.co.uk/) for further information

Send details of your events and activities in the following format:

**WHAT IT IS,  
WHERE IT IS,  
WHEN IT IS**

in no more than 40 words,  
email us at: [news@henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk](mailto:news@henleazeandwestburyvoice.co.uk)

## ADVERTORIAL

# The Yeomen of the Guard: Gilbert and Sullivan's dark masterpiece

In 2020, Bristol Gilbert and Sullivan Operatic Society were just two weeks from opening *The Yeomen of the Guard* when the pandemic brought everything to a halt. Six years on, the company finally brings this long-planned production to the stage.

*The Yeomen of the Guard* is widely regarded as the darkest of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and this production leans into the bloodthirstiness and grit of Tudor London while still delivering all the fun and humour you would expect from a Gilbert and Sullivan show. A full professional orchestra will bring to life what is widely regarded as Sullivan's finest work,

allowing the richness and dramatic weight of the music to be fully realised.

With Sarah Nash returning as director and John Pitts as musical director, the production finds a new home for the society at the Olympus Theatre. Grisly, dramatic, and musically ambitious, *The Yeomen of the Guard* offers a powerful reminder that Gilbert and Sullivan can be every bit as serious and compelling as they are comic.

BGSOS will be performing *The Yeomen of the Guard* from the 19th - 21st March at the Olympus Theatre, Filton.

Tickets available at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/bgsos](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/bgsos).

Bristol Gilbert & Sullivan Operatic Society

**The Yeomen of the Guard**

**19-21 March 2026**

7:30pm on Thu/Fri, 2pm & 7pm on Sat

The Olympus Theatre, New Road, Bristol BS34 8LP

[bristolgbsos.co.uk](http://bristolgbsos.co.uk)

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## ■ MESSAGE FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

# Neighbourhood policing gets results

AS we begin a new year, there have been changes to the Police and Crime Commissioner role nationally, but my commitments remain the same: keeping people safe and ensuring policing is rooted in the communities it serves.

Neighbourhood policing continues to be at the heart of that approach, because visible, local policing builds trust and tackles the issues that matter most to you.

That's why I have supported the national Winter of Action campaign, a programme running through December and January to keep communities safe during the festive season and darker evenings.

This initiative builds on the success of the Safer Streets Summer, with local policing teams increasing high-visibility

patrols, working closely with businesses, and continuing important efforts to tackle violence against women and girls.

This includes campaigns such as StreetSafe, a national app that lets people anonymously report places where they feel unsafe, and Walk and Talk, where women join officers on patrol to share concerns and help shape safety measures.

The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee has already delivered 70 additional officers, PCSOs, and special constables into local teams, strengthening visible policing where it counts.

Here are some examples of how it is making an impact:

In Bristol, specially trained officers have been carrying out deployments in the city centre.

These unpredictable patrols combine uniformed and plain-clothes officers to deter crime and keep people safe.

Recent activity led to several arrests, including a woman wanted on a warrant, a man recalled to prison, and another arrested for drugs and weapons offences.

Officers also acted swiftly to stop a prolific shoplifter, recovering nearly £400 worth of stolen goods.

In South Gloucestershire, mounted units joined neighbourhood teams for patrols around Bradley Stoke following reports of antisocial behaviour.

And when residents raised concerns about speeding at a local 'Talk to Us' event, the Speed Enforcement Team investigated.

Their checks revealed



**With Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody**

that over 84% of vehicles were exceeding the limit - a worrying figure that led to the road being added to the mobile enforcement schedule.

This shows how speaking to your local team can make a real difference.

This is what neighbourhood policing is all about: listening to communities, acting on concerns, and being there when it matters most.

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## How to understand your Inheritance Tax position

With significant changes coming into effect in April 2027 following Labour's first Budget - most notably the inclusion of many pensions in the value of estates for Inheritance Tax (IHT) - now is a good time to understand what your estate is worth and how the current allowances work.

IHT is charged on the value of your estate when you die, as well as on certain gifts made during your lifetime. Your estate includes the assets you leave behind, such as:

- Property you own
- Savings and investments (some pensions remain excluded, but ISAs are taxable)
- Life insurance policies in your name
- Other assets of value

#### How to Work Out the Value of Your Estate

Start by adding up the value of all your assets. From this, you can deduct outstanding debts (loans, mortgages and credit cards). You can also deduct certain lifetime gifts, charitable legacies and reasonable funeral costs.

Once you've arrived at a figure, compare it against the standard IHT 'nil rate band' threshold:

#### If your estate is worth less than £325,000:

No IHT is currently due. However, it's important to keep an eye on rising property, investment and pension values, especially with changes coming in 2027.

#### If your estate is worth more than £325,000:

Anything above this threshold may be taxed at 40%.

Example: If Robert's estate is £500,000, the taxable amount is £175,000, creating a £70,000 IHT bill.

#### How Your Relationship Status Affects IHT

**Single:** Anything above £325,000 is taxed at 40%.

**Married or in a civil partnership:** You can pass everything to your spouse tax-free, and this does not use your own nil-rate band. When the second spouse dies, any unused allowance can

be transferred, creating a potential combined threshold of up to £650,000.

**Unmarried couples:** Each partner has their own £325,000 threshold, but these cannot be combined.

#### The Residence Nil-Rate Band

To help families pass on the family home, an additional allowance of up to £175,000 per person is available when leaving your home to direct descendants. For a couple, this can create a combined allowance of up to £1 million.

However, the rules are specific. The property must have been your home, it must pass to direct descendants, and the allowance tapers for estates over £2 million.

If you are concerned that you may have an IHT issue, either now or with the changes coming next year, please do get in touch for a complimentary review, we're here to help. Call **0117 3636 212** or email **office@haroldstephens.co.uk**



If you would like a relaxed chat about how to manage your assets in later life, then we are on hand to deliver it the good old-fashioned way – face to face right here in your local community.

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## TURNER'S VISION

# Love your look this February: Why eye exams matter more than you think



**Peter Turner**  
of Turners Opticians  
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[www.turnersopticians.co.uk](http://www.turnersopticians.co.uk)

FEBRUARY is often associated with hearts, love, and wellbeing, making it the perfect time to show a little extra care to your eyes. While most people think of an eye test as simply a way to update their glasses, an advanced eye examination can reveal far more than just how clearly you see.

Your eyes are unique in that they allow us to look directly at blood vessels, nerves, and structures connected to the rest of the body. This means an eye exam can sometimes detect early signs of wider health conditions, often before other symptoms appear.

### More than just vision

During an advanced eye examination, we don't just check whether you need glasses. We carefully assess the health of your eyes and how well they are functioning as part of your overall visual system. Subtle changes in the eyes can be linked to conditions such as: High blood pressure, Diabetes, Raised cholesterol and Autoimmune conditions.

Many of these issues can be developing silently, without obvious warning signs. Regular eye examinations can therefore play an important role in protecting not only your sight, but your general health too.

### The eye-brain connection

Seeing clearly isn't just about the eyes, it's about how the eyes and brain work together. Visual discomfort, eye strain, headaches, or difficulty concentrating can all be signs that the visual system is under stress, even if eyesight appears "normal".

For some patients, particularly those who spend long hours on screens or notice increasing fatigue, specialist assessments and tailored lens solutions can help reduce strain and improve comfort. These more advanced or therapeutic lens options are a hidden secret in eye care and can make a significant difference to everyday quality of life.

### Prevention is the ultimate self-care

Looking after your eyes is one of the simplest forms of preventative healthcare. Regular eye examinations allow us to: Detect problems early, when they are easier to manage, Monitor changes over time, Provide reassurance when everything is healthy, Tailor solutions to your lifestyle and visual demands.

Many people are surprised by how much peace of mind a thorough eye examination can bring.

### Book with Confidence

This February, consider your eye examination as an act of self-care, or even a thoughtful nudge for someone you care about. Whether you've noticed changes in your vision or simply want reassurance that everything is healthy, we're here to help.

To find out more or to book an appointment, visit our website or contact our friendly team by calling our Henleaze practice on 01179622474 or our Fishponds practice on 01179654434.

Because loving your eyes today helps protect your vision for the future.

*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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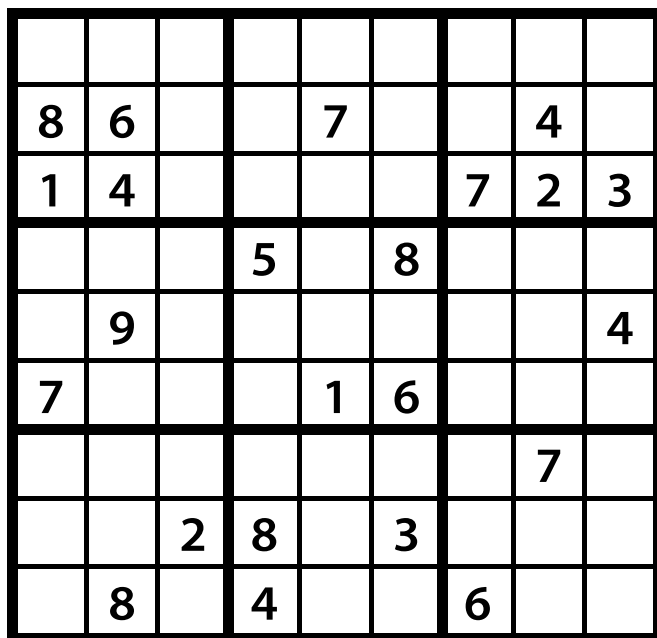
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## PUZZLE PAGE

## The FIEND

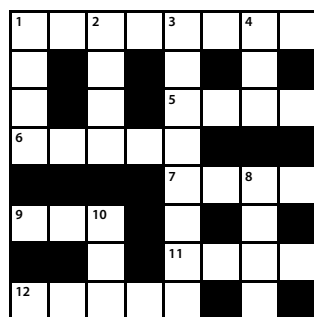
Each row, column and square (9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, without repeating any numbers within the row, column or square.

NOTE After feedback from readers, we have made The Fiend SLIGHTLY easier!



## Ttxtpert

Theme: Music



Use the phone keypad to decode the clues.

For example:  
2 could be A,  
B or C ... and  
5678 could be  
LOST



Across

- 1 86625489 (8)  
5 4533 (4)  
6 67372 (5)  
7 8655 (4)  
9 247 (3)  
11 7333 (4)  
12 28453 (5)

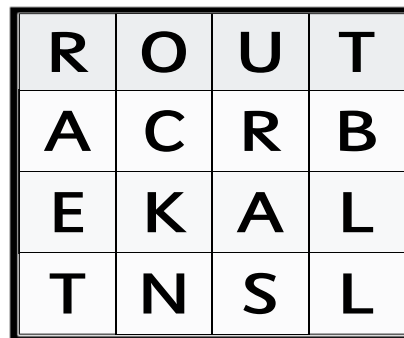
Down

- 1 8746 (4)  
2 6683 (4)  
3 54428873 (8)  
4 843 (3)  
8 5433 (4)  
10 724 (3)

## For younger readers

## Tennis Boggler Puzzle

How many words of 3 letters or more can you find using the letters below? Words are formed from adjoining letters. Letters must join in the proper sequence to spell a word and may join horizontally, vertically, or diagonally, to the left, right, or up-and-down. No letter square, however, may be used more than once within a single word. You may use plurals if available. Score 1 point for each 3 letter word, 2 points for 4 letter words, 3 points for 5 letter words and so on. Score an extra 2 points for every tennis word that you make!



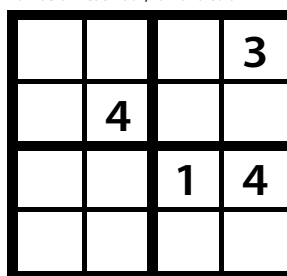
My points \_\_\_\_\_

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## Easier sudoku Solutions

Rules the same as the Fiend, but only four numbers in each box, row and column



Ttxtpert



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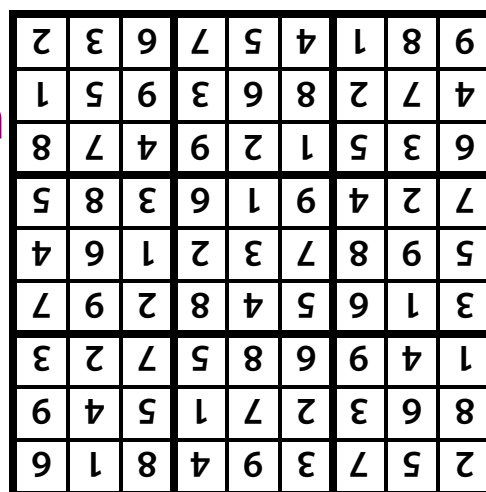
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FIEND  
Solution

## ■ VINEYARD NEWS with INGRID BATES

# We're watching and waiting ...

JANUARY is always one of the quietest months in the vineyard but it's also one of the most important. Over the last few weeks we've spent most days pruning the vines and chopping back the willow windbreak that surrounds the vineyard - slow repetitive work that doesn't look very exciting but has a massive impact on how the vineyard will grow and look this summer.

The vines themselves might look lifeless but the vineyard doesn't feel empty. Every day we've been watching

groups of rooks gathering and moving across the field in large, impressive flocks. Likewise in the winery, there's a lot going on. The winemaking team have been busy prepping our 2025 wines for bottling over the coming months. Just another reminder that things may feel quiet but the cycle never really stops.

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