



Wonderful Wassail!
Hundreds of people turned out for the first Wassail event at Magpie Bottom nature reserve I. The event was organised by the Friends of Magpie Bottom Nature Reserve with the support of Kingswood Town Council and featured Rag Morris. Participants made crowns from foliage, and sang the Gloucestershire Wassail song, creating a joyful noise with pots and pans. It was all part of the traditional ceremony of blessing and waking the trees, offering slices of toast to encourage a good harvest. Photo: Alan Cochrane

Thanks, Rex

Rex Britton's 50 years of service to the Oldland Village Club as a member, officer and chairman, was celebrated at a ceremony on New Year's Eve .
PAGE 5

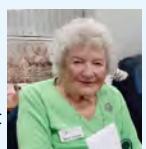


Heartfelt thanks

The Voice's campaign to raise awareness of the need for defibrillators to be publicly available 24/7 has been welcomed by Great Western Air Ambulance Charity.
PAGE 3

90 happy returns

Longwell Green WI marked the 90th birthday of member and former president Beryl by presenting her with a bouquet of flowers.
PAGE 16



Tragedy on the ring road

AN online fundraiser has collected more than £10,000 following the death of a young man on the Avon Ring Road last month.

Organisers say the money will help the family of the victim, named locally as Daniel, with funeral costs and will support a men's mental health charity.

Police are appealing for witnesses after the fatal collision with a car on the A 4174 between Wraxall Road and Marsham Way, just after at 5.20pm on Wednesday 14 January.

Police said the man was pronounced dead at the scene. The road was closed for investigation and vehicle recovery, reopening by 2.40am the following day.

A spokesman said: "If you have any dashcam footage of that stretch of road between 4.45pm and 5.20pm, or any information which could help officers establish how the man came to be in the road, call 101 and give the reference 5226012439."

Turn to Page 2

Medic memories

Dr Aubrey, who was the village doctor in Bitton for 40 years, is remembered in our Bitton History Society feature this month.

PAGE 19

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March deadline

Our March edition deadline is February 18. To ensure your news or letter is included, please contact us by then. Advertisers are also asked to contact us by the same date.

Your views

Letters for publication can be sent to the above email addresses or by post to Letters, Hanham & Longwell Green Voice, 16 Ashmead Business Centre, Ashmead Road, Keynsham, BS31 1SX. The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

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Complaints

Despite our best efforts, we sometimes get things wrong. We always try to resolve issues informally at first but we also have a formal complaints procedure. If you have a complaint about anything in the Hanham & Longwell Green Voice, contact the publisher using the details below. We aspire to follow the Code of Conduct of the NUJ (National Union of Journalists), which holds journalists to a high standard of behaviour.

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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A member of the



NEWS

Tragedy on ring road

From Page 1

Friends of the victim placed balloons and flowers at the scene, although some of these were removed for safety reasons. Many paid tribute to the man.

One message reads: "Dan the Man, forever 21. Thank you for all the laughs and amazing memories."

The online fundraising page described Daniel as "one of the most genuinely kind and beautiful souls you could ever meet".

Another tribute on social media said: "Daniel was deeply loved, and his loss has left a huge hole in the lives of his family, friends, and everyone who knew him." It said money would go to Andy's Man Club, a charity that supports men's mental health and provides safe spaces for men to talk, listen, and not feel alone.

As the Voice went to print, donations to the fundraiser, which can be found at gofund.me/9228e5b80 totalled £10,025. A large donation came from The Cameron Williams Foundation, a local charity set up in memory of a local young man who took his own life in 2024 (see Page 9).

Share a love of reading

SBL Academy is seeking volunteer reading coaches to support students aged 11 to 14.

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in helping young people in Years 7 to 9 to become confident and competent so they develop a love of reading.

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■ NEWS

Vital campaign earns heartfelt thanks

GREAT Western Air Ambulance Charity has welcomed the Voice's efforts to improve the network of defibrillators in our area.

Over recent decades, more of the potentially lifesaving devices have been installed, but some are not available 24/7 and others are not registered with the emergency services.

The Voice first highlighted the issue late last year, after an incident in Longwell Green where a caller who stepped in to help an elderly man having a suspected heart attack was directed to a defibrillator some distance away and not to others that were closer.

We discovered that devices in the retail park at Marks & Spencer, Screwfix, Wickes and B&Q could only be reached during shop hours while another in the foyer at Asda was not registered.

This matters because every second counts when someone has a cardiac arrest. For every

minute that passes without defibrillation and CPR, a person's chance of survival goes down by 10 per cent.

Great Western Air Ambulance Charity (GWAAC) crews attended more than 500 cases of cardiac arrest in 2025. People with the best chance of survival were those who were given early CPR and defibrillation – an electrical shock to restart the heart.

Currently, fewer than one in ten of the 30,000 people who have out-of-hospital cardiac arrests survive. Only 40 per cent receive early CPR and two per cent have a defibrillator used before the ambulance arrives.

A GWAAC spokesperson said: "The availability of defibrillators and the knowledge of how to use them is inadequate.

"We want anyone who suffers a cardiac arrest to receive immediate CPR and defibrillation within five minutes. As a result of this, and other clinical care, there will be fewer avoidable



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This defibrillator in Oldland Common is available to the community 24/7

and needless deaths in our communities.

"We are delighted that the Voice is highlighting this issue and urge anyone who would like to know more to look at the Great Western Hearts page on our website for ways they can get involved."

As well as raising money for new devices, volunteers

can help by organising CPR training sessions or signing up as guardians for the defibrillators already in their community.

It's crucial that devices are available to the community around the clock and are in unlocked cabinets.

All defibrillators should be registered with the national network, The Circuit, which emergency services use to direct 999 callers to the nearest device while they wait for an ambulance to arrive.

Data from The Circuit is also used for the website DefibFinder, which enables the public to find out where the nearest devices are, and the hours they are open

Siston Parish Council recently oversaw the installation of a 24/7 defibrillator on an outside wall at The Horseshoe pub while Bitton Parish Council supported a request from Edgemont View nursing home in Oldland Common for a device, accessible round the clock.



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■ NEWS

Concern over loss of 'lifeline services'

WIDESPREAD bank branch closures are affecting many parts of South Gloucestershire "severing lifeline services" according to Tory councillors. Both villages and suburbs have seen branches and Post Offices disappear, leaving people without access to services.

Conservative councillors tabled a motion which called for action on the cash crisis.

While a few positive examples exist in South Gloucestershire, such as a mobile Post Office every Friday morning in a rural village, thousands of people across the district are struggling to access basic banking.

The motion called on South Gloucestershire Council to explore how these services can be kept open.

One potential example is that buildings owned by the council could be turned into banking hubs. Without in-person banking, shops can suffer as

residents struggle to access cash. Banking hubs, owned by Cash Access UK, allow customers to access services from multiple banks, like paying in cash and cheques, withdrawing money, paying bills and checking balances. The motion was passed by councillors shortly before Christmas.

Councillor Liz Brennan, leader of the Conservative group, said: "For many residents, such as older people without online banking and small business owners, the local Post Office is not a convenience, it's a lifeline.

"But across South Gloucestershire, high street banking has already been steadily disappearing.

"We've lost branches in Downend, Staple Hill, Kingswood, Yate, Chipping Sodbury, Hanham, Filton, Patchway and more. When access to cash disappears, footfall falls and high streets

suffer. In Downend we see this impact clearly. We have a vibrant and much-loved high street, but it thrives only when people can pop in, get what they need and support local businesses."

In the village of Rockhampton, north of Thornbury, a mobile Post Office arrives every Friday, and was described by councillors as "extremely valuable". A new banking hub has also opened in Turnberries Community Centre in Thornbury.

But other rural communities across the district still lack access to similar services. One example is the small village of Doynton, near the A420 east of Bristol. An outreach Post Office was open for one afternoon a week, until this closed in March after funding was withdrawn.

Conservative Councillor Ben Stokes said: "We tried to do what we could but the money just isn't there in the system. For those

residents who were relying on that, and particularly the elderly who don't drive, this was a severing of a lifeline."

The motion calls on cabinet members at the council to write to the government, seeking assurance that local access to Post Office services will be maintained.

Cabinet members are also asked to work with the Post Office and Cash Access UK to identify areas at risk and explore options to maintain access to services

Options will also be explored for accelerating the rollout of new banking hubs in communities affected by branch closures. And a progress report will be made back to the council within 12 months.

By Alex Seabrook,
Local Democracy Reporter

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■ NEWS

Thanks, Rex, for 50 years of service

FOR half a century Rex Britton has served Oldland Village Club. He's been a club member, committee member, vice chair and finally chairman.

This remarkable effort was highlighted with a presentation to Rex on New Year's Eve.

A spokesperson said: "Rex has stood at the heart of our social club—steady, committed, and always ready with advice. Fifty years is more than a milestone; it is a legacy. And we celebrate not just the time that has passed, but the extraordinary impact Rex has had on the club."

"From the early days of the club's growth to the busy, thriving community we enjoy today, Rex has been a constant source of support.

"His dedication hasn't just kept things running smoothly—



Celebrating Rex Britton's half-century of service at Oldland Village Club

it has created a place where friendships flourish, memories are made, and everyone feels they belong. His genuine care for the club and its people are

qualities we admire.

"On behalf of every member, past and present, we want to say thank you, Rex. Thank you for your loyalty to the club and

the countless hours you've given without ever asking for recognition.

"Here's to you, Rex. Congratulations!"



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■ NEWS

CLF leader honoured

STEVE Taylor, the leader of the Cabot Learning Federation education trust, has been knighted in the New Year's Honours list.

The honour is in recognition of his work to 'tackle educational inequality' in the South West.

Mr Taylor has been chief executive officer of CLF for 11 years. The trust has grown to 36 schools, including John Cabot Academy, King's Oak Academy, Hanham Woods Academy, Digitech Studio School, Bristol Brunel Academy, City Academy Bristol and Bristol Metropolitan Academy.

CLF schools have seen dramatic improvement under Mr Taylor's leadership, as the trust has earned a positive reputation for taking on struggling schools and supporting them to improve.

Mr Taylor has instilled a values-led approach to the trust, which places equity at its heart as it aims to ensure all students are supported to achieve lifelong success irrespective of any disadvantage they may face.

Outside of the CLF, Mr Taylor is an active participant in local, regional and national networks designed to strengthen UK education for the benefit of all children, and has held a number of advisory and governance roles within the sector. He is a Fellow of the Chartered College of Teaching, an inspector for Ofsted, and holds an honorary Doctor of Education degree from UWE Bristol.



Steve Taylor

OFSTED has carried out a snap inspection of a secondary school after a row over the cancellation of a visit by Bristol North East's MP.

Damien Egan, whose constituency includes Staple Hill and Mangotsfield, had been due to visit Bristol Brunel Academy, in Speedwell, in September.

The visit was called off after members of the National Education Union learned of the invitation and started planning a protest.

In a social media statement, Bristol NEU said union members had planned a protest because of Mr Egan's position as vice-chair of the Labour Friends of Israel group.

The incident was thrust into the national spotlight when Communities Secretary Steve Reed, speaking at the Jewish Labour Movement conference on January 11, said a Jewish MP colleague had been "banned" from visiting a school "in case his presence inflames the teachers", and described the situation as "an absolute outrage".

Cabot Learning Federation,

Ofsted's

which runs Bristol Brunel Academy along with 35 other schools across the region, insists that Mr Egan has not been banned from the school. It says his visit was postponed to prevent disruption from the protest and has already been rearranged.

However, after the incident was recounted by Mr Reed, the row escalated.

At Prime Minister's Questions on January 14, Conservative MP Lincoln Jopp said Mr Egan had been "prevented from visiting a school in his constituency because he is Jewish", and asked the Prime Minister "what he is going to do about it".

In reply Sir Keir Starmer said the case was "very serious and very concerning", adding: "All Members of Parliament should be able to visit anywhere in their constituency, schools or other places, without any fear of antisemitism.

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■ NEWS

swoop after MP visit cancelled

"We are providing more funding for security and support that we are putting in across the country, and we will be holding to account those who prevented that visit to the school."

The next day Ofsted announced it was inspecting the school.

HM Chief Inspector of Schools Sir Martyn Oliver said: "I was concerned to learn that a school may have been intimidated into cancelling a visit from their local MP."

"I am troubled by the message this sends to children - especially children from the Jewish community."

"Those of us privileged enough to be working in education have a professional and moral duty to stand against discrimination."

Sir Martyn said Ofsted inspectors had concluded "the threshold for an inspection was met".

It took place on January 15-16, and Sir Martyn said the school had been open in engaging with the inspectors.

A spokesperson for Cabot Learning Federation said: "Damien Egan MP – as a high-achieving alumnus of the CLF, and in common with other local MPs from across the political spectrum – was invited in September to visit Bristol Brunel Academy.

"Mr Egan was due to discuss democracy and the role of an MP, while helping to raise aspirations among students who may have an interest in pursuing similar career paths.

"On the evening before Mr Egan's scheduled visit, we were made aware of plans for a public protest outside the school.

"As this protest was scheduled to coincide with the end in the school day, we opted to postpone Mr Egan's visit to ensure everyone would continue

to feel safe when entering and exiting school and to prevent any disruption to our students' learning.

"We have remained in contact with Mr Egan throughout, and he agreed a new date for the visit some time ago. We have also been in contact with the police and followed their advice."

The spokesperson said Mr Egan had visited six CLF schools since he was elected in 2024.

In a post on the Bristol NEU Facebook page at the time of the cancellation, the school's decision was described as a "Victory for Education Workers, Parents and the Community".

The post said: "Egan is Vice Chair of Labour Friends of Israel and has visited Israel since the current onslaught on Gaza began, demonstrating his support.

"We celebrate this cancellation as a win for safeguarding, solidarity, and for the power of the NEU trade

Damien Egan



union staff group, parents, and campaigners standing together."

Mr Egan, whose husband is an Israeli national and who is a former pupil of Hanham High School, now the CLF-run Hanham Woods academy, has not commented publicly on the issue.

Labour Friends of Israel states on its website that it "supports a negotiated two-state solution for two peoples; with a safe and secure Israel, alongside a viable and independent Palestinian state".

The group says it works with Labour parliamentarians to "strengthen relations between Britain and Israel and to promote a vision of coexistence founded on peace and liberal democracy".

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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.

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■ NEWS

Friends' mountain mission for Cameron

TWO friends are preparing to climb Africa's tallest mountain in memory of a Downend teenager.

Jo Robb and Kim Dixon will head to Tanzania on February 7 to start a six-day journey up Kilimanjaro, which at 5,895m (19,341ft) is the highest free-standing peak in the world.

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

Cameron, who was 19, took his own life in 2024 after being left devastated by the death of a friend in a road crash.

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

Jo, who lives in Mangotsfield,

said: "The tragedy hit Millie hard - we were all devastated.

"Cam was the most beautiful soul, he had the kindest heart and his laughter was infectious.

"We miss him and I hope we do him proud."

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

Cameron and his friend Tyler Carley were passengers in a scaffolding lorry which overturned on the Avon Ring Road in December 2023.

Tyler died in the crash, and while Cameron was not physically injured, Amelia said he had survivor's guilt and post-traumatic stress disorder,



Jo Robb (left) and Kim Dixon training for their climb up Kilimanjaro

which he hid from his family and friends.

Jo, an advanced nurse practitioner based at Kingswood Health Centre, said: "I see how our mental health crisis is affecting men and boys, in practice at work and at home.

"I want to do something to raise awareness of the struggles that men and boys face when it comes to mental health and not opening up and talking to

people."

Jo and Kim, of Warmley, have been training hard by walking, hiking and weight training four times a week.

Jo said: "Hiking is a mental challenge, just like mental health, and it's a good way to show people help is on hand if you need it and are struggling."

People can sponsor Jo and Kim via a Gofundme page at tinyurl.com/3s7ra7ch.

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■ NEWS

Council's pothole-filling record gets amber rating

SOUTH Gloucestershire Council has been given an amber rating by the government in a new national breakdown of which authorities are fixing potholes effectively.

The Department for Transport has produced a map and a breakdown, showing which councils are doing the best job and which need to make improvements, with the top performers given green ratings and the worst red.

South Gloucestershire has been given an amber rating for the condition of its roads, best practice in tackling potholes and overall, with a green rating for how much it is spending on maintenance.

Neighbouring Bristol and B&NES also have amber ratings, although Gloucestershire has a green rating overall.

The government says it has given £1.5 billion to councils in the South West from its Pothole Fund to be used on fixing roads and invest in long-term maintenance measures.

It says the best green-rated councils were able to demonstrate they are investing in long-term preventative measures rather than just patching up potholes, while also maintaining good road conditions and "investing significantly" into road



Potholes on Northcote Road near the junction with Windsor Place, in Mangotsfield

improvements.

Amber-rated showed some room for improvement, while those rated 'red' are not meeting the expected standards.

Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said: "For too long drivers in the South West have paid the price because our roads were left to deteriorate. We've put our money where our mouth is, increasing the funding in the South West with £1.5 billion to fix roads, and giving

local highway authorities the long-term certainty they have been asking for.

"Now it's over to them to spend the money wisely, and for the first time we are making sure the public can see how well local highway authorities are doing in delivering the improvements they want to see in their local area."

South Gloucestershire Council says it has seen a 38% reduction in pothole reports year-on-year and has taken on extra road maintenance crews with its Pothole Fund money.

A spokesperson said: "We undertake a significant programme of work to maintain and improve our local roads, and we are pleased the rating reflects the positive steps we have taken to prioritise safety and deliver value for money for our residents.

"Over the last five years we have more than doubled the number of potholes being filled, but we recognise there is always room for improvement.

"We are currently working through our £2.4 million pothole fund programme, which consists of patching and resurfacing works and will improve the condition of sections of the network that are most in need of attention."

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■ NEWS

Scouts ready for adventure

FORTY Kingswood District Explorer Scouts are preparing for the adventure of a lifetime as they get ready to set off for Switzerland this August.

The group will be accompanied by seven adult volunteers and will spend six days at the Kandersteg International Scout Centre (KISC). This will be the first time in more than 20 years that Kingswood Explorers get to take part in a self-led international expedition.

Em Masters, expedition coordinator, said: "The purpose of the expedition is to provide the Explorers with adventurous and cultural experiences where there are opportunities to make international friendships at one of the most iconic places in World Scouting. It will also contribute to the top awards that Explorers might be working toward, such as the King's Scout



Award."

In June 2025, Kingswood Town Council awarded the Explorers a £2,000 community grant. The funding was formally presented when councillors handed over a giant cheque in January.

The grant will help cover essential costs such as transport, accommodation, and a programme of activities. During their week in Switzerland, the Explorers will go on hikes in the area, take part in adventurous

activities, and mix and socialise with Scouts from other countries.

Em said: "We're incredibly grateful. This funding helps us to give our young people a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity—and we hope it will pave the way for more international expeditions in the future."

Leaders say preparations are under way.

The Explorer Scouts, aged 14 to 18, meet weekly. Members come from across the Kingswood area.

Having a clearout?

IF you're clearing out your shed/workshop/ tool cupboard, remember that Chipping Sodbury Rotary Club are still collecting old carpentry or engineering tools, or electrical tools (without batteries).

Last year members collected around 16 car-boots full of donations and delivered them to the Bristol Tools for Self Reliance centre in Warmley where they have been processed, polished, sharpened and renewed, - all being packed into tool kits to send to Africa. These are given to students to enable them to take a college course or entrepreneurs to enable them to start a small business.

Call Clive on 0117 932 2673 or Marian on 07837 588362 to arrange collection.



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WHAT'S ON

REGULAR EVENTS

MONDAY

LONGWELL GREEN ART CLUB, no tutors. Would you like to do your own thing in the company of a small, friendly group that meet Mondays 9.30 to 12.30, arrive and leave as you please. URC Wesley room. Contact Jackie on 01179600273 or email colown@blueyonder.co.uk

YOGA CLASSES AT HANHAM COMMUNITY CENTRE - Monday evenings 7-8 pm. To book your place or for further information please email yogashula@hotmail.com or Text/ Tel 07949333548.

TUESDAY

LIP READING CLASS, 1.30-3pm at North Common Village Hall, Millers Drive, BS30 8YH. Contact Mary Hall 07790 283939, lipreadingmary@yahoo.com

TUESDAY CLUB a social group meet every Tuesday 1.45-3.45pm at Longwell Green Community Centre

EXERCISE AND FRIENDSHIP GROUP at The Community Project in Cadbury Heath (BS30 8EL) every Tuesday, 11:00 - 12:30. Join our over 65s. Improve strength, balance, and more in a fun, inclusive environment. Just £5/session includes tea/coffee and chat. Don't miss out on boosting your well-being! For more information contact Adam - 07875503586

HANHAM TENNIS CLUB
Adult Play - Tuesday & Thursday evenings and Sunday afternoons. Monday, Wednesday & Friday mornings, 9.30am - 11 am. . Beginners' session coaching - Wednesday 7-8pm. Junior coaching - most early evenings. New players welcome. Fully qualified LTA coaching. See website for details www.hanhamtennisclub.co.uk

LONGWELL GREEN LADIES GROUP meet at 2pm on the first and third Tuesday of each month at the United Church, Bath Road, Longwell Green BS30 9DU (opp. Aldi). Please phone Maureen on 0117 9322341

LONGWELL GREEN SHORT MAT BOWLS CLUB, We meet Wednesday and Fridays 1.30 to 3.30 at the Longwell Green community centre , Shellards road, in the California suite. All equipment provided. Beginners very welcome. We are a friendly group who need additional members. Email. Michael8bence@

gmail.com. Tel 07800869837

WELSH CONVERSATION GROUP The Old Manor House, Keynsham 7pm-830pm. 3rd Tuesday of the month 15th July (Aug holidays) Free. Organiser Catherine Dhanjal Call Catherine on 07941669925 or follow <https://www.facebook.com/CymraegBrysteCaerfaddon>

WEDNESDAY

BARRS COURT PROBUS CLUB Retired and semi-retired Professional and Businessmen: Meet 2nd and 4th Wednesdays 10-12 at Longwell Green Community Centre. Please contact our Membership Secretary, Mick Funnell: 0117 932 4104 or email bcprobusclub@gmail.com to arrange a visit. Website: <https://barrscourtprobus.org/>

BARRS COURT LADIES CLUB: Wives and partners of the Probus club members meet 10-12 on the second Wednesday of each month at the United Church, Bath Road, Longwell Green. Website: <https://barrscourtprobus.org/>

FILTON COMMUNITY BRASS BAND: We are a community brass band with a huge emphasis on being friendly and playing at community fetes and a few concerts. We practise on Wednesday evenings in Kingswood and would love to encourage developing players and those who may not have played for a few years to join us. To find out more, find us on Facebook or email filtoncommunitybrass@gmail.com

ZEST CHOIR is an inclusive happy singing group for all adults who love to sing - even if you think you can't or might be Tone Deaf! We meet Term Time Wednesdays at Longwell Green Community Centre from 10.15am-11.45am and from 7-8.30pm. Contact Mary on 07954 170532 www.zestchoirs.com.

LONGWELL GREEN PROBUS CLUB meets at Warmley Community Centre on the first and third Wednesday of each month.. New members welcome- for details contact Mike on 07817094147

HANHAM BRIDGE CLUB Every Weds 7-10pm at Hanham Community Centre, new members welcome. See www.hanhambridgeclub.co.uk or call Graham 07790 491564.

HANHAM AND KINGSWOOD PHOTO CLUB. A friendly club welcoming photographers of all abilities to share our hobby. Meeting 7.15pm for a 7.30pm start on most Wednesdays, St Barnabas Church Hall, Warmley, BS30 5JJ. See the website for where meetings will be held (some on Zoom & some evenings out). For details visit <https://www.handkphoto.club> or contact Geoff Mallin at email address, geoffmemsechps@gmail.com.

com

RWP BADMINTON CLUB play at Hanham Woods Academy 6.30-7.30 social club, 7.30-9.30 league club. Visitors welcome, please look at the website for more details

LIP READING CLASS, 10am-noon, Warmley Community Centre. Termtime only. Contact Mary Hall 07790 283939, lipreadingmary@yahoo.com

FRENCH CONVERSATION

GROUP The Old Manor House Hotel, Keynsham 7pm-830pm 4th Wednesday of the month 23 July (Aug hols) Free. Organisers Steve James & Catherine Dhanjal Call Catherine on 0794 1669925 or join L'Amicale Francaise de Keynsham <https://www.facebook.com/groups/429989176573347/>

OLDLAND VILLAGE CLUB

Wednesday Weekly Bingo. Books on sale 7:15pm with Eyes Down 8pm. Open to Members and Non-Members. Over 18s only.

OLDLAND VILLAGE CLUB

Monthly Coffee Morning take place every 3rd Wednesday of the month, 10:30am start; open to all, cake donations for the table greatly appreciated.

SHORT MAT BOWLS Every Wednesday and Friday at the Longwell Green community centre, Shellards Road. Beginners welcome. 1.30 til 3.30 Text Michael on 07800869837 or email michael8bence@gmail.com

THURSDAY

AVON SCALE MODEL SOCIETY We are a small friendly club, all subjects are included, aircraft, cars, armoured vehicles, fantasy, etc we meet on the 3rd Thursday of the month, at St. Anne's Hall, Barry Road, Oldland Common, at 8pm. Please contact Ian on 0117 9603435

BLACK SHEEP HARMONY

We welcome new singers to any of our weekly rehearsals, to join in or just to listen. 7:30pm on Thursdays in Hanham Community Centre. Contact Noey: 07899 088180 or check out our website www.blacksheepharmony.com

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WALKING NETBALL Broadlands School, Keynsham, 7pm -8pm £5 per session, ex players or new to netball welcome, for more info email lindab2023@gmail.com

'STAND UP REACH OUT' A social group meet every Thursday 2-4pm at Longwell Green Community Centre for different activities.

FRIDAY

LONGWELL GREEN WI meet on the third Friday of the month at 7.30pm at Longwell Green Community Centre. New members are always welcome. Email longwell-wi@gmail.com or tel. 0117 9864782.

TAI CHI FOR PARKINSON'S:

Weekly beginners Tai Chi & Qi Gong class for people with Parkinson's disease, their families and carers. Lincombe Barn, Downend. BS16 2RW. Fridays (term times) 10.15 - 12.15 including tea / coffee break. Contact: Claire - Claire@Taichibodyandmind.co.uk (07769 857672) or Sarah - buqiworks@gmail.com (07815 662844)

LONGWELL GREEN COMMUNITY CENTRE QUIZ NIGHT, meets normally first

Friday of each month at 8 pm. Bar available. For details please contact Marian.r.summerill@gmail.com, or ring 07503 989880.

CROFT END SILVER BAND

Hanham Tabernacle, Tabernacle Road, practice 7.15pm - 8.45pm. Players needed on all sections , all ages welcome and training given. We are a happy Band with a good atmosphere. More details contact Rob (Chairman) on 07788 473404

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

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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,



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making this approach suitable for older 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 Ellacombe Pharmacy Team are ever ready to support every positive change. Sometimes the simplest habits make the biggest difference. Let's move it!

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■ ANTIQUES

Booming books

If you'd have told me a decade ago that old books would be popular at auction, I would have laughed. But I couldn't have been more wrong! Our book department is bursting at the seams with rare titles, beloved classics and antique editions. The world of antique books isn't just alive, it's kicking and screaming!

So, why are we all suddenly obsessed with physical books again?

In an increasingly digital world, it seems there is a deep, soulful craving for something you can actually hold. A first edition isn't just text; it's a time capsule. When someone holds a 19th-century volume, they're touching the same paper the author might have seen, they're reading the same words as someone a century ago. It's an experience. You can't get that "shiver down the spine" feeling from something on a Kindle. Our bidders aren't just buying stories; they're buying tangible history.

What's more, auctions have become the ultimate "treasure hunt." Whether it's a signed Harry Potter or a beautifully illustrated botanical guide, there's a competitive joy that retail just can't match. People love the provenance - knowing a book sat in a country house library for eighty years before landing in our saleroom adds a layer of romance that's hard to resist.

There is a huge influx of younger collectors in the book world. Social media is helping push the history of books to a young audience, and it's no longer just the 'antique' books that are fetching big money, it's the beloved children's classics from the last thirty or forty years too.

Whether it's the nostalgia of a childhood Enid Blyton or the prestige of a rare Conan Doyle, our gavel is falling on more books than ever before. The "death of print"? Not in our saleroom!

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■ KINGSWOOD HISTORY SOCIETY

Presentations 2026

3rd March - 650 years of Bristol in 65 mins - David Parker

7th April - The Motor Bus serving Bristol - Mike Walker

5th May - Being Pantomime Dame - Tim Mayo

2nd June - William Bence and the Longwell Green Coachworks - John Hitchings

7th July - Filton In Space - Terry Ransome

4th August - A Wrecker's Tale – Ship Breakers of the Severn - Paul Barnett

1st Sep - Highlights & Stories From The Rostrum - Andy Stowe

6th Oct - Origins of 'liberties' in the Kingswood chase coalfield - William Evans

3rd November - A Night at the Cinema - Clive Burlton

1st December - AGM

First meeting at the Park Centre, Kingswood is **Tuesday 3rd March, 7pm for 7.30pm start**. Visitors £4 incl tea/coffee and biscuits.

Full schedule of presentations can also be found at www.kingswoodhistorysociety.org

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Longwell Green Community Centre, Shellards Road
Longwell Green BS30 9DU
Monday: 6.00pm & 7.30pm
Tuesday: 9.30am
Tel: Karen 07889 408969

AEK Boco FC,
Greenbank Road,
Hanham BS15 3RZ
Thursday: 4.00pm & 5.30pm
Tel: Izzy 07824 365101

North Common Village Hall,
16 Millers Dr, North Common
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Tuesday: 6.00pm & 7.30pm
Tel: Emma 07773 689229

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■ COMMUNITY NEWS

LONGWELL GREEN WI

MEMBERS again generously donated toys and presents towards the Christmas Tree Appeal. In total, this included 60 teddy bears and 1,700 toys and presents (200 more than the previous year). Vouchers to the value of £1,100 and £5K was also donated to child related charities.

January's meeting started on a celebratory note with one of our long-standing members, Beryl, celebrating her 90th birthday. She was presented with a beautiful bouquet of flowers amid loud applause. Beryl joined in 1996, and has previously served as President for the local WI for a good number of years.

Members were asked to vote on five shortlisted resolutions to support. The top three were:
 1. Accessible public toilet facilities to promote dignity, health and social inclusion
 2. Action on women's homelessness, and
 3. Every child needs a friend.

The Friends and Family Walking Group went on their first walk



Birthday girl Beryl

in January, to the Chocolate Quarter, in Keynsham. Eleven members and 2 dogs went. Unfortunately, they didn't get their coffee fix when they stopped for refreshments, as the coffee

machine was out of order, but this didn't stop their enjoyment.

Two new Groups have been included to our activities. This will be a Garden Group visiting local garden centres once a month as well as a Cinema Group, where interested members can go as a group to enjoy a film at their local cinema.

We have lots of groups that our members can participate in. There are book clubs, walking groups, knitting group, skittles and social suppers. On the first Thursday of the month, we meet at The Chapel Coffee Shop in Longwell Green for Tea and Chat.

The Longwell Green WI's monthly meetings are held on the third Friday of the month at 7.30 pm at the Longwell Green Community Centre and new members are always welcome. If you are interested in visiting, please get in touch by email at longwellwi@gmail.com, telephone 0117 9864782 or come along on the meeting evening. We shall look forward to meeting you.

Kamann Huang

IT was lovely to see so many members and new members back with us for our January meeting and all looking forward to what 2026 will bring us.

Keen followers of our Bitton Village postbox topper will have seen that our Christmas effort was removed early January. I gather from our Knitting Group they are already designing and making their next creation which may already have been unveiled by the time this edition is published. If not, do, as they say, watch that space!!

This year we have an interesting and varied list of speakers for our meetings - anything from Chair Zumba to Soap making. Remember, if you aren't a member but would like to come along to see a speaker you might be interested in, then we welcome guests for a small charge.

Our next meeting takes place on Monday February 9 at 2 pm in the Church Hall, Bitton, when we will be enjoying our annual quiz afternoon.

Karen Davidson

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■ 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.

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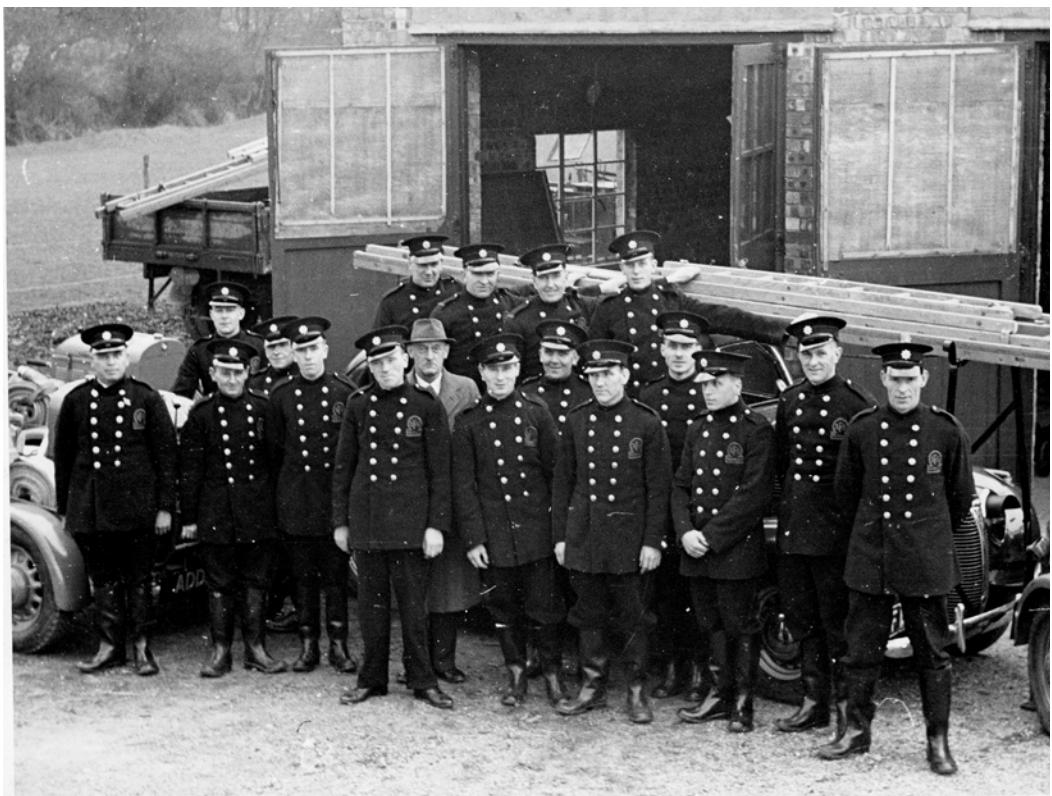
KINGSWOOD MEMORIES

WARMLEY AUXILIARY FIRE SERVICE

The Auxiliary Fire Service performed an important role across the country both during the Second World War, and when the Service was reformed in 1948 alongside the Civil Defence Corps.

The picture (undated) features the Warmley Auxiliary Fire Service at their head-quarters in Stanley Road, Warmley. From here they were called out on a "Shout" wherever needed, including during the Bristol Blitz and to fires and events much further afield.

If you would like to share your memories of the Auxiliary Fire Service, please let Kingswood Heritage Museum know by email at kingswoodmuseum@gmail.com, or by phone on 0117 9605664.



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Dr. Thomas Aubrey by Mike Gates

One of Bitton's most well-known and respected residents was Dr Thomas Aubrey, who worked as the village doctor for forty years until his death in 1945. In later life he lived and had his surgery at Westover House on Bath Road, next door to a pharmacy run by Miss Summerhays.

Dr Aubrey's Generosity

Dr Aubrey was especially remembered for his kindness and generosity. At the time, many working families simply couldn't afford a doctor's fees, and as a result a lot of illness went untreated. This was long before the NHS began in 1948, and people who couldn't pay often had to rely on home-made remedies instead.

Mr Clark, who lived in North Street, Oldland Common, made medicines from vegetables and herbs for stomach problems such as indigestion and flatulence. Another well-known local figure was Oliver Tippetts, whose ointment was widely used, particularly on septic wounds. Depending on how serious the injury was, crushed white sugar was sometimes sprinkled on the wound before the ointment was applied. The recipe remained a closely guarded secret until his son Samuel died in 1959.

W.I. Memories of Dr Aubrey

In 1957, members of the Women's Institute wrote down their memories of Dr Aubrey:

"An outstanding character was Dr Thomas Aubrey, who came to Bitton in 1905 when he took over Dr Stone's house and practice at Woodbine Cottage, Golden Valley. He was a true 'family doctor' of the old school. There was no national insurance then, but he went into every home bringing care, kindness and sympathy, often without mentioning a fee for either advice or medicine. His practice spread further and further; first he travelled by horse and trap, then by motorbike and side-car, and later he wore out a car a year."

"In 1918, when he was ill with pneumonia and his only daughter died during the great influenza epidemic, his patients showed how



Dr Aubrey in the car provided by his patients

much they cared by raising money to buy him a car. Later he suffered another great loss when his son, Dr T. R. Aubrey, was killed in North Africa during the Second World War. Even then, he seemed to forget himself while caring for others. So it was with deep sadness that the village learned on November 23rd, 1945, that he had died in his sleep—having, many felt, given his life in service to his patients."

Dr Aubrey's surgery was later based at Westover House, where the adjoining pharmacy building—built around 1915—was originally located.

At his funeral at St Mary's Church, farm carts were used to carry the wreaths, showing just how much, he was loved and respected. Today,

a plaque on Bath Road, Bitton, remembers him, and the road Aubrey Meads keeps his name alive in the village.

Next Meeting

3rd March

**The Wild Hunt and the Witches
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**Professor
Ronald Hutton**



*Everyone is welcome:
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for entry.*

www.bittonhistory.org.uk

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church), Church Lane, Bitton, BS30 6LH**

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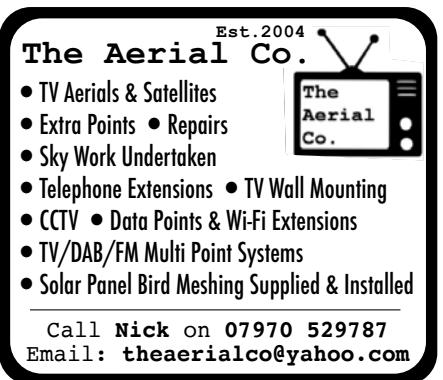
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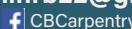
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