

hanham & longwellgreenvoice

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Railway remembered



Kingswood Players members helped Avon Valley Railway mark the 60th anniversary of the last British Rail train services on the Mangotsfield and Bath branch line Report: Page 6

Picture: Adam Ashford



WI branch closes after 72 years

Longwell Green WI closes on April 1 after 72 years after committee members resigned in the wake of a national decision to ban trans women. **PAGE 3**

Fatal crash widow's anguish

Penny Stone, from Longwell Green, told a court of her heartbreak after her husband Michael died when a van crashed into his car at speed on an M32 slip road. **PAGE 5**

Day of action to save Green Belt

Campaigners to save the Green Belt in east Bristol from large-scale housing development plan a day of action this month. **PAGE 11**

Homes site on market

THE prospect of homes being built on a brownfield site in Hanham has moved a little closer.

The former Kleeneze site in Anstey's Road has been put up for sale to developers by the Government agency Homes England.

Outline planning permission has been granted for up to 200 homes, 35 per cent of which should be affordable.

Savills, which is marketing the site, says there

is some scope for flexibility over the layout of the "urban village" scheme so that it will be integrated with the wider Hanham area.

The design brief suggests there should be more houses than flats and that apartment blocks should be four storeys high.

Tesco bought the 5.78 acre factory from the brushmakers in 2003. Homes England took it on in 2020 and cleared the site ready for development.

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May deadline

Our May edition deadline is April 22nd. To ensure your news or letter is included, please contact us by then. Advertisers are also asked to contact us by the same date.

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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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A member of the



NEWS

Action call on potholes

A PETITION has been launched over the poor condition of Pound Road in Kingswood.

As the Voice went to print, nearly 300 people had signed the online campaign started by New Cheltenham ward councillor Matt Palmer.

Cllr Palmer said: "The situation has become extremely concerning. I've reported numerous potholes to the council over a sustained period.

"While it's widely acknowledged that some road surfaces across South Glos are in poor condition, I believe Pound Road has deteriorated well beyond what could reasonably be described as routine wear and tear. In my view, isolated patch repairs are no longer sufficient. Many of the previously repaired potholes have re-emerged, and individual defects are now merging into much larger, continuous damaged sections. This suggests that more substantial resurfacing or sectional reconstruction may be required."

He is calling on the authority to respond formally to residents and recognise the scale and urgency of the problem.

Many residents have commented on social media about the state of the road surface. One said: "Pound Road is like the surface of the moon." Another said: "This road is literally caving in at points."

Other residents pointed out that many other roads in Kingswood and beyond are severely afflicted with potholes.

The petition can be found at <https://www.change.org/PoundRoadPotholes>

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NEWS

WI branch closes after 72 years amid concerns over ban on trans women

LONGWELL Green Women's Institute is closing on April 1 in the wake of the national organisation's decision to ban transgender women.

The National Federation of WIs (NFWI) announced in December that it was changing its policy following the UK Supreme Court's ruling that the legal definition of a woman is based on biological sex.

This means that from this month – the start of the new subscription year – trans women can no longer be WI members although trans men, who were born female, can.

The NFWI, which has about 180,000 members nationwide, said independent legal advice had forced the decision, which had been made "with the utmost regret and sadness". It intends to set up a network of inclusive WI Sisterhood groups alongside its formal structure.

Longwell Green, which had about 80 members, joins a number of WI branches across the country that have voted to close, often because committee members have decided to leave.

In a statement, the branch said: "It is with regret that Longwell Green Women's Institute (LGWI) announces that it is closing from 1 April 2026.

"The LGWI has been in existence since 1954 and over 72 years has grown to a membership of over 80 providing friendship, wellbeing, interests and support.

"Due to the resignation of the three essential Committee

Officers, (President, Secretary and Treasurer) who are not renewing their membership from 1 April, and despite unsuccessful appeals to the members to fill the posts, a committee cannot be formed.

"This was a difficult decision for the Committee Officers to make as they didn't want to let down the members. The decision was the result of the National Federation of WIs' (NFWI) change of policy to ban transgender women from being members, exacerbated by the manner in which this was handled without engagement or consultation with the grass roots members.

"Some members had also indicated they would not be renewing their membership for this reason. As a result, at a Special Meeting overseen by the Avon Federation of WIs (AFWI), the majority of members voted for closure.

"However, going forward, a community-based ladies group has been discussed with current members who are enthusiastic to continue meeting in a different guise. Such a group is likely to be set up meaning friendships, clubs, activities, outings etc can continue and grow, hopefully for at least another 72 years!

"More news on the new group in the very near future!

"The final monthly meeting took place on 20 March 2026 when members looked over the memorabilia that had been collected during the last 72 years and celebrated how successful



Former presidents Beryl Collins, seated. Behind, left to right, Lynne Sherman, Margaret Bryant, Sandra Hill, Helen Jones and Linda Muller

our WI had been."

A spokesperson for AFWI said: "The Avon Federation supports the 87 WIs in our region, and we are working to support the members of Longwell Green WI. All our WIs are individual charities that rely on volunteers to operate, and March is the period in the financial year where members make decisions about holding positions in their WI and Federations.

"We continue to work to reach out to women who might like to get involved with the WI; either as members and post holders in their local group, or at federation level. The WI runs on the passion and power of women supporting one another, and learning from each other.

"For the full statement on the upcoming membership policy change, visit www.thewi.org.uk/media-centre/press-releases"



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Why Wellbeing Matters as You Get Older

Growing older brings new challenges—changes in health, mobility, and how we socialise can affect how we feel day to day. It's the everyday things that used to feel small that can often cause us stress, such as paying bills or going out to buy food. That's why it's so important, that we look after our physical and mental health as we get older.

The **5 Ways to Wellbeing** provides a simple, practical framework to stay positive and resilient. By focusing on connection, activity, learning, giving, and mindfulness, it provides a way for older adults to maintain independence, boost mental health, and enjoy a sense of purpose and belonging.

For over 60 years, Abbeyfield Bristol and Keynsham has provided more than just housing; they offer a warm community built to tackle isolation and build lasting friendships. They believe that staying connected is the heartbeat of wellbeing, which is why their supported living houses bring residents together every day through shared mealtimes and activities.



Recently, they've embraced the "5 Ways to Wellbeing." Developed by the New Economics Foundation as a mental health equivalent to "5-a-day," these simple, practical steps are essential for maintaining a sense of purpose and improving wellbeing.



1. Connect

Life is better together. Supported living communities provide opportunities to build friendships, share stories, and enjoy social activities. Whether it's a coffee morning or a group outing, staying connected combats loneliness and boosts emotional health.

2. Be Active

Movement matters at every age. From gentle exercise classes to walking in landscaped gardens, supported living encourages physical activity tailored to your abilities—keeping you strong, mobile, and independent.

3. Keep Learning

Learning doesn't stop as we grow older. Explore new hobbies, attend workshops, or join book clubs in your community. Supported living houses offer creative and educational programs that keep your mind sharp and engaged. Such as, quizzes, history clubs, and crafting sessions.

4. Give

Giving brings joy. Whether it's helping a neighbour, volunteering, or sharing your wisdom with younger generations, supported living fosters a sense of purpose and community spirit.

5. Take Notice

Pause and appreciate the little

things—a beautiful sunset, a blooming flower, or a shared laugh. Supported living environments are designed to help you enjoy life's moments in a safe, stress-free setting. Abbeyfield Bristol and Keynsham has created a 'Book of Wellbeing' to share ideas that can help keep you connected and improve your wellbeing by offering tips and activities to boost your happiness. Scan the QR code to read the 'Book of Wellbeing'.



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Our Local Houses: Abbeyfield Bristol & Keynsham

Abbeyfield Bristol & Keynsham houses offer, en-suite studio and one-bedroom apartments across houses in Henleaze, Keynsham, Hanham, and Redland. As part of a vibrant community, residents enjoy home-cooked meals, relaxing gardens, daily events, and companionship that comes with living with other residents.

NEWS

A DRIVER who crashed his van at high speed into a car queueing on an M32 slip road, killing a family man from Longwell Green, has avoided a jail sentence.

Jamie Nicholls told police he was looking for a cigarette and his attention was off the road "for a second or two" before he crashed into Michael Stone's car, killing the father-of-two.

Mr Stone's car was pushed into the car in front, causing further collisions involving a fourth and fifth vehicle.

A work colleague of 68-year-old Mr Stone, who was a passenger in his car, suffered "significant physical injuries" including a head injury and seven broken ribs.

Nicholls and another driver also needed hospital treatment.

Nicholls, aged 48, pleaded guilty to charges of causing death and serious injury by careless driving before he was sentenced on February 26.

He was not sent to prison, instead being given a 14-month

Widow: I never got the chance to say goodbye

suspended sentence and a one-year driving ban.

Nicholls, of Otterhampton, near Bridgwater, was told he must take an extended test before he can get his licence back, abide by a 60-day curfew and undergo 10 days of rehabilitation, as well as paying a victim surcharge and costs, when he was sentenced at Bristol Crown Court.

In a statement read to the court Mr Stone's widow, Penny, said she had had to break the news that her husband of 40 years had been killed to one of their two daughters who was in America on her honeymoon at the time.

She said: "Mike was the foundation on which our family was built.

"When we gather around the table now there is an empty space where he should be sat, head of the family. You knew you were safe when Mike was around and everything would be alright.

"I have lost my husband, my best friend, the father of my children, my rock, the person who rubbed my back when it ached, made my morning cuppa, laughed with me, wiped away my tears, danced with me, loved me.

"My heart is truly broken, and I miss him so much it physically hurts. All I have left of him are my memories, and that shouldn't

be. Our daughters have lost an amazing dad who would do anything for them however old they were.

"I never got the chance to say goodbye to Mike on that fateful day.

"I waved him off to work and the next time I saw him was 11 days later in the mortuary."

She told Nicholls: "The actions you took on that day when you got in your van have changed everyone in our families' lives forever.

"But, more importantly, Mike was denied the right to live his life because of you."

After the case, police investigating officer Noelle Poupard said: "This was a collision caused by Nicholls' failure to concentrate on the road ahead of him.

"A motorist looking away from the road, even for a second, will cover quite a significant distance when they are travelling 70mph and the consequences can be horrendous, as this case painfully demonstrates."

Working together to inspire community pride

KINGSWOOD Community Clean Up is an initiative set up thanks to one resident's determination to improve public spaces.

Jon Allum founded the group in January with the belief that everyday residents have the power to shape their communal space.

The group has grown from three volunteers at the first event to 11 at the most recent one — an encouraging sign of growing community spirit. Jon and the team meet every fortnight, on a Saturday or Sunday, for about an hour, with the option to stay longer.

Each time, they move around Kingswood's parks and green spaces, picking litter, pulling weeds and making spaces better for

everyone to enjoy. Recent sessions focused on Westons Way Playing Field and the green space around Woodstock Play Area, where the group expects to be working for the next couple of months.

Jon's motivation for starting the group comes from powerful early memories of life on his childhood street.

He said: "I remember not having a play park near where we lived. My parents gathered the support of local people and asked the council for one. One was built, and we had somewhere to play."

He also remembers watching his Dad spend an entire day clearing weeds and

overgrowth from a row of garages, after neighbours declined to help.

"He worked himself to a standstill to make our part of the world a better place to live. I think I'm driven to do the same and make my parents proud," said Jon.

Although independent, the group has had support from South Gloucestershire Council, who have provided litter-picking equipment and collected the bagged waste.

Residents of all ages are welcome to join future sessions. Details about upcoming events are at: www.kingswoodcleanup.co.uk. To get involved or find out more, email: kingswoodcleanup@gmail.com

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NEWS

Railway group turns the clock back 60 years

THE clock was turned back to 1966 for a day at a special event to mark 60 years since the end of passenger trains on the railway line through Bitton.

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

It was Dr Beeching's infamous report of 1963, The Reshaping

of British Railways, that recommended the closure of the Mangotsfield and Bath branch line, which included passenger services Bristol Temple Meads to Bath Green Park.

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

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

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

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

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



Kingswood Players re-enact a 1966 protest over Beeching's cuts



Avon Valley Railway supporters are steaming Photos: Adam Ashford

of angry protesters.

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

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

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

"They were joined by Dr Richard Beeching, preparing to close the railway, which certainly caused some drama. These interactions even led to passengers giving Dr Beeching

some (slightly inappropriate) choice words!

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

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

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

Representatives of South Gloucestershire and B&NES councils attended the event.

The Avon Valley Railway has more special events taking place in April.

Details can be found at www.avonvalleyrailway.org.



Fares for children were at 1966 prices - 20p a ticket - for the day

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NEWS

Pupils and staff at SBL proud of Ofsted success

SIR Bernard Lovell Academy is celebrating a successful outcome under a demanding new Ofsted regime.

The Oldland Common secondary school is the first secondary in Futura Learning Partnership to be inspected since the education watchdog introduced the system, which judges schools in a range of areas rather than simply giving a one-word grade.

SBL's main school achieved the expected standard across the board, showing that it is doing everything that it should to support young people to thrive and achieve.

Headteacher Dr Robin Bassford said the inspectors had found that most of the criteria for achieving a strong standard in each area were also met.

"Ofsted's new approach has significantly raised the bar regarding the quality of education inspectors look for in schools. The 'expected standard' is a high benchmark," he said.

"We are proud that the report comments that 'the quality of teaching is highly effective' and that 'the curriculum is broad and ambitious'."

The team of five inspectors, who visited the 1,261-pupil school in February, praised the behaviour and attitudes of students and noted the strong relationships with parents and carers.

"The diligent work of tutors and pastoral staff, in partnership with families, has had a clear positive impact on creating a culture where pupils feel a sense of belonging," their report said.

"Pupils at SBL are proud of their school and enjoy their learning.

"Pupils are polite and respectful towards each other and adults.

The inspectors highlighted the school's high expectations and consistent approach to pupils' behaviour, which helps create a calm atmosphere and ensures everyone could learn without disruption.

They also noted the strong support for disadvantaged pupils and those facing mental health challenges, and said that safeguarding practices were a strength of the school.

"The pastoral support offered to pupils is highly effective ... Pupils feel safe and have positive



Inspectors praised the range of opportunities at SBL for students

relationships with adults and their peers," the report said.

Recent work to improve attendance and enhance pupils' personal and social development was praised,

"Leaders ensure that pupils broaden their horizons, social skills and interests during their time at the school. Trips bring the curriculum to life."

During the visit, the inspectors were complimentary about the current post-16 provision, following significant changes over the past two years. The 'needs attention' grade was largely determined by past exam results.

Dr Bassford said he was confident that the improvements in the sixth form would be maintained as the school continued to go from strength to strength.

He said: "We are very proud

that the wonderful qualities of our students have been recognised by Ofsted, as well as the excellent work of our staff, governors and Futura Learning Partnership. Thank you to parents, carers and the wider community for supporting the school to achieve our goal of 'opening doors to success' for all of our young people."

Gary Schlick, chief executive officer at Futura Learning Partnership, commented: "This Ofsted report card, under the revised, tougher framework, confirms that SBL is a school that is meeting the needs of its young people and community consistently and strongly and is well placed to go on getting even better. Congratulations to everyone involved and thanks to families for their ongoing support and commitment to the school."



School has happy tales to tell

STAFF, children and parents at Cherry Garden Primary School celebrated World Book Day.

Families were invited to 'Stay and Read' to start the day off and throughout the day children and staff enjoyed reading-themed events including an assembly to share their fantastic outfits and a book swap.

Deputy head Vicki May said: "It was lovely to be able to make sure that every child could choose a book to keep."

The day was finished with 'Books at Bedtime', where children came back to school in their pyjamas for a story and hot chocolate (teddies were also welcomed).

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NEWS

Hanham Woods swimmers make a splash

IT was straight in at the deep end for the swim team from Hanham Woods Academy as they competed in the annual swimming gala hosted by the Cabot Learning Federation (CLF).

Staged at Hutton Moor Leisure Centre, the contest saw eight academies take part in what proved to be a competitive and exciting event.

After a full programme of swimming disciplines, Hanham Woods Academy secured a commendable fourth-place finish, an excellent result that reflects the dedication and talent of the team.

Several students were representing the school for the first time and delivered outstanding performances, =

Event highlights:

1st place – Year 7 girls' front crawl

1st place – 25m backstroke

1st place – Year 8 individual medley

1st place – Year 8 mixed medley relay

A spokesperson for the academy said: "We are incredibly proud of all our swimmers who represented the academy with determination, teamwork, and enthusiasm.

"To achieve multiple first-place finishes and a strong overall result is a testament to their hard work and commitment.

"This was a fantastic experience for both new and experienced competitors alike."



STUDENTS from Lift Broadlands in Keynsham are taking their first steps as young social activists through the First Give programme, a national initiative that encourages students to explore social issues and support local charities.

Year 10 classes are working together to address key social challenges and have chosen three charities to support: Mikey's World, St Peter's Hospice, and Developing Health & Independence (DHI).

The school welcomed representatives from the three organisations, giving pupils the chance to ask questions, learn about their work, and

Lessons in giving

understand the impact they have on the community.

Mikey's World was founded by Hayley Ryall in memory of her son Mikey, who lost his life in a knife attack in Bath in June 2023 at just 16. It focuses on helping young people understand the impact of knife crime and encouraging them to explore positive alternatives.

DHI helps people across the region live healthy, independent lives, supporting housing, mental health, employment, and substance recovery.

St Peter's Hospice provides free adult hospice care for patients and families in Bristol, South Gloucestershire, and North Somerset.

Laura Stone, principal at Lift Broadlands, said: "It's been a joy to see our students throw themselves into First Give. This project gives them the chance to develop important skills, work together, and understand the positive impact they can have on their community."

Hayley Ryall, founder of Mikey's World, said: "It was a

real pleasure to visit the school and share what Mikey's World is working to achieve.

"They were engaged and wanted to learn about our catastrophic bleed kits and virtual reality programmes. It means a lot to us that young people are behind what we do as they will be the change for the future."

Dianne Rawlins, from DHI, said: "Homelessness is a complex issue, and we were pleased to have the opportunity to share insights with the students."

Hayley Ali, from SPH, said: "Generous donations like this help us bring light to people's lives."

IKB celebrates a memorable decade



IKB Academy in Keynsham has celebrated its tenth anniversary.

The specialist science, technology, engineering and maths opened in September 2015 in buildings at Wellsway School, moving in March the following year to its purpose-built base, with labs and workshops.

Both Futura Learning Partnership schools are on the Wellsway campus, meaning IKB students have access to facilities of the larger secondary while also benefiting from being in a small specialist school supported by staff with strong STEM expertise.

IKB has established close partnerships with local and national employers, who provide real-world links for project work, mentoring and

work experience.

Head of school Pete Headeach said: "One of the strengths of IKB is providing wider opportunities such as meaningful work experience and mock interviews, where students' personalities can truly shine.

Executive head Rob Pearsall said: "This anniversary is a chance to celebrate the fantastic students and staff of IKB, who show such dedication, ambition, and spirit. The school has a great track record of supporting each individual student to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to become the very best version of themselves."

Students can join IKB in Year 10 or Year 12. ikbacademy.org.uk

NEWS

Police swoop on 'drugs lab'

SIX men have been charged following the discovery of a suspected drugs laboratory near Bitton where it is believed class A drugs, including cocaine, and class B drugs, including Mephedrone, were being produced.

They were all arrested as part of a South West Regional Organised Crime Unit (SWROCU) investigation in the early hours of Thursday 26 March. Police were continuing to search the large industrial unit on Bath Road, as the Voice went to print.

The search was expected to take several days.

The six are: Aaron Stevenson, 30, from St Mary's-with-Summercombe, Brixham; Callum Thorpe, 23, from Leigh, Greater Manchester; Samuel Oram, 39, from Cathays, Cardiff;

Abdul Laftah, 48, from Leek, Staffordshire; Ian Boyle, 32, from Royston, Hertfordshire; Simon Khan, 46, from Warmley, South Gloucestershire

All were charged with conspiracy to supply class A drugs and conspiracy to produce a controlled drug of class B. Khan has also been charged with possession of counterfeit currency. They were due to appear at Bristol Magistrates' Court on March 28.

Vapes and drugs seized

CANNABIS, vapes and alcohol were seized in a multi-agency agency operation at three convenience stores as part of a visible policing initiative.

Police and licensing officials, council officers, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC), and the Home Office were involved in a day of action targeting exploitation and criminality.

133 crates of lager and dozens of boxes of vapes were seized from three shops and two vehicles in Fishponds.

Lifesaving advice

AWARENESS of defibrillators in our area and how to use them, as highlighted in the Voice over recent months, is continuing.

Siston Parish Council held a session with Sharon Kirwan of South West Ambulance Service Trust, which was attended by councillors and members of the public, to improve skills and knowledge of defibrillators and CPR. Parish clerk Sara Thomas said: "It was a great session and everyone went away better informed and with renewed confidence, should any of us be first on scene, with somebody unconscious. Sharon also explained about the new practices with checking for bleeding, which is very relevant at the moment."

Meanwhile, a 24/7 public access defibrillator has been installed at the Coronation Centre in Cadbury Heath.



Clr Ben Milsom and his daughter learning CPR from Sharon Kirwan

Together with the bleed kit already in place, this creates a fully equipped Emergency Response Station for the community.

The Royal Society of St George Charitable Trust donated this lifesaving device.

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NEWS

Big families can ask for extra wheelie bin

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

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

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

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

change to three-weekly black bin collections.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

going to happen.

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

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

"A considerable change happened.

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

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

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

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Your black bin collections are changing



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



southglos.gov.uk/app



NEWS

Campaigners prepare for day of action

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

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

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

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

Plan, at around 12.15pm.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Each set of hearings will be held between Tuesday and Thursday, with one in May and the rest in June and July.

SOGs-SG have employed a planning consultant to represent the group at each day of the hearings. They are aiming to raise £15,000 towards their representation and had raised more than £7,000 as the Voice went to print.

The fundraising page is at gofundme.com/f/sogs-sg, and more details of the walk can be found on the SOGS-SG website and Facebook page.

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COMMUNITY NEWS

HANHAM WI

FROM minor accident to major award is the inspiring and fascinating story of how Nick King, the founder and owner of Goats of the Gorge, created and developed his award-winning family run business.

At our March meeting Nick told us how it all began. In 2014, whilst a serving police officer, Nick was involved in a minor traffic accident in Bristol. During routine hospital tests, he was diagnosed with osteoporosis and advised to increase his calcium intake, including drinking goats' milk. This recommendation sparked a deeper interest in its benefits, particularly for skincare.

After attending a soap-making course in the Cotswolds, he began creating soaps using goats' milk instead of water. Early feedback was extremely positive, with customers reporting improvements in various skin conditions. Encouraged by this, he took early retirement and turned a hobby into a business.

Starting at local markets, Goats



of the Gorge has since grown into a recognised brand, now stocked in retail outlets. The business maintains high standards, with all products safety assessed, cruelty-free certified under the Leaping Bunny programme, and fully compliant with EU regulations.

Its success has led to an appearance on Dragons' Den, generating significant online interest, as well as invitations to trade shows and opportunities for international expansion. The brand has also featured on TV, radio, and in publications such as Country Life.

From an unexpected diagnosis

to a thriving business, Goats of the Gorge shows how a simple idea—rooted in natural wellbeing—can lead to remarkable success.

An invitation from Auctioneum, the Hanham-based auction house, to a "Fun Afternoon at the Auction House" proved too good to miss—and it certainly didn't disappoint. Members described it as "Bargain Hunt with tea and cake."

Auctioneer Andy Stowe welcomed us with a behind-the-scenes tour and a preview of upcoming lots, from jewellery and toys to paintings and militaria. He and his team of specialists gave short talks, followed by a lively



mock auction where members placed "imaginary" bids—often with wildly varying results.

A highlight was the valuation session, with members bringing along items such as war medals, clocks, jewellery and books. While no hidden fortunes emerged, it was still great fun for all.

The afternoon ended, as always, with tea and cake.

Meanwhile, following an appeal from the charity Standing with Giants, members were invited to knit or crochet poppies for their 2026 Normandy displays. Our branch responded enthusiastically, and our efforts have now been sent off to support this worthwhile project.

Dianna Coles

Growing together.

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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

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-8.30pm 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 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/
 ■ **BARRS COURT PROBUS** is a friendly local club for men recently retired or semi-retired. We're a mixed group- extradesmen, engineers, teachers, shopkeepers and professionals-who meet every 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month for talks, coffee and outings. Just good company, new experiences. Come as our guest and see what you think. Call Mick 0117 9324104 to check details and say you're coming. Bring a friend - everyone is welcome.
 ■ **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

■ **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-8.30pm 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

■ **WALKING FOOTBALL FOR AGE 50 PLUS**

19.15-20.30 Keynsham Town Walking Football for age 50 plus. Play football at a slower pace for fun and fitness. New members welcome contact keynshamtownwff@gmail.com for details

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

■ Join our **SEATED FITNESS CLASS** at Longwell Green Community Centre, perfect for beginners, older adults and anyone needing gentle, low-impact exercise. Thursdays 9:15-9:45am, first class free. Contact Sarah today to book your free trial class. on 07975 943589 or sarah@realfitnesswithsarah.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 - buqjworks@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

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■ PHARMACY COLUMN

Worried about Meningitis B? We can offer you a vaccination

SPRING is here—and with it comes a timely reminder to look after your health and those around you. We're here to help you stay protected, informed, and feeling your best this season.

Covid

The NHS 2026 Spring COVID Booster Campaign launches on Monday 13th April. If you're aged 75 or over, you're eligible—so just come in or book online for an appointment.

Our service as you know is quick, simple, and flexible. Whether you book online or walk in, we'll get you protected in minutes. Don't delay—your booster could make all the difference.

Meningitis B:

Recent cases of meningitis have understandably raised concern. This serious infection of the

brain and spinal cord lining can develop rapidly and become life-threatening without urgent treatment.

While viral meningitis is often mild, bacterial meningitis is far more dangerous and can lead to severe complications or even death.

It spreads through close contact such as coughing, sneezing, or kissing. Early symptoms may feel like flu—fever, headache, vomiting, or drowsiness—but can worsen quickly. A rash that doesn't fade when pressed (the "glass test") is a critical warning sign.

Working with our Bristol Travel Clinic partners, we have provided Meningitis B vaccinations since 2018 in response to a patient's request for an affordable local service. We also support the

Meningitis Now campaign for improved NHS vaccination cover and raise symptom awareness.

Vaccination remains the most effective protection. To learn more or book, visit: www.bristolmeningitisclinic.co.uk

Hay fever

As pollen levels rise, so do the challenges for hay fever sufferers. Around 1 in 4 adults in Bristol are affected, along with many children—impacting sleep, concentration, and even school performance.

Symptoms such as sneezing, itchy eyes, and runny noses can disrupt daily life, but simple steps can help.

Keep windows closed on high-pollen days, shower after being outdoors, and start antihistamines early—ideally before symptoms begin. Wearing



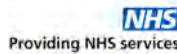
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sunglasses outside or applying a small amount of Vaseline around your nostrils can also reduce exposure.

We're here to help

From vaccinations to hay fever relief—and NHS sinusitis prescription treatments—Ellacombe Pharmacy is here for you. Call **0117 9322293** or pop in to speak with our team.

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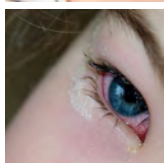
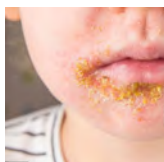


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■ **ANTIQUES**

Izzy, Wizzy, let's get bidding!

A few weeks ago, our saleroom was graced by true television royalty: Sooty, Soo, and Sweep. This iconic trio of original, screen-used puppets was donated by Sooty's owner, Richard Cadell, to a local Tangent Group with the wonderful mission of being auctioned off for charity.



Anyone who knows me knows that I was a massive Sooty fan growing up. I spent my childhood glued to the TV after school or rewatching my favourite episodes on well-worn VHS tapes (remember those!) Back then, in the '90s, the show was hosted by Matthew Corbett, following in the footsteps of his legendary father, Harry. It's a little-known but delightful fact that Sooty is actually the only non-human member of the prestigious Magic Circle.

When I first learned we'd have the honour of selling these puppets, I could barely contain my excitement. Opening that box for the first time felt like unlocking a core memory; there was something almost otherworldly about looking into Sooty's eyes that is hard to put into words. We kept "the gang" on display in our foyer for a few weeks, and it was a joy to witness their universal appeal. People of all ages stopped to take photos or pause and reminisce about their favourite episodes, bringing a wonderful sense of nostalgia to the office.

When auction day finally arrived, the interest was massive, with bids flying in from every corner of the country. After some intense competition, the trio raised a whopping £6,670! Every penny of those proceeds was donated to Cancer Research UK. While I was certainly sad to see them go, I know they've headed off to good homes where they will be truly cherished. It turns out the real magic of Sooty isn't in his stage tricks - it's the smiles he still brings to the faces of everyone who sees him.

Andy Stowe, Auctioneum

■ **KINGSWOOD HISTORY SOCIETY**

650 years of Bristol in 65 minutes

by David Parker – 3rd March 2026

A great turnout for the KHS's first talk of the year at the Park Centre. David introduced his self as someone heavily involved in film production in his career. Hence, he was able to present a collage of film covering the history of Bristol edited by his good hand. His incentive was the 650 year anniversary of the Bristol Charter granted by Edward the Third, as following the much celebrated 600 year anniversary in 1973.

The film started with a young Tony Robinson presenting the early days of Bristol and its wooden castle of 1080. To be eventually replaced by the much stronger castle made of stone. It was interesting to see how resulting road configurations of a Celtic Cross stemmed from the then centre, originally marked with The High Cross (now found at Stourhead). Churches of Christ Church, St Mary Le Port, All Saints, St John, strategically placed.

I believe all well known and perhaps not so well-known historical events relating to Bristol were then covered. The Slave Trade, Civil War (following which the castle was demolished and replaced with a residential area with commercial activities), WW1 and WW2 all had a mention, including SS Great Britain, Concorde and particularly the Floating Harbour. The building of the Workhouses was probably less known; the Bedminster workhouse can still be seen at Flax Bourton. There was more.

To finish the film showed the toppling of the Edward Colston statue, which I believe became a worldwide event for Bristol.

Next meeting at the Park Centre, Kingswood is Tuesday 7th April, 7pm for 7.30pm start. Visitors £4 incl tea/coffee and biscuits.

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



Hanham Community Centre.
118-124 High Street.
Hanham BS15 3EJ.
Saturday: 9.00am
Tel: Izzy 07824 365101

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

North Common Village Hall,
16 Millers Dr, North Common
BS30 8XX
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Tel: Emma 07773 689229

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NEWS

Salute to a century well lived



Eddie on his birthday and below with Audrey. Right: the RBL surprise visit

EDWIN J Hawking, or Eddie as he's known to all, had a memorable 100th birthday.

He and his wife Audrey, who live in Oldland Common and have been married for 77 years, had a surprise visit from members of the Bitton and Oldland branch of the Royal British Legion, who gave them a trumpet fanfare, presented their branch standard, and handed over a framed certificate to mark the occasion.

Their day was made all the more memorable thanks to BBC Points West coming along to record the milestone.

Eddie was born in Upton Cheyney on March 25, 1926, and joined the Royal Air Force training as Air Crew in 1944. He was at Lords' Cricket Ground in London at first, then due to the V2 rocket attacks on London he was relocated to Babbacombe Bay near Torquay

Towards the end of the war, Eddie decided to transfer to the Army. He did his Officer Training in Bangalore in India and afterwards was commissioned into the 2nd Punjab Regiment of the Indian Army. This was as tensions started to mount, with plans for partitioning rapidly advancing. At just 22, Eddie was promoted and served as the youngest Commander in his Regiment. In 1947 the British left India and Eddie's service ended as a Weapons Training Officer with the King's Shropshire Light Infantry.

On leaving the military, Eddie went on to train as an art teacher at the West of England College of Art in Bristol where



he met Audrey. Most of his art teaching was in the north of England, but in retirement he returned to his 'grass roots' in the West.

Eddie joined the Bitton and Oldland Branch of the RBL in 1991, following in the footsteps of his father Fred Hawking, a founder member in 1927

Eddie and Audrey have three sons, Chris, Andy and Matt, a daughter Becky Vicary, grandchildren Ben, Jonathan, Helen, Liam and Zoe, and great grandchildren Max and Felix.



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NEWS

Friends conquer Kilimanjaro for Cameron

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

They have an online fundraising page which is still taking donations, at tinyurl.com/3s7ra7ch.

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



Jo Robb and Kim Dixon at the summit of Kilimanjaro

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NEWS

Three cousins born on the same day



COUSINS Frankie, Connie and Maddox were all born within a day at the Royal United Hospital.

The rare coincidence took place on Friday 6 February when Georgie from Bridgeway, gave birth to identical twin girls Frankie and Connie and her brother Billy and his partner Kiera welcomed their son Maddox shortly after.

Georgie said: "It still feels

surreal that we all became parents on the very same day. We joked about it happening and then it actually did!

"It was a very emotional day for us all, one our family will never forget. It was so special seeing the cousins all together and being able to pop down the hall and see one another on the ward. We can't wait for all the joint birthday parties to come!"

COMMUNITY NEWS

BRISTOL u3a

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

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

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

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

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

If you are interested in trying one of the groups, send me an

email at the address below and I'll reply with the full details.

Bristol u3a (you in your Third Age) is for anyone: there's no lower age limit but most members are retired or semi-retired. Activities are wide and varied, so the best way to find out more is to come to one of our café socials. You don't have to be a member to attend.

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

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

Membership is half-price from April 1.

New event springs up

RESIDENTS of Bitton and the surrounding area are invited to discover the wide range of groups, organisations and small businesses serving the community at a Community Fair taking place on Saturday 18 April, from 10.30am to 1.30pm, at St Mary's Church and Church Hall, Bitton.

The new event builds on the strong community spirit already seen at Bitton's popular Autumn Fayre and Fête, which attracts large crowds each year. The event has been created in response to interest from residents who would like more opportunities to discover the many clubs, groups and activities taking place locally, as well as those who are interested in creating new ones.

Jim Heavens, one of the organisers of the event said: "There are so many groups and organisations in the local area providing sports, recreational and other services, but often people just don't know they are there. We hope that the community fair will give them a real opportunity to talk to people and help visitors get involved."

The fair will take place in both the Church and the Church Hall in Church Lane, where visitors can meet stallholders, ask questions and explore opportunities to get involved locally. Entry is completely free for both visitors and stallholders, with refreshments available in both venues.

As well as information stalls, the fair will also include a fun baking competition to find "Bitton's Best Young Baker." Children and young people up to the age of 16 are invited to bring along homemade cakes, breads or traybakes to be judged during the event, with a small prize for the winner.

Twenty local groups and organisations have already confirmed their attendance, with space still available for a small number more. Local organisations interested in taking part, as well as residents looking for more information, are encouraged to visit the church website at www.stmarysbitton.org.uk, which also includes details on hiring the church hall.



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MESSAGE FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Together we make neighbourhoods safer

I RECENTLY attended a Neighbourhood Watch event. It was a reminder of something I see across Avon and Somerset time and again: the powerful impact of people looking out for one another.

Neighbourhood Watch is rooted in that simple, vital idea of bringing people together, strengthening connections and creating places where people feel included and safe.

One of the key principles of Neighbourhood Watch is prevention, which is a priority in my Police and Crime Plan.

One of the most visible elements of that work is increasing neighbourhood policing.

We have added officers to neighbourhood teams because I know that when officers are

present and familiar, when they know the communities they serve, and those communities know them in return, it builds trust and reduces crime.

People feel reassured. Concerns are raised early and acted on quickly.

Neighbourhood policing is practical, visible prevention and it matters. The officer who came to the Neighbourhood Watch meeting last week demonstrated the effectiveness of that.

But prevention also means investing in the right support, at the right time, in the right places and this work is happening across Avon and Somerset.

Recent activity includes: *South Gloucestershire: Youth work and graffiti prevention project engaging young people

in places impacted by Anti-Social Behaviour.

*Bath: youth work and mentoring sessions engaging young people.

*Across Avon and Somerset: More than 100 sports diversionary sessions, delivered to young people to reduce antisocial behaviour and youth violence.

Together, these programmes make shared spaces safer, support young people with positive opportunities, and reduce risks before harm occurs.

While formal schemes and funded programmes are essential, so too are the everyday actions each of us can take.

Creating safer communities doesn't come from just one initiative or one organisation, or just from better neighbourhood



With Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody

policing.

It's the sum of many actions, choices and relationships. It's communities pulling together, looking out for one another, refusing to let division take root, choosing compassion and care.

Every area can have a Neighbourhood Watch scheme but, with or without that formal arrangement, together we can continue building safer, stronger and more confident communities where everyone can live, work and thrive free from fear.



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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Finding hope in a garden

WALKING around Fishponds, even after living here for over a decade, I am still filled with a sense of thanks for the amazing green open spaces that we have around us.

Whether it is a wander down the cycle path, a picnic in Fishponds Park, a meander from Oldbury Court through Snuff Mills and around Eastville Lake, we are really blessed in this part of our city with large green spaces and interesting pockets of trees, rivers and wildlife.

I spend a lot of my time in the churchyard at St Marys, and All Saints' grounds.

They are places which give us all beautiful seasonal flowers and trees, freedom to play, spaces to run or sit quietly for a moment.

What is fascinating is that just a stone's throw away is the busy Fishponds Road, with all the eclectic life of a city. And yet, here are gardens that we all

have round-the-clock access to, providing spaces of wonder at creation, stillness, fun and rest.

In a city where few people have gardens, they act as our open-air community places and spaces.

There are lots of gardens spoken about in the Bible.

At Easter, Christians around the world, focus on one in particular. It is both a garden and a burial place, just on the edge of the city.

It is here that, 2,000 years ago, women went early on a Sunday morning, expecting to anoint the body of Jesus.

Yet the Bible says they found something very different. The tomb was empty.

In that garden, Mary Magdalene, Jesus's friend and disciple, finds herself having a conversation with someone she thinks is the gardener. It is only when Jesus speaks Mary's name that she recognises her friend. I have always loved that image

of Jesus as a gardener, tending, caring and nurturing everything and everyone.

This moment forms a core part of Christian faith. It speaks of life, hope, resurrection, joy and surprise. It is that new life and possibility beyond death that have given us all traditions with which we celebrate new life - be that egg hunts or festive gatherings. And it all happens in a garden.

I believe that people need both stories of hope and new life, and gardens which are green and safe, beautiful and restful.

We need gardens that we as a community, in all our wonderful individual diverse ways, blessed with our different talents and gifts, can meet others.

We get to know our neighbours' names, and experience what it means to be connected to each other and God's wonderful world.



Rev Lizzie Kesteven, Vicar, All Saints and St Mary's churches, Fishponds

In a time when the world feels fragile and war torn, the Easter message of hope and life, set within a garden, is a joyful one to ponder.

May you be blessed by the gardens of Fishponds this Easter. May you know the hope and new life that the Easter Story brings.

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■ NATURE WATCH

with Dawn Lawrence

The noble history of the humble waybread

A FELLOW botanist recently told me that in colonial Africa the plant we call greater plantain was known as "white man's footprint" because, previously unknown in sub-Saharan Africa, it appeared wherever the white men went. This memorable name combines close observation of the plant's habits with a record of its history.

The greater plantain has a tough ecological "niche" (this word encompasses all the conditions that define a particular species' usual home). Look for it around gateways and along footpaths on the very edges of the bare mud or dust (areas that are too heavily scuffed, trampled and compacted even for greater plantain to survive). Here you will find its neat rosettes of rounded leaves with parallel veins and its stringy stems of plain green flowers modestly pressed close to the ground. Its English name comes from the root "plantar" meaning the sole of the foot, because greater plantain has evolved to tolerate being trodden on. It will, however, grow upwards to about a foot long (a metric conversion would simply not do!) given the opportunity.

The Anglo-Saxons called this plant waybread; another fitting name because it



Greater plantain or waybread: we can eat the leaves and birds love the seeds.

Photo: lawnweeds.co.uk/

grows by the wayside and you can eat it - the young leaves as a salad vegetable and the older ones cooked for greens. Its astringent leaves can be crushed to soothe nettle and insect stings and can also act as a styptic for cuts and grazes (and the stung, scratched and hungry traveller can stumble upon it without effort). Its ability to grow in compacted soils means that it can be used for breaking up the hard pan once the disturbance has ceased. In

this role it is the architect of its own demise as other plants will now shoulder it out in these improved conditions. And so it travels along its path by hitching a ride on animals' feet or our boots with its tiny seeds that become sticky when wet.

That's not even all: this most pedestrian of plants has a surprisingly noble history. It had its portrait painted in 1503 by one of the greatest artists of all time, Albrecht Dürer, who, a few years later, painted the Emperor Maximilian I. But then, that is only fitting for a plant considered to be one of the Nine Sacred Herbs and Mother of Plants by the Anglo-Saxons. The greater plantain refuses to let all that praise and honour go to its head and can still be found along our pavements and gutters and by any muddy gateway, fulfilling its name of waybread as pigeons and finches feast on its tiny seeds. Dürer's painting is called, rather wonderfully, "The Great Piece of Turf" and is lavished with no less skill and attention to detail than he devoted to the Emperor himself - it will be no surprise to you that it is one of my favourites, do look it up, it is perennially beautiful.

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NEWS FROM THE METRO MAYOR

Next stop: better buses

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Visit haveyoursaywest.co.uk/betterbuses online and have your say, from March 30 until May 10.

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

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

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

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

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

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



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

quieter streets too.

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

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

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

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LETTERS

Amazing support for cancer charities

I WOULD like to acknowledge how amazing the community has been in supporting the cancer charities Bowelbabe and CRUK and Abbie Collings and Daniel Money and their families. Over £140,000 has been raised as well as significant sums for Birmingham Hospice, St Peter's Hospice and Dorothy House.

Friends and families and people of Keynsham and surrounding area are asked to continue their amazing support for Abbie and Daniel's fundraising again this month. Two coffee mornings are being held at Keynsham Cricket Club on Friday April 17 for Bowelbabe and on Friday April 24 for Daniel's CRUK Fundraising Page.

The coffee mornings will add to the fundraising efforts of five locals who are running the London Marathon on Sunday April 26. Paul Collings, his brother Mark and friend Rich Wheeler are running as part of Team Bowelbabe. Paul's wife Abbie is currently receiving treatment for Stage 4 Bowel Cancer. Daniel's brother Joe Money, and Daniel's friend from Wellsway Tom Jenkins, are running for Daniel's CRUK Giving Page. Daniel died of Stage 4 metastatic bowel cancer aged 27 in September 2025.

Rich Wheeler will be running



Joe Money and Tom Jenkins

the London Marathon in full firefighter kit and has already organised charity car washing. The next Charity Car Wash is on Saturday April 4 at Hicks Gate Fire Station; Rich will be running on a treadmill in full firefighter kit for 6 hours while volunteers and firefighters wash cars.

As reported in the Voice last month, Paul will be running his second London Marathon on April 26.

He said: "Abbie's cancer is being kept under control as a direct result of Cancer Research's breakthroughs over recent years. Since her treatment commenced, Abbie has faced every setback with incredible strength and positivity. She's a true and such a positive inspiration to Mark, Abbie and Paul Collings



Mark, Abbie and Paul Collings and Nicky (Mark and Paul's sister)

and Nicky (Mark and Paul's sister) everyone who knows her."

Daniel started his Cancer Research UK Fundraising Page in February 2023 after he was diagnosed with Stage 4 metastatic bowel cancer. He grew up in Keynsham, went to Chandag and Wellsway Schools, then studied medicine at Birmingham University and qualified as a doctor in July 2021. Daniel died in Birmingham Hospice on September 11, 2025, aged 27.

There have been over 50 fundraising events for Cancer Research UK held in Daniel's name. The most recent was a Race Night, organised by Teresa Phillips, which raised £2,720.

Abbie's and Daniel's families and friends are amazed and

humbled by how generous the Keynsham community has been in supporting them, not just through donations and fundraising events, but throughout their cancer journeys.

If you would like to sponsor Joe, Tom, Paul, Mark and Rich please follow these links:

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/joes-giving-page-2707824890>

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/london-marathon-2026>

<https://fundraise.cancerresearchuk.org/page/paul-marks-london-marathon-2026>

Sarah Stone
Daniel's mum

Running for mental health

I WOULD like to share a story about a challenge that I have set myself this year to help promote 30 mins of exercise a day to help those who suffer with mental health issues and those who just want to try and better themselves physically and mentally.

My challenge is to run at least 5km a day (which takes around 30 minutes) with the occasional half marathon and tough mudder along the way.

We have also set up a run/walk club every Friday which starts from the Chew Valley Distillery located in Bitton just up the road from the railway station.

This Friday run club is more about the social side and we encourage people to talk not only while running but when back at the Distillery over a drink and every two weeks some food from the food truck that we have in attendance.

We are always looking for more people who would like to join and



would love to be able to promote such a club through you and your paper.

The challenge of 5km a day can be followed through my Instagram page Life_after_whothisguy

You can also find more information there on how to join our run club, for which you can just turn up on the day for free.

Chris Ritchens

Respect the common

I RECENTLY collected two bags of litter collected from the mountain bike track in the wooded area of Rodway Common.

This covered only a third of the area, and should be of concern to any parents whose children visit this area, as it's their kids who are creating a mess. All the litter was plastic pop bottles, sweet and crisp packets.

It's amazing how many people thank you for picking up litter, however it would be better if it wasn't there in the first place!

If everyone stopped walking past a piece of litter but actually picked it up and deposited in a bin, what a wonderful place this country would be.

Rob Higgins

ADVERTORIAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

One volunteer I spoke to joined

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



Adventurers start young at Woodhouse Park

when her son was a Beaver. Years later her son is now a Group Lead Volunteer, and she is still involved alongside her husband. When I asked what her favourite part of Scouting was, she didn't hesitate. "Camping," she said. "And encouraging kids to try new things."

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

Challenge

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

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

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

Experiences like those taking place at Woodhouse Park show what Scouting is all about.

Adventure, confidence, teamwork and creating opportunities for young people to grow.

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

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

From lighting campfires and supporting activities to helping

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

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

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

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

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

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NOSTALGIA

LOUIE MCLEAN

Louie McLean née Ball was a true trailblazer in the world of motorcycling. Born in 1900, Louie developed a passion for motorcycles at a young age, working in her father's garage and quickly becoming both a skilled rider and mechanic.

Louie went on to compete in motorcycle trials across Britain and Europe, becoming one of the most accomplished female riders of her time. In 1927 she was part of the team that won the Silver Vase at the International Six Days Trial – the only all-women's team ever to achieve this feat.

At the height of her competitive motorcycling career during the 1920's and into the 30's, Louie rode for Douglas as well as James and BSA. In those days Douglas, based in Kingswood, were probably the biggest manufacturer of motorcycles in the world.

Kingswood Heritage Museum has an exhibition gallery dedicated to its large collection of Douglas motorcycles. This includes Louie's famous motorcycle FY8006, alongside a fascinating wall display of trophies, awards, and photographs capturing her extraordinary career.

The motorcycle is featured in the colour picture alongside Ralph Brain, one of the Museum's volunteers and the author of an article on Louie and her life that was published in "The New Conrod", the members' magazine for the London Douglas Motor Cycle Club. Louie herself is shown in the black and white



photograph astride another machine.

All of this has been made possible thanks to the generous loan from Louie's daughter, Mrs Louie Hackney, who lives in Scotland.



If you visit the Museum this season, don't miss the chance to see Louie McLean's motorcycle up close and discover the story of one of motorcycling's great female pioneers.

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Bitton and Oldland Cycling Club bounces back after 108 years

By Steve Cox and Peter Davies

The history of Bitton and Oldland Cycling Club has helped inspire the relaunch of the club as a social cycling group. For the residents of Bitton and Oldland Common, the arrival of the safety bicycle did not merely offer a faster commute; it heralded a two-wheeled liberation that dismantled the rigid boundaries of class, gender, and decorum.

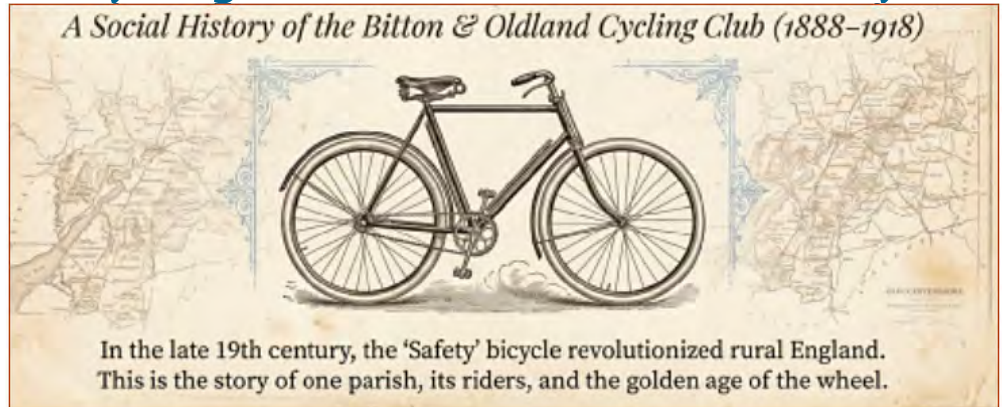
The End of the chaperone: bicycles as 'freedom machines'

Before the mid-1880s, cyclists risked life and limb atop the "high-wheeler" or Penny-farthing. The introduction of the "safety bicycle"—featuring equal-sized wheels, a diamond frame, and pneumatic tires—democratized the road. For women, this shift granted them unchaperoned mobility.

Victorian fashion was a literal hazard on a bicycle; heavy petticoats and restrictive corsets frequently tangled in gears and pedals. The resulting move toward "Rational Dress" became a cultural battlefield. In Leicester, Alice Hawkins famously shocked the populace by donning "pantaloons," while others adopted the "Hyde Park Safety Skirt," which cleverly buttoned up for riding and let down for walking.

The Bitton and Oldland 'Wheeler's'

The Bitton and Oldland Cycling Club, formed in August 1888, quickly became important to local social life. Members frequently gathered at the Crown and Horseshoe in Oldland Common and the White Hart in Bitton, where the "Wheeler's" celebrated their victories with robust musical

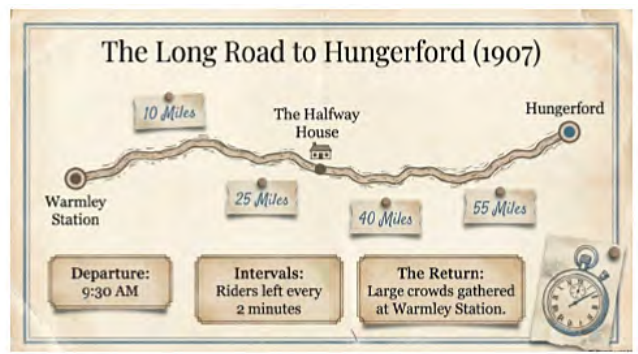


concerts and annual dinners—such as the grand gathering held at the White Hart on Wednesday, October 14th, 1891.

The Lantern Ride was a very popular. The 1892 event started from The British School, Oldland, stopping at The Grange, the home of Mr W Sommerville whose wife judged the cycles, each decorated in flowers and lanterns. A small concert followed including songs from Miss Sommerville, Miss Shellard, Mrs Jefferies, Syline Jefferies and Miss Whitford; on piano Mr F Lear.

July 7th 1896 riders cycled from Bitton to Castle Combe and joined other members and friends for the annual club picnic and they all sat to a reported "VERY FINE TEA". Non cyclists had arrived by wagonette and traps.

W H Stone took the Patrons cup in 1901 presented at the annual dinner held at the Crown and Horse Shoe, Oldland, December 16th. Club Captain W H Stone and T Churchill among others received awards from Chairman Mr J E Morgan. The previous year at the same location 40 members attended the dinner, where medals were awarded to Luther May, H Gerrish and E Jefferies among others.



In September 1907 the 100-mile race from Warmley to The Halfway House, 5 miles past Hungerford and back, took place.. A large crowd was at Warmley Station to see the finish, the winner being W H Stone completing the 100 miles in 6hrs. 20min. 20sec. A musical concert supplied by Mr Gerrish, Mr Fussell, J Ashley and others rounded off the event.

The rules of 1909

The club's 1909 Handbook mandated that every member "shall carry a bell" and "at night a lighted lamp." Crucially, the rules forbade riding on any footpath at any time—a major point of friction as cyclists negotiated territory with pedestrians and livestock.

Communication on the road was handled via a specific whistle code:

- One Whistle:** Proceed;
- Two Whistles:** Slow Up;
- Three Whistles:** Dismount

A historic club is reborn

Proud of our heritage, in February 2026 the Bitton and Oldland Cycling Club has been reborn as more than just a sports group—it is a sanctuary for social cycling. We aim to transform the solitary act of riding into a collective, joyous experience designed to boost mental wellbeing and reduce

loneliness.

We operate on five core pillars:

- **Friendship:** We value shared experiences and social connection as the primary goal of every ride.
- **The "No-Drop" Policy:** We move at an accessible pace, ensuring the group always stays together and every rider feels supported.
- **Inclusivity & Accessibility:** We welcome all riders regardless of their background, skill level, or the cost of their equipment.
- **Safety:** We believe in the "strength of numbers" to help everyone feel secure and advocate for infrastructure safe enough for ages 8 to 80.

• **Wellbeing:** Mental health and community confidence are our "North Star" for all club activities

You can find out more and join the club at <https://www.cyclinguk.org/group/bitton-and-oldlandcycling-club>

Next meeting

The next meeting of the history group is 7th May 2026 – an external Visit to Stanton Drew stone circle with Bridget Hetzel as guide. Everyone is welcome but please contact the group so that we can plan the guided tour.
www.bittonhistory.org.uk



SPORT

KEYNSHAM BOWLING CLUB

WITH the rain receding and the sun starting to shine, the bowling green in the Memorial Park is looking in pristine condition as the new season for Keynsham Bowling Club beckons.

The clubhouse was packed recently for subscription day as members, both old and new, signed up for the 2026 season.

If things go to plan, the green is scheduled to open on Sunday April 12 when the first woods will be rolled.

The new season will kick off with a couple of friendly games, with the serious stuff beginning on Friday April 17, when the men are at home to Begbrook in the Triples League.

The ladies follow soon after, also with a home triples fixture, against Frome Selwood.

Social bowling will continue throughout the season with Monday Roll Up, when members turn up and play in any position on the rink, it being a superb way to enhance their skill levels.

On the administration side, members have moved into the world of high technology, which

is quite an achievement when you consider the age profile of the club.

In the past, ladies and gents players expressed their interest in playing in the various leagues by signing the paper listing on noticeboards where, after the selectors had met, the chosen teams would be displayed. Now members will be able to express their availability by computer, tablet or smartphone, and then wait for an email advising them if they have been selected.

The club, which is always keen to recruit new members, will hold open days on Sunday and Monday May 3 and 4, when the qualified coaches will be there to help members of the public give bowling a go.

There will be two sessions each day, lasting about one hour each, and those attending are asked to wear flat shoes. Lead coach Ian Tweedie encourages people of all ages to come along and try their hand at the wonderful game of bowls.

So all is in place for what we hope will be a successful season at Keynsham Bowling Club.

Mike Barrow

FRYS BOWLING CLUB

WITH the sun beginning to shine and April now upon us, a packed fixture list begins on 8th April with a Wednesday friendly away at St Anne's Park. The Saturday friendlies begin on 11th April with a visit to Begbrook Green, with the Ladies friendlies begin on Tuesday 21st April at Page Park. The competitive games begin with the Friday Triples League on 17th April away at Avonvale, before the Bristol and District League season starts on Thursday 30th April. Following an unbeaten 2025 season in Division 3, Fry's make the step back up to Division 2, with Henleaze 'A' the visitors on opening night.

The cup campaigns begin in June with The City and County of Bristol Clarence Davey on Sunday 7th June with a tough trip to G.B. Britton, before a Tuesday night game on the 9th June in the Bristol and District League Lloyd Trophy at St Anne's Park. The Somerset Bowls Association Turnbull Cup commences on Tuesday 30th June with Norwest visiting Somerdale. Tuesday 14th July sees Keynsham make the short trip across the railway to play the annual Alsop Shield, which Keynsham currently hold. Fry's will also be looking to defend the Triples League Cup throughout the season.

In addition to THE fixtures with other clubs, the club are running individual competitions, as well as pairs and triples competitions. The popular triples day is scheduled for 11th July. New for this season is Finals Day on 5th September where the champions for the season will be decided.

As ever a busy winter season has reached its conclusion with the short mat sessions once again proving popular. Following a successful first year, the end of February, saw club members travel back to the Torak Hotel in Torquay for an enjoyable week of indoor bowls.

If you would like more information about Frys Bowling Club, or to give bowls a try, please visit our website: frysbowlingclub.wixsite.com/frys, search Frys Bowling Club on Facebook, follow us on X (formerly Twitter): @FrysBowls, or contact our Secretary, Stephen Day, e-mail: frysbowlsclub@gmail.com, tel: 01225 872959.

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