

FREE EVERY MONTH IN CLIFTON AND SURROUNDING AREA



Clockwise from top left: Hoardings at the former WH Smith site; Clifton Cllrs Paula O'Rourke and Jerome Thomas with Robert O'Reilly and Terry Lai and of Oxford Architects reviewing the plans; how the pop-up restaurant could look

Hopes rise for eyesore site

THE hoardings surrounding a prominent site in Clifton Village could finally be coming down.

Ward councillors Paula O'Rourke and Jerome Thomas have revealed that the new owners of the former WH Smith site are considering opening a pop-up restaurant there while

they develop their long-term plans for development.

They say Speare Developments, which bought the flattened site from THAT group, are working with renowned chef Josh Eggleton on the scheme, which could be launched as early as Easter.

WH Smith closed in 2010 and the site remained unused other than for a temporary ice rink in 2014. THAT group had consent for a three-storey development of offices and shops but scrapped its plans in 2023, citing increasing costs.

More details: Page 17

Singers shine on the big stage

The Singing Club at St John's CofE Primary in Clifton became part of the biggest children's choir in the world at an event at Birmingham Arena last month.

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Sam's lifesaving legacy for village

A potentially lifesaving defibrillator, accessible 24/7, has been installed in Clifton Village by the family of rugby player Sam Polledri, who died in 2022.

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Tower tours net fifty grand!

Tours of the Wills Memorial Building have raised more than £50,000 for The Grand Appeal for Bristol Children's Hospital.

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Our March deadline is February 11. To ensure your news or letter is included, please contact us by this date. Advertisers are also asked to contact us by the same date.

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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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BOOK REVIEW

Departures by Julian Barnes

'I AM now seventy-eight, and this will definitely be my last book – my official departure, my final conversation with you,' Julian Barnes declares in *Departures*. And, though the inclusion of 'definitely' paradoxically introduces some doubt, one is inclined to believe him. He wants to leave a finished work, not something someone might publish posthumously, either incomplete or, worse, completed by another. And he wants, though he does not say so, to write a final masterpiece, which he has.

His last 'book', he calls it, not his last 'novel' or last 'essay collection' and readers may debate which it is and why it is both though it hardly matters for *Departures* is *sui generis* and beautiful.

There is a love story, that of a couple who meet at university, introduced by the young Julian himself. They fall for each other and come together and go to Julian when small misunderstandings spell disaster and then all is well again. Until they graduate and choose to break up rather than get married. Years later, with Julian's help, they meet again. And he has written this story, a story with a beginning, with two endings and no middle, despite swearing an oath that he never would.

There is a wrestle with memory, with Proust and madeleines, with identity and who we are when we lose our memory.

There is the author's own account of ageing, grief, ill health and of his writing, always in search of the whole story.

There is a dog. Jimmy. He does not know he is a dog. He will protect those who care for him from whatever comes through the letterbox.

Barnes berates himself for breaking his oath. We needed him to. The love story – or the story of love attempted, of an ending if not love's ending, whatever it is – and the parts of his own story become a conversation with the reader. He pictures reader and author side by side on a café pavement, looking out and attending to all they see. He asks us to keep looking and, with such an observer by one's side, how could one not? In all of his books and from that café pavement there is so much (still) to see.

Lizzie Moss, Heron Books, Clifton

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■ NEWS

Device that could save a life at any hour of day or night



A POTENTIALLY life-saving machine has been installed in one of Clifton village's busiest streets in memory of a popular and talented rugby player.

Sam Polledri who was 24 years old died after a cardiac arrest while he was on a night out with friends in the centre of Bristol in 2022.

Although the emergency services and the Great Western Air Ambulance charity (GWAAC) attended they were unable to save Sam.

His family, girlfriend, and family friends set up the Sam Polledri Foundation with GWAAC. The aim of the foundation is to raise funds to buy defibrillators and install them.

Their latest defibrillator has been fixed to the wall between Clifton Village Fish Bar and Chandos Deli in Princess Victoria Street.

Marco Maestri, who runs the Fish Bar, said: "This honours Sam's memory in a truly meaningful and moving way.

Lewis Polledri, Sam's brother, Louise Polledri, Sam's mother, and Marco Maestri, of Clifton Village Fish Bar

"We thought that with the success of the semi-pedestrian area on Princess Victoria Street that there should be a defibrillator which is unlocked giving access twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week."

He said that many defibrillators are locked away in buildings and not available to the public.

The ongoing maintenance of the machine will be covered by Clifton Village Fish Bar.

Sam's mother Louise said: "I wish there had been a public access defibrillator available for my beautiful boy but knowing we have made a difference because of Sam's passing, and that other families may have been saved from our living nightmare is huge. This makes all we have done worthwhile".

Sam Polledri had played for various rugby clubs including Clifton, Dings and St Mary's.

Claire Harris of GWAAC said it was their goal that no one should be more than five minutes' walk away from a defibrillator.

Spring target for end to Whiteladies Road work

WORK is continuing to improve walking, wheeling and cycling routes on the lower part of Whiteladies Road.

The improvements began in July last year and a new cycle path has been installed.

However, the project had to be halted while drainage issues were investigated. Construction got back under way at the start of this year with the intention of stopping water pooling on the road.

Councillor Ed Plowden, chair of the Bristol City Council's transport and connectivity committee, said: "Whiteladies Road has struggled with localised flooding for years and the mature trees, that line the eastern side of the street, have caused problems for pedestrians as their roots have made the narrow pavement surface uneven.

"I am pleased that work has restarted as we need to make Whiteladies Road more accessible for pedestrians and safer for cyclists, while retaining

road space for vehicles and without losing any of the trees.

"Unfortunately, the need to resolve the drainage issues has added extra time to the project, which is now on course to be completed early in the spring.

"Thank you to everyone, especially residents and businesses along the route, for bearing with us while we work to improve Whiteladies Road for all."

The northbound diversion is via Queens Road, St Pauls Road and left onto Whiteladies Road.

The diversion to access properties on the western side of Whiteladies Road is via Queens Road, Pembroke Road, Oakfield Road, and right onto Whiteladies Road.

Access is still being maintained for pedestrians and cyclists.

There will need to be an overnight road closure towards the end of the project for road resurfacing.

More details: Councillors' column, Page 16

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There are few more confusing – or unpopular – taxes than Inheritance Tax (IHT). If you're unsure of the details, or you'd like more of your inheritance to go to your family and less to the HMRC or on care fees, we can help.

Leaving loved ones to incur up to a 40% reduction due to tax on their inheritance is a hard ask. Yet despite many children and grandchildren being ill-equipped to grapple with IHT, more and more families are having to deal with it.

It's a situation that is set to continue, with the Office of Budget Responsibility forecasting that IHT revenues will reach £14.3 billion by 2029/2030¹.

In better news for your family, the residence nil-rate band threshold is now set at £175,000 for those who qualify when passing their main residence to direct lineal dependants.

This goes some way to reflect the growth in property prices, as well as other asset values, which together have dragged more households into the IHT net.

Nevertheless, it can come as a shock to discover that a large proportion of your wealth, which includes the family home, investments such as Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs), life assurance plans not in trust and even old family heirlooms, will be included in your estate.

Get in the know

So what exactly could your family be liable for? We've already discussed the residence nil-rate band threshold of £175,000. Then you can factor in that the first £325,000 of your estate is likely to be exempt from IHT. This means that, subject to various conditions, if you're married or in a civil partnership, you could have a tax-free estate worth £1,000,000.

¹ Office for Budget Responsibility, Economic and Fiscal Outlook, March 2025

Yet the simple fact is that IHT could be considered a voluntary tax. The Treasury relies on our inertia and reluctance to confront the issues of death and inheritance. To make things worse, the Treasury's coffers are boosted at the exact time your loved ones least need the added hassle.

Help your family now

There are many perfectly legitimate ways to mitigate IHT through foresight and careful financial planning. You don't need high-powered tax planning, just a willingness to discuss the issue, act and make use of the many options available. These include establishing trusts) and making use of annual exemptions such as gifting.

With a little planning, more of your wealth can be passed on to future generations

Bear in mind that if you're domiciled, or resident, in the UK, IHT rules are complex. Certain transfers are deemed exempt from the tax if they pass between a husband and wife or civil partners.

The levels and bases of taxation, and reliefs from taxation, can change at any time. The value of any tax relief depends on individual circumstances.

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Get in touch

If you're after a little help to guide you through the IHT maze, give us a call. We're here to make a difference to your family's future.

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■ NEWS

Young singers shine on the big stage

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

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

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

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

The St John's Singing Club is made up of children in the juniors, Years 3 to 6, and continues to offer pupils valuable opportunities to develop their musical skills, build confidence and enjoy performing together in inspiring settings, in line with the growing recognition of the value of singing in schools.

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



The Singing Club at school, top, and at the Birmingham Arena

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The data will be published at the end of the 25/26 season.



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■ NEWS

Ardagh chief honoured for sustainability work

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

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

Christine said: "I was so surprised and thrilled to receive this award. It's amazing to think that the work we did to encourage

and secure short, local supply chains has become part of a national framework, rolled out across the country, ensuring all those small and medium-sized food producers have a secure route to their local markets."

Christine became CEO of ACT, a charity-run venue in the heart of Horfield Common, in May 2025, and has continued her food production and distribution-related work with her ongoing plans for the Ardagh's food bank collation and community garden. The garden recently won a Royal Horticultural Society's In Your Neighbourhood award, and is home to the first café in Bristol to compost 100% of its food waste on site.

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

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

Praise and pride as Serena, 21, gets British Empire Medal

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

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

Serena, who grew up in East Bristol, is an anti-knife crime campaigner, boxing coach and mentor with the charity Empire Fighting Chance, where she also works as a Youth Voice Ambassador. Through her work, Serena helps young people build confidence, find their voice and create positive change in their communities.

She has also played an influential role in national youth policy, including contributing to the development of the Government's National Youth Strategy and speaking up for

young people at events such as the Youth Opportunity Summit at St James's Palace, where she sat alongside King Charles and Sir Keir Starmer to share young people's perspectives. She also attended the first annual Knife Crime Summit at 10 Downing Street.

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

Empire Fighting Chance said: "Serena's journey with Empire is a powerful example of lived experience driving real change, from coming through our programmes herself to now mentoring and inspiring young people every day.

"This BEM is a brilliant recognition of Serena's

leadership, her voice for young people, and the impact she continues to make both locally and nationally. Please join us in congratulating Serena on this well-deserved honour, we are so proud."

Serena originally joined Empire Fighting Chance after her brother took his own life. After losing friends to knife crime, she decided to work with other young people to bring about change. She is a former pupil of Fairfield High School.

Asked about school experiences, Serena said: "While my journey wasn't always easy, there were some teachers at Fairfield who really believed in me when I needed it most. They offered encouragement, reassurance, and provided me with a space where I could feel comfortable during tough times. I'm very grateful to those



Serena Wiebe

individuals, as their belief in me stayed with me and helped shape my confidence moving forward."

Edel Cronin, the school's principal, said: "Serena is an inspiring young woman who has faced considerable challenges and used her experiences to help and empower others. We are proud that she has been recognised in this remarkable way and that she spent her formative years at Fairfield. Her story will continue to inspire our students for years to come."



Fiona Donald

Anaesthetist Fiona is made OBE

A FORMER consultant anaesthetist at North Bristol NHS Trust (NBT) has been recognised in the King's New Year's Honours List for outstanding contributions to her field.

Dr Fiona Donald, who worked at NBT for 27 years before her retirement, has been made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to anaesthesia, intensive care and pain medicine.

Dr Donald specialised in obstetric anaesthesia and perioperative medicine, with further interests in teaching and training, and is also a former

President of the Royal College of Anaesthetists.

Dr Donald said: "I am delighted to have been awarded the OBE, particularly because this honour also reflects the work of the many individuals and teams I have had the pleasure of working with over the course of my career. Each collaboration helped me work towards my aims of improving patient outcomes and educating future generations of anaesthetists."

Maria Kane, Bristol NHS Group chief executive, said: "This accolade is the perfect celebration of Dr Donald's truly outstanding career."

■ NEWS

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

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

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

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

New battle as school bans public access to playing fields

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

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

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

fields and maintain the security of the fencing.”

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

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

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

“The whole episode demonstrates the problems that

the school has failed to plan for, when erecting a fence all around the perimeter in full knowledge that four public rights of way lie within the fenced area.

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

“The school keeps repeating that the public rights of way have no current status, but that is not correct. The school’s failure to respect the law impacts young children, who cannot now walk a safe route to Stoke Bishop School across the field, elderly people who could manage a short cut across the field but cannot walk a longer route, and thousands of others including those with mobility and other issues.

“It shows an absolute lack of good faith.”



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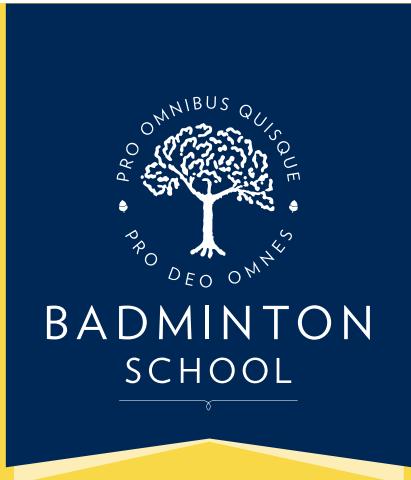
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■ NEWS

Tower tours net fifty grand!

THOUSANDS of visitors have now climbed to the top of the University of Bristol's Wills Memorial Building through its popular tower tours, raising funds for The Grand Appeal, the dedicated charity for Bristol Children's Hospital.

Informal tours of the 100-year-old Neo-Gothic building were so popular that scheduled tours were introduced and opened to the public in exchange for charitable donations.

The tours are coordinated and run by guides Gary Nott, senior estates assistant at the Wills Memorial Building, and Sarah Price, engagement officer in the university's global engagement division.

Gary said: "For 25 years, we've helped raise lots of money for The Grand Appeal by welcoming visitors from all over the world. Recently, I was able to visit some of the facilities provided by The Grand Appeal to families of sick children, and it was amazing to see first-hand where the money we have raised has been going. We hope to continue to welcome lots of visitors over the coming years."

In recognition of his outstanding efforts, Gary Nott was presented with a Golden Gromit for his exceptional

contributions to The Grand Appeal.

Professor Judith Squires, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, said: "Gary Nott and his team have worked tirelessly to welcome members of the public into the Wills Memorial Building, helping to generate £50,000 in support of the dedicated charity for Bristol Children's Hospital, The Grand Appeal. This remarkable achievement will make a real difference."

Kate Jones, community fundraising manager at The Grand Appeal, added: "We're incredibly grateful to everyone who has supported these tours over the years. Every donation helps us provide the specialist equipment, facilities and support that families need during the toughest times."

The building hosts graduation ceremonies twice a year as well as other events. Visitors on the tours experience the splendour of the Great Hall, Council Chamber and ornate libraries, and can climb to the top of the building's tower where the view of Bristol is unparalleled.

The tours also give a unique insight into the history of the building, including the damage caused by the Bristol Blitz.



Kate Jones, from, The Grand Appeal, Gary Nott, Wills Memorial tour guide, and Professor Judith Squires

■ FROM BRISTOL CENTRAL'S MP

Fixing housing crisis in our city

THIS year has been off to an unsettling start, with Trump's aggression in Venezuela and transparent ambitions to 'own' more and more territory, including Greenland. It's vital that Keir Starmer finds his backbone and stands up to Trump – I and my fellow Green MPs will be holding his feet to the fire, as always.

But closer to home, we started the year with some brilliant news – Bristol Council has smashed records for building affordable housing. In just six months, between April and September last year, more new affordable homes were built in the city than in any other year 'within memory' – 286. While there's much more to be done, it's worth a moment to celebrate that Bristol is now the best council outside of London for building affordable homes!

The Green-led council has also made huge strides towards sorting out the mess it inherited from the previous Labour council when it comes to maintaining existing council housing in the

city. When Greens took over the council in 2024, England's social housing regulator had made a serious judgement on the council's failures to properly look after its stock of council homes. But now the council has made huge progress towards fixing these failings, with regular communication with tenants and a huge project underway to survey every council home for damp and mould.

Of course, these are just first steps. A decade and a half of government neglect has caused a huge housing crisis which is still devastating lives in Bristol and across the country. The progress is brilliant, and will have a huge impact on people's lives. But we need more from the Labour government – like more funding for councils so that they can build all the homes that are needed to fill the gap. And rent controls, to stop landlords exploiting tenants by charging extortionate rents that people can't afford.

Since being elected in 2024,

this Labour government has proved a disappointment to the people of Bristol time and time again. Residents tell me they are frustrated by its failure to take bold climate action, and upset by its anti-migrant rhetoric and policies – dancing to Reform's tune of scapegoating the migrants and refugees who are a vital part of our community.

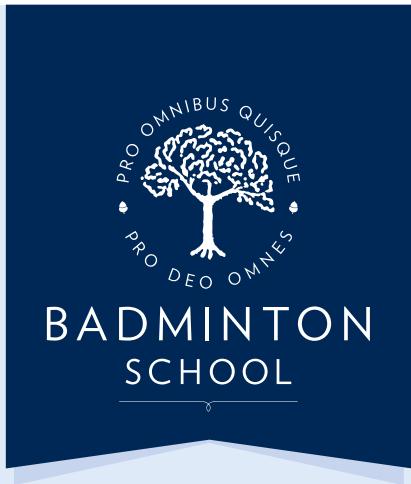
But as we head into 2026 I'm inspired and spurred on by the knowledge that in Bristol, we don't just fight for the things that we care about – we get on with doing them.

From the brilliant volunteers I meet week in-week out who are doing so much for their local communities, to the hardworking Green councillors making Bristol a leading city in the fight against climate change and tackling the housing crisis head-on – I see so much in this city that makes me feel positive about the year ahead. And so proud to be working with my fellow Bristolians to get the job done!

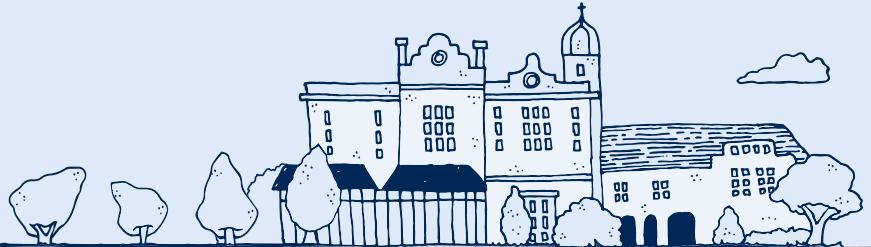


Carla Denyer
writes for
the Voice

If you live in Bristol Central and need help with a local issue, email me at bristolcentraloffice@parliament.uk or write to Carla Denyer MP, House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA For national issues email me using carla.denyer.mp@parliament.uk



Spring Open Events



Whole School Open Mornings
Friday 27 February
Friday 1 May

Pre-Reception and Reception 'Stay & Play'
Friday 13 February
Friday 8 May



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■ NEWS

Get set for Window Wanderland x 2

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

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

- March 1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Bishopston event is on Friday February 27, Saturday



Decorated windows brighten up neighbourhoods during the long dark winter evenings

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

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

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■ NEWS

'Positive change for children'

OFSTED has praised the workforce and the leadership of children's services at Bristol City Council.

In their report published last month inspectors said: "Committed and determined political and corporate leadership is bringing positive change to children in Bristol."

Most children in need and those under child protection plans were receiving timely and appropriate support, benefiting from well-coordinated multi-agency planning, they said.

Other positive comments included: 'workforce morale is high', 'practitioners love working for Bristol' and 'there is an unwavering commitment to improving services and support for children'.

The findings also highlighted two areas for improvement, including the quality of safety plans and note-taking in records.

The inspection assessed the council's arrangements for children in need, child protection planning, and private fostering arrangements.

The report acknowledged the council's stable senior leadership team, and increasingly permanent workforce, which have enhanced social work practices and the quality of support for children. It notes that workforce morale is high.

A full inspection is due within the next six months.

■ FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

News from Green Party Clifton Down councillors George Calascione and Serena Ralston



Better dressed streets

We are pleased to say that various roads in our local area are to get the surface treatment. Exeter Buildings and Burlington Road will receive a surface dressing, a preventative maintenance treatment that seals the road surface and extends the life of the carriageway. This helps prevent water getting in and further deterioration.

These works are expected to take place between April and September. The exact start dates will depend on the contractor's availability and weather conditions.

Update: Whiteladies Road works

The project to prevent flooding and improve active travel routes on Whiteladies Road is now expected to be complete in the spring.

Construction work on the lower part of Whiteladies Road has started again after onsite investigations into drainage issues. These issues mean the project will take a little longer.

To allow the work to take place safely, Whiteladies Road is closed to northbound traffic between its junctions with Tyndalls Park Road/

St Pauls Road and Queens Road.

The northbound diversion is back in place, directing traffic via Queens Road, St Pauls Road and left onto Whiteladies Road.

The diversion to access properties on the western side of Whiteladies Road is via Queens Road, Pembroke Road, Oakfield Road, and right onto Whiteladies Road.

Access is still being maintained for pedestrians and cyclists who should follow instructions. There will need to be an overnight road closure towards the end of the project for road resurfacing.

Work got under way in July 2025 and has so far included installing a new cycle path, adding new drainage, and repaving the pavement on the west side of the road, between Whiteladies Road's junctions with Queens Road and St Pauls Road.

Remaining work on the east side of the road, between Whiteladies Road's junctions with Queens Road and Tyndalls Park Road, includes:

- Adding a separated cycle path with a black tarmac surface at the same height as the pavement
- Adding 'beany block kerbs' that combine the roadside kerbs with a built-in drainage system
- Raising the driveways of six private properties using like-for-like materials
- Repaving the pavement and increasing its height, to reduce the impact of the tree roots
- Adding rubber crumb around the trees

This project is being funded using the highways maintenance block allocation from the UK government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, secured by West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

Help on the High Street

These are tough times for high streets businesses, so we are delighted that the Vacant Commercial Property Grant scheme has reopened. Grants from £2,500 up to £10,000 are available to help businesses start trading from a vacant commercial property on one of Bristol's 46 designated high streets, including our very own Whiteladies Road, and the designated city centre.

The grant helps reduce the number of empty commercial properties across Bristol's city centre and local high streets. This scheme forms part of the council's City Centre and High Streets Renewal Programme.

Most organisation types can apply, including limited businesses, sole traders, charities, CICs, voluntary organisations, and arts and culture groups. The grant can be used to pay for capital expenditure including structural or physical works to the premises or equipment a business needs in order to trade.

You can find out more on the council's vacant commercial property grant scheme webpage. The page includes guidance notes, the application form, and case studies of some of the successful applicants who have received this funding.

Councillor surgeries

We hold regular surgeries on the first Friday of the month from midday to 1:30 at Redland Library on Whiteladies Road. Come and speak to us about any local issues.

Serena Ralston: clr.serena.ralston@bristol.gov.uk

George Calascione: clr.george.calascione@bristol.gov.uk

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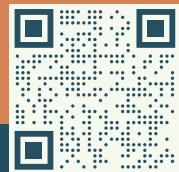
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FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

News from Clifton councillors

Paula O'Rourke (Independent)
and Jerome Thomas (Green)



Finally! Hoardings at Clifton site will soon be coming down

Speare Developments, working with restaurateur Josh Eggleton from the Pony and Trap in Chew Magna, are proposing to open a temporary pop-up restaurant on the former ice rink site in Clifton Village.

Your local councillors have been involved in discussions and welcome an opportunity to see this long-derelict site brought back into use, while longer-term plans are developed.

Because it is a pop-up, the restaurant could open as early as Easter, meaning the site would no longer be fenced off and forgotten. The intention is for the restaurant to complement Clifton's strong identity and its tapestry of independent traders. There will even be space for occasional market stalls on the site!

Jerome and Paula are ensuring that nearby businesses and residents are kept informed, and that opportunities to work together are explored.

Josh Eggleton is well known as the chef behind the Michelin-starred Pony & Trap in the Chew Valley. Speare Developments is a local company that now owns the site and will be bringing forward proposals for a permanent redevelopment later this year.

The pop-up restaurant is

expected to operate for around two years while those longer-term plans are developed. Councillors will ensure that local voices are heard as designs for the permanent development are shaped, ahead of any planning application being submitted. While the final proposals are not yet known, they are expected to include a mix of commercial space on the ground floor and new homes, with the aim of creating a development that genuinely benefits Clifton.

Visitor permits: we're standing firm

We've had a very full inbox about the proposal to reduce visitor permits to 60. We want to reassure residents that we have both objected and are hopeful that the limit will not be reduced. The need for elderly residents and their families to retain adequate visitor permits has been clearly heard.

While some people were unhappy that the consultation ran over Christmas, it's important to say this was a statutory consultation which usually runs for 21 days, not a survey, and it was extended to cover the bank holidays. We don't believe the Council is trying to sneak anything through, and all indications are that the Green administration is listening.

Litter over the holidays: better, but not perfect

Overall, Bristol Waste did a decent job over Christmas, but problems arose when bins were left out on collection days that didn't happen who expects waste to be collected on Christmas Day when it falls on a Thursday? Food waste was quickly scattered by foxes and gulls, leading to avoidable mess. Much of this seemed to come from students



Valuing our bridge attendants

As a Trustee of the Clifton Suspension Bridge, Paula was recently invited to a small farewell for Graham Wallis, who is retiring after 14 years as a Bridge Attendant. It was a privilege to thank him for work that is far more demanding than most people realise. Many assume Bridge Attendants are there to manage the toll barriers and the vehicles crossing Brunel's famous bridge. In reality, they carry a much greater responsibility. The bridge is, sadly, attended from time to time by vulnerable members of the community. The Bridge Attendants keep a close eye on those using the bridge and with the help of multiple CCTV screens are alert to anyone who may be in distress and requiring help. As Graham explained, sometimes it only takes a calm word or brief human connection to give someone the chance to pause, reflect, and "take themselves home" and this is one key aspect of the Bridge Attendants' role.

So next time you cross the bridge, remember: the Bridge Attendants are watching over far more than traffic, and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

heading home early — something we'll be raising with the universities for next year.

On a positive note, community litter-picking really works. An hour on a weekend morning can be surprisingly uplifting. If you'd like to join in and help keep Clifton clean, text Paula on 07584 370433 to join the WhatsApp group.

How long can the Mardyke Steps stay open?

Fixing the failing boundary wall beside the Mardyke Steps is one of our key priorities for 2026. While the steps have reopened, this is only possible because temporary safety barriers are in place and the site is being checked every month. This is not a long-term solution.

The fundamental problem is responsibility. Bristol City Council says it is responsible for maintaining the steps only, not the wall. The wall is attached to land owned by the Mardyke pub

landlord, who disputes this and argues that the council, as owner of the higher land, should carry out the repairs. This disagreement has gone unresolved for years.

Before any repairs can happen, engineers need access to the site to assess the wall properly. That cannot happen until the landlord engages with council officers — something that has not happened despite repeated attempts.

We are now working with local residents and senior council officers to press both parties to engage, establish responsibility, and finally move towards a permanent repair.

Paula and Jerome

Contact us

Jerome Thomas: cllr.jerome.thomas@bristol.gov.uk
Paula O'Rourke: cllr.paula.orourke@bristol.gov.uk



How the pop-up restaurant could look

■ MESSAGE FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Neighbourhood policing gets results

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

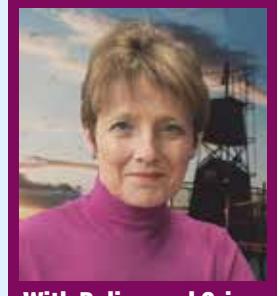
Recent activity led to several arrests, including a woman wanted on a warrant, a man recalled to prison, and another arrested for drugs and weapons offences.

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

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

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

Their checks revealed



With Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody

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

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

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

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SPORT

Clifton proves hotbed of young talent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Roger Opie



Ollie Harris in action for Clifton



Joe Owen in his lavender and black days



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WHAT'S ON

February 18

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

March 21

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

Various dates

WANT TO LEARN TO NORDIC WALK? Our Beginner Workshops are run by friendly, professional instructors, are full of chat and laughter, and you'll get an effective total-body workout. Meeting on Clifton Down 4th Feb, 7th Feb, 18th Feb & 28th Feb. Visit www.bristolnordicwalking.co.uk or call Ros on 07886885213.

Various dates

■ BRISTOL HOME LIBRARY SERVICE. A free home delivery service for Bristolians provided by local volunteers. For anyone affected by age, disability or caring responsibilities. 07714898558
■ BLAISE COMMUNITY GARDEN, behind Blaise Museum BS10 7QS open Wednesday and Saturday 10 to 2, interesting walled kitchen garden, free to enter, new volunteers needed & welcomed, plants always available.

Various dates

LA SCALA DELI HENLEAZE

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

JANUARY

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

FEBRUARY

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

MARCH

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

APRIL

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

Sun 15 Feb

■ MASSIVE SOUND - FAURÉ'S REQUIEM WORKSHOP AT BRISTOL BEACON A

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

Regular events

Various days

■ WEST OF ENGLAND BRIDGE CLUB based at RAFA Club, 38 Eastfield, Henleaze. Five sessions every week, catering for different standards. Thursday afternoon is Improvers. Monday and Friday afternoon is for more capable players; this is an EBU recognised session. You may come alone to any afternoon session; a partner will be found. The evening sessions are on Wednesdays and Fridays, and are open to pairs. [www.woebridgeclub.co.uk](http://woebridgeclub.co.uk) or contact Secretary, Chris Frew, on 0117 962 5281.

Monday

■ WESTBURY AND CLIFTON AREA DISCUSSION GROUP meet at Westbury on Trym Baptist Church every Monday 9.45am to challenge ourselves with topical debate on what's happening in the world. If you would like to help to solve some of today's challenging issues with good company, tea and biscuits - contact James Ball 01454 415165 or Ian Viney 0117 9501628.

■ THE CORNER CLUB. Banish Loneliness!

We offer a warm welcome to Seniors looking for fun and friendship. Morning coffee and biscuits, a freshly cooked 2 course lunch, varied afternoon entertainment and tea and cake await you. All for £6. Managed by a non-denominational Charity we meet from 10am to 2.30pm in the Apostle Room at Clifton Cathedral BS8 3BX. Contact Helen on 07717405673. Transport Available. New Volunteers and Volunteer Drivers would be most welcome. We'd love to meet you.

■ PLAY BOWLS at Canford Park in a friendly, social atmosphere. Qualified coaches and equipment provided. Contact: Les on 07305695579

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

9279875 for details.

■ WESTBURY ON TRYM WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

meets on the third Monday of the month in the Westbury Village Hall, Eastfield Road, BS9 4AG, from 2-4 pm. Interesting speakers, crafts, lunch club, skittles and outings. Our lively, friendly and inclusive group welcomes visitors. Call Sascha on 07961619806 or Traci on 07766073917

Tuesday

■ WESTBURY PARK WOMEN'S INSTITUTE

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

■ COMPANION VOICES BRISTOL

is recruiting new members. We are a 'threshold choir' actively looking for new people to join us. We meet in Easton on the 3rd Tuesday of the month from 7 to 9 pm to learn soothing and uplifting songs by ear and build skills in sensitivity/compassion/loving presence to sing at the bedsides of people nearing the end of life. To join or support us in this work, contact Valerie on bristol@companionvoices.org. Visit www.facebook.com/CompanionVoicesBristol and www.companionvoices.org

■ MEET UP TO MEDITATE

Free Class Every Tuesday 7.30 pm-8.30 pm At 80 Queens Rd Bristol Email: info@meetuptomeditate.co.uk

■ BRISTOL BRANCH OF THE KNITTING AND CROCHET GUILD

meet on the third Tuesday of the month, 10am-12pm, usually in the function room at the Boston Tea Party on Whiteladies Road. Free to attend, all welcome (members and non-members). We cater for beginners through to experienced makers. Email BristolKCG@gmail.com for more info.

Wednesday

■ HENLEAZE CHORAL SOCIETY

We are a thriving, non- audition choir performing mainly classical repertoire. Rehearsals take place at Henleaze Bowling Club, Grange Court Road on Wednesdays 7.30-9.00pm New members welcome. Go to www.henleazechoralsociety.org.uk.

■ CLIFTON CRAFTERS

We all have craft items we started and are now lurking in a drawer unloved - dig them out and come and share with us a morning of knitting, crochet, tapestry, rag rugs or whatever you would love to resurrect or mend. Clifton Library every Wednesday 10.30am-12.30pm

■ BLAISE COMMUNITY GARDEN,

behind Blaise Museum, open Wednesday and Saturday 10-2. Originally a walled kitchen garden. Free to enter. We're looking for volunteers. Our Café (+ homemade cakes) open 10-2, 18 March and 8 April.

■ WELCOME WEDNESDAY Friendly and free coffee afternoon on the last Wednesday of the month, 2-3.30pm at The Beehive Pub, Wellington Hill West, BS9 4QY. Meet new people, have fun,

WHAT'S ON

and find out what's happening in your area. Call 0117 435 0063.

CLIFTON CRAFTERS We all have craft items we started and are now lurking in a drawer unloved – dig them out and come and share a morning of knitting, crochet, tapestry, rag rugs or whatever you would love to resurrect or mend! Every Wednesday in October at Clifton Library 10.30-12.30pm.

GOLDEN HILL WI Meets the first Wednesday of every month. 1-3pm. Golden Hill Sports Ground, Wimbledon Rd, BS6 7YA. A vibrant, lively new afternoon WI in BS6. We have an exciting and varied programme to offer. For more information contact Pam Scull at goldenhillwi@gmail.com.

CLIFTON WOMENS INSTITUTE We are a friendly bunch who meet on the last Wednesday of the month at Alma Church, Alma Road, Clifton BS8 2HG, from 7.30pm. Anyone interested in coming to a meeting as a visitor is most welcome (£5). Visit our blog cliftonwi.blogspot.com for forthcoming events. For info about us contact thecliftonwi@gmail.com

OPEN DEVELOPMENT CIRCLE For those interested in developing their spiritual awareness and mediumistic ability. 7.15 for 7.30 start at Westbury Park Spiritualist Church, Cairns Road BS6 7TH. Just turn up or visit www.westburyparksc.org

SPIRITUAL HEALING Spiritual Healing is available from 2pm to 3.30pm by the accredited healing team at Westbury Park Spiritualist Church, Cairns Road BS6 7TH. Just turn up or visit www.westburyparksc.org

Thursday

HENLEAZE LADIES' CHOIR Come and join us as we fill St Peter's Church Hall in Henleaze with a diverse selection of music.

We are a friendly choir and meet on Thursday afternoons in term time from 1.45 to 3.45. There are no auditions, and the ability to read music is not necessary. Contact Jeanette on 9685409 or Jane on 07752 332278.

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

FRIENDS TOGETHER DEMENTIA FRIENDLY CAFÉ

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

HEALING FOR WELLBEING - NEW TIME 5.00 PM TO 6.15 PM

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

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

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healing/healing-centre or phone Selina 0117 9466434.

LOCAL CHOIR ACTIVELY RECRUITING NEW MEMBERS. We meet at Stoke Bishop CE Primary School, BS9 1BW on Thursday, 7.45 - 9.15pm. We are a well-established mixed choir performing both sacred and secular music. See website www.henburysingers.org contact secretary at secretary@henburysingers.org.

Friday

HENLEAZE BOWLING CLUB. Come along at 5.45pm on Fridays to see if bowling could be the sport for you. Coaching available. Experienced bowlers welcome. Situated in Grange Court Road, by Newman Hall. This is a friendly Club with good bowling facilities and social events throughout the year. Phone, Tom Logan, on 0117 962 1669 or email hbcsec@henleazebowlingclub.org.uk for details.

BRISTOL SPANISH CIRCLE. We meet every month from September to June, usually on the last Friday of the month, at St Peter's Church Hall in Henleaze. For more info, see <https://www.spanishcirclebristol.com/>.

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

Saturday

SEA MILLS REPAIR CAFE offers sewing, woodwork, general, electrical and cycle repairs at the Methodist Church, Sea Mills Square, from 10am-12pm, every second Sat (except August). This is a voluntary service run by experienced

Radical history festival returns

THE Bristol Radical History Festival returns this spring for its eighth edition.

The festival takes place over two days in 2026 – at the M Shed on Saturday 25 April, before it moves on to The Cube Microplex on Sunday 26 April.

Those two days will encompass talks, panel discussions, films, historywalks, exhibitions and more, the details of which will be confirmed closer to the date.

This year's event has four main themes: Propaganda, Utopias and Dystopias, Welsh history and the General Strike - 2026, of course, marks the centenary of this singular event that lasted nine days and brought Britain to a standstill. The History Festival is just one of a number of events that are happening nationwide to commemorate this unique moment in British history.

In addition, as a preliminary to the festival, there will be a performance on Friday 17 April at The Cube by Three Acres and a Cow. It is a new show shining a spotlight on the Welsh history of land rights and protest in folk song and story.

Incidentally, this year also marks twenty years of the Bristol Radical History Group. The first event was the inaugural Bristol Radical History week in October 2006. Since then the group has become a permanent fixture on Bristol's cultural landscape, and along the way has hopefully shifted some perceptions about the city's history.

In those twenty years the group has helped organise over 500 events and published over 80 pamphlets and books. Events have always been free or of minimal cost and are organised by local people from Bristol and not funded by universities, political parties, business or local government. To break even the group relies on members giving their labour for free and sales from publications.

As well as talks and discussions at the free festival's two venues, there will also be space devoted to stalls where you can stock up on pamphlets, books and more, from over

For more information on the Radical History Festival head over to the Radical History group's website at www.brh.org.uk which will be updated regularly as individual events are confirmed.





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BOOK REVIEW

Our Wives Under the Sea

By Julia Armfield

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

The novel opens with the return of Leah from a deep sea mission, that was supposed to last three weeks but saw her absent for six months. We are presented with a dual narrative with Leah looking back at her life changing mission and Miri providing the reader with her perspective of life since her partner's return home. Miri finds Leah much changed from the woman she married. Leah spends much of her time, submerged in the bath tub, vomiting seawater, her skin

developing a strange oyster sheen, changing from white to blue and green.

We discover that Leah was accompanied on the submarine by two colleagues, the Catholic and saint worshipping Jelka and a former fisherman Matteo.

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

point of the Pacific.

We discover that Miri is still in grief from the loss of her mother, who lived alone by the sea, until moving into a hospice. This is an intriguing and thought provoking book, with two unreliable narrators, tackling issues of love, loss, grief and trauma. The ending is both poignant and beautiful and will stay with me for some time to come.

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

Review by Bob Deacon, from Bishopston Library



Clifton Library opening hours

Monday 10am-2pm
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Westbury on Trym

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A fantastic 2-bedroom top floor purpose-built flat with some great elevated views, balcony and parking space. EPC C.



Henbury

£450,000

A fantastic 3-bedroom link-detached home, perfectly positioned with ready access to Blaise Estate. Generous living spaces, modern fittings, courtyard garden, private off-street parking and garage. No onward chain. EPC D.

Experts in residence

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