

cliftonvoice

March, 2026 Issue 31

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FREE EVERY MONTH IN CLIFTON AND SURROUNDING AREA

Never better ...

Clifton College students Violet, Tom, Ben and Pip on staga as the Darling family in the school's acclaimed production of *Peter Pan*, which was performed to packed houses
Picture: Stewart McPherson Photography

More photos: Page 9



£8m paint job nears completion

A two-year project to repaint Brunel's bridge at a cost of £8m comes to an end this month.



The work, which has taken more than 1,500 gallons of paint, will also help preserve the landmark.

PAGES 2 & 3

Double boost

The tower clock at Christ Church in Clifton could soon be working again thanks to a fundraising appeal. The church also welcomes a new vicar.

PAGE 7

Ready for Act 2

The Redgrave Theatre in Clifton, which is marking its sixtieth anniversary this year, has ambitious plans for its future.

PAGE 9

Council tax to rise 4.99 per cent

BRISTOL city councillors have confirmed a 4.99 per cent council tax rise from April.

The Green-led authority's budget, comprising £634million for day-to-day services and £232million of capital investments in large projects and city infrastructure, such as houses, bridges and schools, was passed by 42-26 votes, with the Lib Dems in favour and Labour and the Conservatives against.

Just one of the nine amendments tabled by minority parties received support at February's four-and-a-half-hour meeting – a Lib Dem proposal to bring forward £1million of funding

for road repairs by a year, doubling the amount available in 2026/27 – while the rest were rejected.

The budget included nearly £41million in savings to balance the books, but also a series of U-turns announced in January following public consultation, including £270,000 towards reopening public toilets and scrapping cuts to cultural groups.

The council tax rise comprises 2.99 per cent in core spending and two per cent for adult social care. This is a rise of £129.79 to £2,713.68 for band D households and by £100.94 to £2,110.64 for Band B.

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Clifton Voice contacts

Emma Cooper Publisher

0117 908 2121 / 07715 770448
emma@cliftonvoice.co.uk



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Maurice Fells Editorial

0117 921 3612 / 07771 697835
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April deadline

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

Your views

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

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



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NEWS

£8m paint job nearly done

FOR nearly two years, workers have been perched almost 300 feet above the River Avon for an £8 million project to refurbish and keep in good order Isambard Kingdom Brunel's Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Their contract, which ends this month, has involved painting the wrought iron chains with a protective material that will keep them shipshape and Bristol fashion for the next 20 to 25 years.

The previous paint coatings on the bridge were showing signs of surface corrosion. A spokesperson for the engineering firm Tazaker said: "With salt naturally occurring in the air from the River Avon below, this can also attack the bridge's ironwork".

Parapet stanchions and lattice work have also benefited from the new paint system.

Special precautions had to



be taken by the engineering company as this was no ordinary paint job. Engineers would be working above the River Avon, the Avon Gorge and woodland which are areas of Special Scientific Interest (SSI) or protected woodland.

The road deck of the bridge is 245 feet above a high tide and the piers on both the Clifton and Leigh Woods sides of the bridge are 86 feet high.

The natural environment below the bridge was protected

A CROSSTOWN CONCEPTS PRESENTATION

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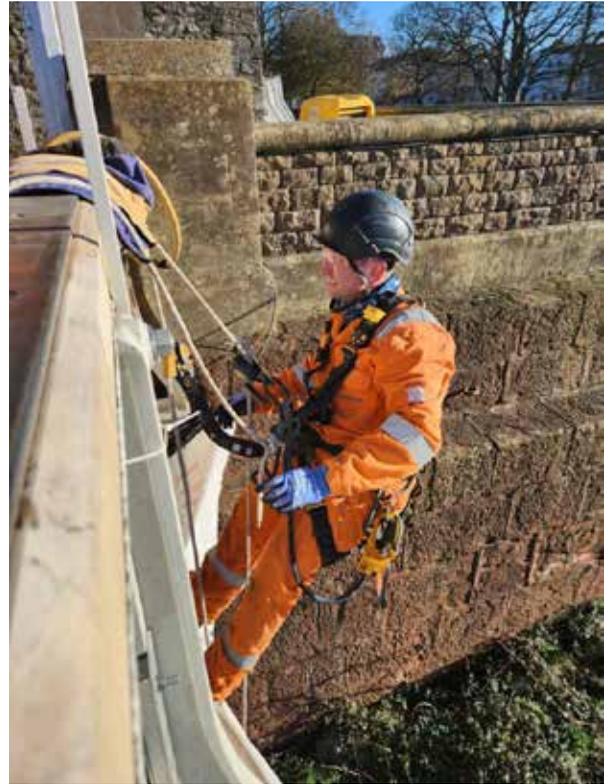
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by workmen using plastic sheeting to gather flakes of the old paint during the removal process.

The workmen used specially-made paint brushes to give the chains an even coating. Each of the 4,200 iron chains was painted by hand three times. More than 1,500 gallons of paint were used.

As the bridge is a Grade 1 listed structure the new coatings of paint exactly match the bridge's signature 'flake grey'.

The trustees of the Clifton

Suspension Bridge are also installing a "cutting edge, environmentally friendly and sustainable lighting system". This replaces LED lighting which has been in place since 2006.

The Clifton Suspension Bridge was opened on 8 December 1864.

As the trustees of the Victorian structure do not receive grants from either central or local government the cost of maintenance is met by the tolls paid by the thousands of motorists who cross the bridge each year.



Ultimate job for a bridge engineer

A NEW Bridge Master has been appointed by the trustees of Clifton Suspension Bridge.

Tristan Ralph succeeds Trish Johnson who has retired. She made history by becoming the first woman to hold the post when she was appointed ten years ago.

Mr Ralph, who has lived in Bristol for more than 25 years, said his new post was "the ultimate job for a bridge engineer."

"The Clifton Suspension Bridge is a world-famous landmark and a vital transport link. I feel privileged to take on the responsibility of safeguarding its future. My focus will be on ensuring that the bridge remains safe, resilient and operational for generations to come."

Mr Ralph's priorities will also include reducing the effects of changing weather patterns on the structure, studying the impact of high wind speeds, and planning for the future. He will also lead on the commissioning of a new energy-efficient lighting scheme.

He brings more than 30 years of experience in civil and structural engineering, specialising in bridges and major infrastructure projects.

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NEWS

A PLANNED £15m scheme to ban through traffic from Park Street has been blocked.

The proposal from the Green-led administration at Bristol City Council was defeated at the transport policy committee last month.

Three Labour councillors, one Conservative and a Liberal Democrat outvoted the four Green councillors.

The opponents were concerned about an increase in pollution if drivers had to use the alternative route past the Bristol Royal Infirmary and the Children's Hospital.

But their decision means thousands of bus passengers will continue to endure delays.

The meeting heard that about 35 buses travel along Park Street every hour in either direction. There are often queues along the entire street as buses and cars attempt to get into the city centre, holding up passengers for at least 10 minutes and impacting the reliability of the bus network city-wide.

A recent council traffic count on Park Street found that between 7am and 7pm, about 7,000 cars, 20,000 pedestrians and cyclists, and at least 30,000 bus passengers used the route.

Councillor Tom Renhard, leader of the Labour group, said: "The impact on air quality outside the hospitals is not something that I feel is a fair sacrifice in order to progress this scheme. It will go up by the amount it will reduce in the Colston Avenue area. It's unfortunate that when WECA [the West of England Combined Authority] offered a compromise, it wasn't taken.

"While you are going to get some modal shift, some people do need to use their cars to get about the city. That could be for a range of reasons, in my case caring responsibilities. I'm fully committed to looking at what we can do to get air pollution down. I'm not going to sign off on measures that are going to make air pollution worse outside our city's hospitals."

Council staff said the increase of air pollution along Park Row, Perry Road, Upper Maudlin Street and Marlborough Street — the road from the Bearpit to the Triangle that passes the hospital— would be negligible. Levels of nitrogen dioxide have been falling since the Clean Air Zone was

Vote scuppers traffic-ban scheme for Park Street



How Park St traffic ban could have looked

brought in and would remain below legal limits if the plan went ahead.

Meanwhile levels of nitrogen dioxide would fall on probably the most polluted part of Bristol, around Colston Avenue, Lewins Mead and Rupert Street — the busy roads in between the Centre and the Bearpit. At the last annual count, pollution here is above the legal limit of 40 micrograms per cubic metre of air.

The Park Street ban would divert a lot of traffic from using this route, with pollution soon falling below legal limits.

Councillors were told that changes would be made to the Park Row alternative route, including to traffic light signals and removing islands, to cut down on congestion. But they remained unconvinced, and Labour suggested that the Clean Air Zone funding be used instead to pay for more subsidised bus routes. This cash has previously paid for new routes and existing routes to run more frequently.

Labour said this money could also be spent on repainting road markings, unblocking drains and installing better lighting on pavements. They suggested expanding a financial assistance scheme helping drivers upgrade to cleaner vehicles, and questioned the loss of parking income if some spaces were removed from Park Street.

The Park Street plan was first suggested by the former Labour mayor of Bristol, Marvin Rees, but the idea was later canned. Then the Greens revived the scheme, splitting public opinion. Some local businesses feared a loss of trade while walking campaigners said footfall would probably increase.

But the Labour mayor of the West of England, Helen Godwin, refused to fund the plan. Instead she offered a trial of a through-traffic ban just at peak hours. Because this would only cut traffic and pollution by about a third, the Greens rejected the trial and tried to pay for the scheme a different way.

Around £8 million would come from the Clean Air Zone income, and £5.3 million from a government air quality grant. However they needed the approval of the transport policy committee. Conservatives and Liberal Democrats previously opposed the plan, so the decision rested on the three Labour councillors, who last year abstained from a decision on Park Street.

Green Cllr Rob Bryher said: "Labour seem desperate to block a fully funded, deliverable scheme that will clean up air, give buses priority, reduce traffic congestion overall, create a better environment for shopping and dwelling, and reinvent the public realm up to the Triangle. We want to make the air safe to breathe for thousands of Bristol residents and visitors.

"It's clear that Labour will only support schemes like this when they get to deliver them, not when the Greens — following on from Labour and Marvin's good work setting up the Clean Air Zone — are delivering them. We thought there was a progressive consensus around clean air and bus priority.

"Labour have sadly broken that consensus by not seizing this opportunity to make our air clean enough to be legally compliant.

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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NEWS

CLIFTON resident Irene Ansems has asked the Voice to highlight the "great work" carried out by the Friends of Birdcage Walk.

She told us: "I was astonished to see the extent to which the Friends have cleaned up St Andrew's churchyard! They must've worked all winter to clear away the overgrown brambles, and now one can walk all over the graveyard and see almost all the tombstones.

"This work will also allow for greater biodiversity as a variety of new species will thrive here in this lovely green space."

Birdcage Walk, which links Victoria Square with Clifton Hill, is arguably one of the most picturesque paths in the city.

A pleached lime-tree arbour, or tunnel, is a feature of the pathway, which is lined by nineteenth century graveyards on either side. These are part of St Andrew's Churchyard. The church itself was bombed in 1940 and its ruins later demolished.

Birdcage Walk is kept attractive thanks to a band of volunteers who regularly gather to do some gardening. Wearing stout boots and gardening gloves and armed with their own secateurs and loppers, depending on the season they tidy up such plants as blackberry bushes, trees, shrubs and flowers. They also tidy up the graveyards, trying to balance access to the graves with maintaining habitat for wildlife.

Independent councillor for Clifton Paula O'Rourke, who is chair of Friends of Birdcage

Great work, everyone!



The cleared churchyard
Photo: Irene Ansems

Walk, said that the volunteers had "done thousands of hours of work".

The volunteers usually meet on the third

Sunday of the month at 11am for two hours of gardening. To find out more, contact FriendsofBirdcageWalk@gmail.com

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NEWS

Visitor parking permits cap paused

PEOPLE power has halted council plans to tighten the rules on visitor parking permits.

Residents in Bishopston, Redland and Ashley Down were among many who protested Bristol City Council consulted the public on possible changes for people visiting resident parking zones.

People living within a zone, with a permit for their own vehicle, can book some free permits for visitors, and more if they pay, as well as one-off passes for unexpected guests. The plan would have halved the number of available visitor permits, and make people pay for all of them, too.

Residents can get between 100 and 140 permits a year, but this would have been reduced to 50 and 70, and ended all free permits. An update was given to the transport policy committee, on February 5, which was received with applause from the public gallery in City Hall.



Green Councillor Ed Plowden, the committee's chair, said: "Since being introduced to the city back in 2014, the residents' parking schemes have provided real benefits to the communities they serve. Not only do the schemes help residents to park near their homes, they also reduce traffic, improve road safety, and contribute to cleaner air for all.

"As part of the statutory consultation, along with local ward councillors, I have received significant feedback about the proposed changes to the scheme, with concerns raised about the implications of reducing the free allocation of visitor permits and the overall number of visitor

permits available.

"As a result, we will be pausing our proposed changes to visitor permits, so we can review the proposals. This will give us time to analyse the responses to the statutory consultation and plan any changes needed to respond to this feedback."

Resident parking zones were first rolled out over a decade ago, to tackle parking pressure and reduce traffic. In 2024 councillors approved increasing the cost of permits for residents and updating pay and display rates. More areas could soon be covered by parking zones as well.

Last year, the council consulted on increasing the cost of visitor permits and limiting the number, as well as other changes.

The other proposals — to make business electric car permits chargeable and to remove the free half hour on pay and display machines — are still being considered.

Questions from the Lib Dems revealed that 3,000 people a year bought additional permits beyond the new proposed limit. This means that eight per cent of all households within resident parking zones would be affected by any cap.

Lib Dem Cllr Nicholas Coombes said: "I'm glad that the council has listened to the feedback, and has decided to pause the implementation of this unfair restriction. Many anxious residents have contacted me to explain that they use visitor permits for a variety of reasons, including letting grandparents support childcare, and they are worried that they will exceed the proposed cap.

"I will continue to push for the reversal of this policy so that residents can continue to welcome visitors without worrying about an artificially low limit."

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service



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NEWS

£35,000 appeal to restore church clock

THE clock on the tower of Clifton's Christ Church, which has been silent for about twenty years, will soon be telling the time again.

Parts of the clock will be taken to a special engineering workshop where all components will be thoroughly cleaned to remove old lubrication and corrosion. Some parts will be repaired or renewed. A night silencing system will also be installed

"The clock has been silent for some time and it is time to bring it back to life," said parochial church council member David Daniels.

"The work, including the erection of scaffolding, will cost a total of £35,000. We have launched an appeal for that target. With help we can ensure that the clock keeps time for the next generation and becomes a

centrepiece again for the people of Clifton."

Christ Church in Clifton Down Road was built in 1841 in Early English Gothic Revival and is a Grade II* building. The clock was made in 1861 in London and added to Christ Church.

Mr Daniels said that the clock is a symbol of continuity and community.

"It's a talking point and a landmark. It is part of our church's history and the future."

The work comes as a new vicar moves into Christ Church. The Rev Matt Southcombe will be licensed by the Acting Bishop of Bristol the Rt Rev Neil Warwick in a special service at Christ Church on March 3.

Matt Southcombe succeeds the Rev Paul Langham, who retired last year after fifteen years as vicar.

Matt arrives at Christ Church



The Rev Matt Southcombe



The Christ Church clock

after several years of ministry in the heart of Bristol at St Nicholas Church, in the old city. In 2018 he was part of a team that reopened the church, a historic building bombed during the Second World War and closed as a place of worship for decades.

Over the years it served many purposes – from museum to tourist information centre – before being restored as a church with a particular focus on engaging younger generations, those curious about faith and

those in need in the city.

Speaking about his move to Clifton, Matt said: "I am delighted to be stepping into this role in a wonderful church that is buzzing with life and excited for a new chapter in its history."

"Clifton is a destination for visitors from all over the world, and I would love to welcome people not just to see the church building, but to step inside to discover the purpose behind what happens here every Sunday and throughout the week."

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BOOK REVIEW

The Passenger by Cormac McCarthy

WE start in Chicago, in the last year of the life of Alicia Western, a maths prodigy who suffers from mental health issues. The opening chapter is italicised, signposting to the reader, that what follows is one of many hallucinations, which haunt Alicia, whenever she skips her medication.

Each hallucination finds Alicia in dialogue with The Kid, a creature with a hairless skull, seal's flippers and oarlike shoes, accompanied by a group of demons, who she describes as penny dreadful entertainers. These hallucinatory chapters are interspersed with chapters depicting the life of Bobby, Alicia's brother who works as a salvage diver. We meet Bobby as he and his salvage team locate an aeroplane on the seabed in the Gulf of Mexico. They

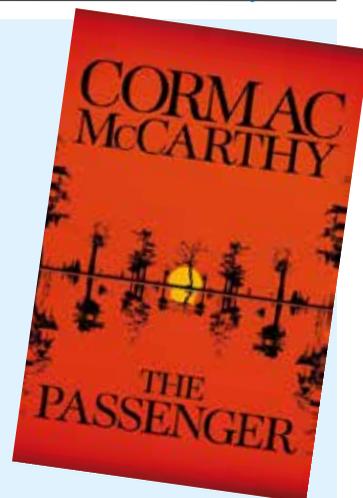
find seven bodies within the wreckage yet eight passengers are listed on the manifest. Bobby hires a boat to investigate the neighbouring beaches in search of the missing passenger.

The narrative shifts back and forth in time including the childhood of Alicia and Bobby, whose father was a nuclear physicist who helped split the atom, leading to the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. We follow Bobby from growing up in Tennessee to present day life in New Orleans where he goes to his bank, seeking to withdraw 200 dollars. He discovers that the IRS have blocked his account and have confiscated the contents of his safe deposit box. He is being investigated for tax fraud and finds work in a dive shop in Tucson where he is paid off the books.

We delve into a wide range of subjects including the development of the Atom bomb, the assassination of President Kennedy, the Vietnam War and a discussion on Quantum Mechanics but the emotional heart of the novel is the relationship between Bobby and Alicia and the all-consuming grief Bobby suffers at the loss of his beloved sister.

This is an complex, strange and melancholic novel, full of captivating dialogue and intriguing characters, providing an enjoyable and challenging read. For this book and many more, please come and visit your local library. You will receive a warm welcome and enjoy access to the internet and wi-fi printing with your library card.

Review by Bob Deacon, from Bishopston Library



Clifton Library opening hours

Monday 10am-2pm

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Thursday 1pm-5pm

Friday 10am-2pm

Saturday 1pm-5pm

BOOK REVIEW

The Book of Disappearance

WHEN Alaa's grandmother dies, he finds himself writing to her. When she was alive he pressed her for stories, wanting to know about the house she grew up in, now bombed, the city she loved barely recognisable as the same city they have walked together and the husband and family members who left her for Beirut expecting that she too would one day leave Palestine.

After her death, he realises he had not asked enough. He has lost the chance to hear these stories again and to understand them more deeply. He writes, 'I'm mad at you. Your memory, which is engraved in my mind, has all these holes in it. Am I forgetting parts of what you told me, or were the things you

said incomprehensible?' He puzzles over the memories held by objects, street names, music, scents, even the sound of his laughter which is just like hers.

His notebook is being read by his friend Ariel. Alaa himself has gone missing. As have all the Palestinians in Palestine. Cafes do not open, buses don't run, workers do not arrive at the flower farm, prison cells are empty. They have simply disappeared.

As the day unfolds amid confusion, fear and horrific joy for some, Ariel goes to work as a reporter. There is little to report – people are waiting; the city is waiting. Amid the noise of buses, radio and television news, panicked phone calls, speculative discussion in the streets and music playing in apartments, there is also

resounding silence, millions of voices suddenly and inexplicably missing. Drawn back to Alaa's writing, Ariel finds himself occupying his friend's flat, reading about his brave grandmother who kept her city alive, the loneliness of survivors and the exhaustion engulfing Alaa as everyday his right to exist is questioned.

Ibtisam Azem wrote The Book of Disappearance in 2014; the English translation by Sinan Antoon was published in 2024. It could have been written in 1948 or a week ago. The fantastical set up of the book comments on a catastrophic reality resulting in a deeply moving, exquisitely written novel which one hopes, perhaps hopelessly, might have some power.

Elizabeth Moss, Heron Books

COMMUNITY NEWS

FRIENDS OF REDLAND LIBRARY

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

On Tuesday March 10, author Thomas Messel is giving a talk on "Elizabeth Linley: The Nightingale of Bath".

Elizabeth Linley was one of Britain's most celebrated singers of the eighteenth century. Set against the vibrant cultural and

political world of Georgian Britain, the talk explores her artistic achievement, her constrained domestic life, and her complex relationship with the playwright Richard Brinsley Sheridan. It is a true story of ambition, jealousy, betrayal and passionate love. Signed copies of the book will be on sale.

On Thursday March 26, there will be an illustrated talk "Getting to Know Your Place".

Bristol City Council's historic mapping website "Know Your

Place" aims to help people learn about the stories of their neighbourhoods.

Meet Pete Insole, the city's historic environment officer who created the site in 2011 and see how it can help you learn about your place.

Both events start at 7pm and admission is £3 (pay at the door – cash only).

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



NEWS

Diamond year for Redgrave Theatre

THE Redgrave Theatre, part of Clifton College, is celebrating its sixtieth anniversary.

It was in 1966 that the curtain went up for the first time at the theatre in Percival Road.

The first production staged in the theatre by Clifton College pupils was Love's Labour's Lost by William Shakespeare.

Gemma Allan, from the theatre, said: "The Redgrave Theatre was originally simply known as the Clifton College Theatre.

"It was officially opened by Bristol-born actor Sir Michael Redgrave who had been a pupil at the college. After his death in 1985 the theatre, which was one of the first purpose-built school theatres in the country, was renamed in his honour."

Former pupils of Clifton College have fond memories of treading the boards in a House play or a school production.

"Many have gone on to enjoy highly distinguished careers in the performing arts after their theatrical debut at Clifton College," said Ms Allan.

Alumni include John Cleese, Simon Russell Beale CBE, Trevor Howard, Simon Shepherd, Neil



Clifton College students performing Shakespeare in 1966

Foster and the brothers Clive and David Swift.

Originally, the theatre was only used for college events but in the 1970s the decision was made for it to be hired out to local amateur dramatic groups during the holidays.

It now hosts a range of professional performers too.

Gemma Allen said: "We are in the early stages of planning a

number of fund-raising initiatives to help secure the future of the Redgrave Theatre.

"The main production and centrepiece for this year will be our pantomime Dick Whittington. This will be our first fully in-house produced pantomime, enabling us to deliver a genuinely Bristol-focused production that celebrates the city and provides creative opportunities for local artists."

■ Present day Clifton College students are keeping up the tradition and quality at the Redgrave Theatre.

The upper school production of Peter Pan included more than 50 performers supported by student lighting and sound technicians, stagehands, and a live band of students and professionals.

It included newly devised ballet sequences, fight choreography, flight scenes, and reimagined musical numbers.

James Moore, director of performing arts at Clifton College, said: "Creating Peter Pan was a testament to the skill, passion, and collaborative spirit of the Clifton College performing arts community.

"As we enter a new era of bold partnerships and an expanded artistic offer, we are seeking to further establish the College as a vital contributor to Bristol's vibrant theatre ecology. In the Redgrave Theatre's 60th anniversary year, we are beginning to put ambitious plans in place to grow our provision and broaden what we offer. Watch this space!"

Cast your vote for Sheila!



A LOCAL theatre producer has been shortlisted as one of 10 finalists in the VisitEngland annual Tourism Superstar Awards.

Sheila Hannon, who co-founded the Show of Strength Theatre Company in Bedminster in 1986, was nominated by Visit West for her celebrated and award-winning theatre walks. With tours revealing the hidden histories of both Bristol and Bath, Sheila highlights notorious crimes, tales of notable women or the working classes, supporting local cafes and pubs along the way. Prominent figures such as Mary Shelley and Cary Grant are brought to life through her humour, charisma and meticulous research.

The VisitEngland website lauds her for her "natural curiosity", which ensures that "every story is entertaining and insightful, making her a standout figure in Bristol's cultural landscape."

Now in its 14th year, the Tourism Superstar competition "seeks out champions working in tourism who provide fantastic experiences for visitors, as well as showcasing the variety and quality of England's tourism offer, businesses and destinations". The winner, who is decided by public vote, will be announced after the English Tourism Week on March 13-22 and will receive a trophy at the VisitEngland Awards for Excellence 2026 ceremony.

Reflecting on her experience of being nominated, Sheila explained: "All finalists have a short film made about them - we filmed ours starting at the Bridge, a stopping point on our Clifton tour. Films will be available to view on Visit England's website, so it's a real opportunity to promote Clifton and the surrounding area."

The public vote opened on February 9 and is available until March 22. To view Sheila's film and cast your vote, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/4kyc8yh>



Scenes from this winter's Peter Pan Photos: Stewart McPherson Photography



FROM BRISTOL CENTRAL'S MP

We need urgent action on climate crisis

IS the government trying to hide the true threat from the climate and nature crisis?

A few weeks ago, a shocking report was released from Britain's intelligence chiefs: the 'global biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and national security assessment'.

We nearly didn't get to read it at all. It was meant to be published last year, but according to reports, the government blocked it because it was too negative. It took a Freedom of Information request for it to even be published.

But once it was released, the warning it contained was chilling: that the collapse of ecosystems around the world presents a serious – and escalating – threat to our national security.

As the climate and nature crisis threatens soil, plants and animal life across the world, the resources we rely on are declining. We're already seeing the effects, and they are likely to get worse in the

years ahead: the report warned of difficulties accessing water, crops failing, fishing stocks collapsing, and new diseases emerging.

For too long Labour and Tory governments have stuck their heads in the sand, and treated the climate crisis like a distant issue – not taking seriously the very real consequences it's already having for people in the UK. Consequences which will only worsen unless our government acts urgently to protect us.

The public deserves to know what we're facing – not least so that we can demand that our politicians do better when it comes to making sure our communities are prepared to deal with it.

Because there is plenty governments can do. First, of course, we need urgent action to stop the climate crisis from worsening. That means leaving oil and gas in the ground – not opening up new oil fields like the Rosebank development, which

ministers still haven't ruled out. It also means investing in protecting and restoring nature, on which we all rely for our food, water, clean air and a healthy environment.

Alongside that we also need action to deal with the impacts of the climate crisis that are already here. Extreme heat and cold are already costing lives in the UK because our buildings aren't designed to keep people warm in winter and cool in summer. Homes in Wales are being bulldozed because they are so vulnerable to flooding. Food prices are skyrocketing and are set to rise further.

The government must act urgently to protect us. Natural flood protection, fixing our homes so they can shelter us better from the heat and cold, and repairing our broken food system so we grow more of what we need here at home.

I'll keep fighting for action to protect Bristol and the whole country from the effects of the



Carla Denyer
writes for
the Voice

climate and nature crisis.

• **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**

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Doris has her day on stage

IN its latest show, DORIS (The Girl Next Door?), The Ministry of Entertainment, the prolific West Country retro theatre company (580 shows so far), tells the story of Forces sweetheart and Hollywood legend Doris Day, who was famous for her girl next door roles and her heartwarming chirpiness.

The show is the result of careful research and is interlaced with Doris's best songs, performed to perfection by Bristol phenomenon Kate McNab, who gives another superb performance as Doris, brilliantly supported by Mike Akers as the men in her life. The play, written by Bruce Fellows, offers insights into the real woman as she relives her successes and heartbreaks with her newest beau.

Preview audiences have loved it, offering very positive comments; 'I never knew all this about her.' 'So interesting.' 'The acting was great.' 'You sound just like her.' 'A thoughtful, bittersweet interpretation . . . oozing both heartbreak and humour.'

The show runs at the Alma Tavern Theatre every evening at 8pm, from March 17-21.

Doris Day, Hollywood's 'Calamity Jane' and girl next door was the girl who could do anything but pick a husband. 'Sentimental Journey', 'Secret Love', 'Que sera, sera': are just some of Doris's hit records when she was America's top female singer in the 1950s.

She had never thought of singing but her dream of being a dancer was destroyed as a teenager by breaking a leg. While recovering, she started singing and her career soon skyrocketed.

Hollywood grabbed her and Doris found she could do anything required; sing, act and dance; do anything that is but have a successful marriage. There were three men and three disasters. Que sera, sera.



COMMENT

AS a past teacher, and also parent and grandparent at Bristol Waldorf (Steiner) School, I want to mark its closure last December with a few words to balance some of what was published about it in Bishopston Voice in 2025, after a bad Ofsted report. In all the sadness of its demise, I want to celebrate its extraordinary and innovative efforts in the educational and social landscape of our city over the past 50 years.

It started with the ideal of offering, firstly, a radically different form of education to its pupils from anything available in the mainstream, a truly holistic, enlivening and nurturing experience for every child's spirit, soul and body; and secondly, a non-exclusive schooling that would – and in the first phase of the school did – accept children from all backgrounds, irrespective of parents' income and ability to pay.

I would like to call it a non-materialistic education in every sense: in its contributions system, whereby parents paid however much or little they could afford; in its salaries to staff, paid in accordance with their particular, differing needs rather than on a fixed salary progression; in its fostering of play, creativity, imagination, music, art and human warmth not in opposition to but as the best foundation for cognitive and intellectual development; in its anti-hierarchical structure, in which all issues of management and child welfare were brought to the school's listening organ, the 'college', for discussion and decisions, which were then 'owned' by all; in the warm and very active involvement of parents in maintaining and supporting the school; in its rich celebration of

Fond memories of a school that dared to be different



Happy days at the Bristol Waldorf (Steiner) School



Parent and child campaigners earned the school a temporary reprieve

festivals and lively community fairs; and last but not least in its active recognition of young children's religious sensibility and need for wonder and beauty, not as mere lip

service but as an intrinsic aspect of growing into the world and finding their true place in it.

Very idealistic and, many might say, unrealistic in this day

and age. It was not at all easy to flout mainstream ideas like this and to keep going on tiny salaries. There were all kinds of problems and difficulties. And in later years, forced to compromise the originating ideals with a headteacher, a board of trustees and a fixed fee structure, the school became what it never wished to be: a fee-paying and therefore exclusive school. Nevertheless, right up to the end, as comments published in this journal show, children loved their school. For instance, in January 24 I read: "My daughter was crying before school every day. Now she wants to be in school all the time, including weekends and holidays." And: "The school is a haven for our child... his spirit was being crushed. He (had) zero self-esteem when it came to academic learning. (At) Bristol Steiner School he has found his happy place and has made incredible progress socially, emotionally and academically."

I regard the loss of Bristol Steiner School as a tragedy. In an age of increasingly domineering educational orthodoxy, spearheaded by an Ofsted approach that has not infrequently been damaging to teachers and children, we urgently need more human-scale experiments in education such as the BWS. I feel grateful and proud to have been there.

Matthew Barton

NEWS

THE owners of a proposed independent special school in Bristol have been blocked from opening after Ofsted inspectors ruled it was unlikely to meet necessary standards.

The school would occupy a building in the grounds of Clifton Rugby Club for up to 50 pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs (SEMH) aged seven to 16.

But a pre-registration inspection report by Ofsted says the organisation that would run it, Meliorate Institute Education and Training (MIET), is far from ready and will miss a long list of requirements, so it needs to go back to the drawing board.

It means the Department for Education (DfE) will almost certainly refuse to let it open until these are met.

More work needed

MIET, an established provider of apprenticeships, community education and training, says it understands where its submission needs more work and would reapply to open the school at the site in Station Road, Henbury, when this is completed.

Ofsted's report said: "The proprietor is committed to providing inclusive education for pupils with SEMH needs. Along with other leaders, it shares the same moral imperative to enhance the life chances of vulnerable pupils and give them hope for future success.

"The headteacher brings many years of experience in leading provision for pupils with SEND. Nevertheless, the proprietor has not ensured that the proposed school is ready to open."

It is a criminal offence for an independent school to operate before it has approval to open.

A MIET spokesperson said: "We have understood the areas where our submission needs further work and are reapplying to open the school for learners with SEMH as soon as we feel the standards will be met." The school hopes to open in either May or September.

By Adam Postans, Local Democracy Reporting Service

NEWS

Badminton match draws record crowd

A NATIONAL Badminton League fixture at Clifton College's Chellaram Sports Complex attracted a league-record crowd of more than 300.

The Bristol Bullets took on the University of Nottingham, and came away with a dominant victory, scoring a maximum 175 points to 89.

With the first fixture setting the bar high, two more match nights are already lined up for March 27 and April 17. Organisers are expecting even bigger crowds next time.

Chris Watts, head of leisure services at the college, said: "It was a pleasure and a privilege for us to host Bristol Bullet's opening fixture here in the Chellaram Sports Complex. We are always proud to showcase this fantastic facility especially on a night like this when we can pull out all of the stops and welcome new players, spectators and volunteers to Clifton College Sports Ground. We are excited to host further home fixtures in March and April and develop a longer term partnership with the Bristol Bullets."

Let us know your views

Email:

news@cliftonvoice.co.uk

FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

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



George and Serena after the budget Full Council meeting

Council's budget approved

The council's budget for 2026/2027 has been passed by Full Council. The Greens have achieved financial stability and have a multi-year balanced budget that makes sure that we get the basics right while also investing in Bristol's future.

With many councils across the country facing financial uncertainty, this is a real achievement. Greens in Bristol have made the decisions needed to get us to the point where we are now reversing some of the damaging cuts inflicted over years of austerity. This is set against the challenges of rising need and greater cost to deliver services.

The budget consists of £634 million of funding to pay for day-to-day services, £232 million of capital investments in large projects and the city's infrastructure, plus other grants.

We are also very pleased that the budget protects the libraries budget in full, and the Cultural Investment Programme for the next three years.

The budget prioritises day-to-day services – bin collections, road

maintenance, street cleansing – but also invests to secure high quality social care services and support schools. Projects to build new homes and support routes out of homelessness will continue to receive millions of pounds of investment. Likewise, there are ambitious plans for the ongoing transformation of transport systems and the decarbonisation of the economy which will secure long-term economic benefits.

The largest proportion of spending in the council's annual budget is £378 million which goes towards supporting adults, families and children.

£350,000 will be spent on increasing the amount of street cleansing, and delivering an improved fly tipping collection, replacing services cut by the previous Labour administration. £1.3 million will be invested over two years on improving recycling.

The budget also includes money for starting the work to reopen public loos.

Over £20 million will be invested in delivering new housing and tackling homelessness, £60 million investment in transport systems and £26 million for supporting children and families.

Full Council approved a 2.99% rise in council tax and a 2% increase in the Adult Social Care precept. The total rise is 4.99%.

While there is extra funding from the Government over the next three years, this is mostly coming from the Government expecting the council to make the maximum increases in council tax alongside the greater retention of the business rates. Direct government grants are in fact being cut by over 60%.

On hold: Visitor permits cuts
We objected to the removal of

free visitor parking permits after many of you got in touch with your concerns about this proposal.

We can now report that the council is pausing and rethinking this idea. As we write this, officers are going through each consultation response from everyone who replied before a final decision is made. Officers need to follow the proper legal process for what is a Traffic Regulation Order consultation.

Please be assured that George and Serena will continue to push for the removal of these permits to be dropped completely. We are keen to ensure it is not simply postponed.

A final announcement is likely to be made in spring. We will be keeping a careful eye on what happens next.

Community funding workshop: all welcome

Have you got ideas on how to improve our area? Why not come along to a community workshop with your suggestions and discover how Community Infrastructure Levy funding could help.

The workshop will be an opportunity to discuss local needs and ideas. Council officers will be on hand to provide expertise and advice on the scope and feasibility of project suggestions.

Join us at the workshop on Monday March 9 at The Redland Club on Burlington Road, 5.30 - 7.30pm. We hope to see you there.

Ward 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 local issues.

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

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

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FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

News from Clifton councillors

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



Unexpected traffic congestion

The unexpected closure of the M5 on Friday January 30 led to significant traffic disruption in Clifton. This congestion was exceptional and arose from very sensitive circumstances. A serious welfare incident on the Avonmouth Bridge on the M5 required police intervention, and neither the Police nor National Highways were able to indicate how long the closure would be in place. We understand that the situation was resolved safely, which will be a relief to many.

However, the incident did highlight valid concerns. We received emails and calls from residents worried about gridlock and the potential impact on access for emergency vehicles. Paula has since spoken with an officer in Bristol City Council's Emergency Preparedness and Resilience Team to better understand why the congestion became so severe and what can be improved for future incidents.

In situations such as this, the lead agencies are National Highways and the Police. National Highways' CLEAR strategy sets out how motorway closures are managed, including the implementation of diversion routes. It is this aspect that has caused particular concern locally. The council's civil contingencies team

has asked for a full debrief, especially to review whether more traffic could be held on the motorway and turned around, rather than being funnelled through Bristol's residential roads. This incident occurred on a Friday in January — the impact during a summer weekend could be even greater. The situation is aggravated by sat nav systems guiding drivers through narrow back streets which can soon result in total snarls.

Bristol City Council can help because it has responsibility for local roads. On January 30 the council temporarily removed the lane closure on the Plimsoll Bridge to help alleviate congestion, though its options were limited on the day. However, we note that there are ways that we could improve conditions locally, such as adding a yellow 'no entry' box to the roundabout at Christchurch Green (thank you to the resident who wrote to us with that idea!) and we will be asking for Highways to improve this junction as it is a severe choke point.

We will follow up on the findings from the debrief with National Highways and Avon & Somerset Police. In the meantime, it is a useful reminder for drivers to be prepared for unexpected delays — keeping water, warm clothing and essentials in the car. Traffic updates are available at nationalhighways.co.uk and via local radio stations, so please do inform yourself when such situations occur.

We know how frustrating such disruption can be, particularly when the reasons are not immediately clear. Thankfully, on this occasion, the incident concluded safely.

Visitor permits: Good news!

Following representations from both Paula and Jerome we are pleased to confirm that plans to reduce visitor parking permits in Clifton have been shelved for the foreseeable future. This will be a relief to the many local residents who have written to us about this.

Former WH Smith site update

In the February edition of Clifton Voice we described the proposed 'meanwhile' use for the former WH Smith site of pop up restaurant and market stalls. We can confirm that planning permission has been sought for this meanwhile use. We hope that this can be granted quickly so the site can be brought back into use as soon as possible. Longer term plans are drafted for the site and we expect these to be shared in a couple of months time.

Council budget for 26/27

Bristol council budget for 26/27 will see a 5% increase in council tax. This above inflation rise is linked to further legally required spending increases in Adult Social Care and special educational needs funding. We are pleased to confirm that funding remains in place for the library in Clifton in 26/27 and it continues to go from strength to strength as a vibrant community hub!

Cross Country Trains

In his role as Chair of the West of England Scrutiny Jerome questioned Mayor Helen Godwin on the terrible overcrowding and poor service on the Cross Country train service that links Bristol with the South West, the Midlands, the North and Scotland. As a result of those questions the Mayor met with the Chief Executive of Cross Country trains who was able to confirm a significant increase in the length of many of their trains from 5-10 carriages. Significant investment that is taking place in new rolling stock which will all hopefully increase the reliability and comfort of these services!

Paula and Jerome

Contact us

Jerome Thomas: cllr.jerome.thomas@bristol.gov.uk

Paula O'Rourke: cllr.paula.orourke@bristol.gov.uk

NEWS

Vive la France!

ST John's Primary recently transformed their school hall into a bustling French café for the day, bringing language learning to life in the most delicious way possible.

Throughout the day, each Year 6 class worked a shift in the café, dressed as French waiters, kitchen staff and Bureau de change cashiers. The Year 6 children were kept busy taking customer orders, preparing croissants and drinks and clearing tables, whilst their younger schoolmates from Years 3, 4 and 5 dressed up in French style, changed their pounds into



euros at the Bureau de change desk, ordered their refreshments and settled their bills with their waiter - all in French! The children had great fun speaking the language and especially enjoyed eating croissants and

sharing drinks at the café with their friends.

At St John's, children begin learning French in Year 1 and continue with weekly lessons throughout the Juniors, making events like this a perfect



opportunity to put their language skills into practice in a really fun way.

The success of this day was down to the hard work and dedication of Madame Allenby, the Juniors' French teacher, who organised the event. She was supported by the Infants' French teacher and four parents and grandparent volunteers who helped in the kitchen and with preparing drinks, ensuring everything ran smoothly.

A white mug is shown on the left side of the image. On the right side, a white mug is decorated with the text 'home is where the heart is' in various colors and fonts, surrounded by floral patterns. Several cookies are scattered around the decorated mug, with some crumbs on the blue background.

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SPORT

Clifton strive to secure league points

AT the turn of the year and mid season for rugby clubs it was already apparent that in National League One there were already four teams competing for the one promotion place to progress to the Championship League.

From mid table to the bottom club, seven teams were already looking over their shoulders at avoiding the three lowest positions by the season's end in April when three clubs would be placed in the regional leagues for the 2026-27 campaign. Some clubs had recruited on-loan players from the Premiership to boost survival chances.

Both local clubs Clifton and Dings Crusaders were in the group of seven with few points separating them. Consequently securing wins, losing bonus points and extra points for touching down tries were crucial!

Clifton's aborted trip to top team Rotherham in January when the hosts called off the game as they arrived after a four-hour journey meant that they had to return there in February on what



Tom Quinlan breaks through

was planned to be a rest day in the league. Several players had arranged to be away that weekend and Clifton had incurred injuries to key players. With those facts in mind there was no real surprise in the result with their hosts cementing their league leadership!

A well-deserved home win over Sedgely Park with maximum points had boosted morale but a home loss to Leeds Tykes was disappointing. They had arrived with loanees from Premiership



Brad Talbot on the charge

club Sale Sharks providing extra muscle. With both influential fly half Tom Quinlan and all-action flanker Jay Evans suffering head injuries in the same collision they will be missed as they sat out the concussion protocol time during the rest of February.

Against Sedgely two trademark Brad Talbot tries delighted the crowd and young winger Ollie Harris touched down a thrilling try in the corner. Little surprise that Harris was called up by the Bears

for Premiership Cup games. This win placed Clifton for the time in a more comfortable league position.

The outcome of away trips to Reading Rams and Bishop Stortford as well as the home clash with bottom team Leicester Lions will have proved vital as Clifton head into season-defining encounters in March and April.

The visit of Dings Crusaders on March 21 will be an intense occasion.

Roger Opie



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■ ADVERTORIAL

One team to one in ten homes – the Window Hub’s success story

Every great local business starts somewhere. For The Window Hub, it began in Bristol with a single team, a simple belief in doing things properly, and a promise to treat every customer like the only customer. Fast forward to today, and that same family-run, independent business now completes one in every ten domestic window and door installations across the South West and South Wales – without ever losing sight of what made them successful in the first place.

2025 has been a landmark year. The Window Hub was proudly crowned UK Installation Company of the Year at the prestigious national G-Awards, placing this Bristol-born business firmly on the national stage. As if that wasn't enough, two outstanding members of the team were also recognised with National



Fenestration Awards, proving that behind every great company is an even greater team. Despite the national recognition,

The Window Hub remains rooted in the local community. Being named finalists for Retailer of the Year at the Bristol Life Awards is

a reminder that supporting local businesses really does matter. When you choose local, you're investing in local jobs, local families, and local success stories – and sometimes, those stories go on to achieve incredible things.

Whether you're upgrading your home, improving energy efficiency, or simply looking for honest advice from people who care, The Window Hub delivers award-winning quality with a personal touch.

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■ MESSAGE FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Volunteers protect rights and dignity

THE TV documentary *24 Hours in Police Custody* shapes many people's views of custody.

Dramatic moments often take centre stage, but the reality is more complex.

Custody is a highly pressured environment, where people are at their most vulnerable, and where decisions are made that have real consequences for individuals and for public confidence in policing.

What happens in custody matters. It is not a place the public typically sees, yet it is an area where human rights, dignity and safety must be protected without exception.

People arrive in custody in many different circumstances: some accused of serious

offences, some experiencing mental ill health, and some under the influence of substances.

Whatever the situation, they are entitled to fairness and appropriate care.

That is why public scrutiny is so important and is provided by independent custody visitors (ICVs). They are volunteers from our communities, who help my wider work in scrutinising the police and holding them to account, on behalf of you.

The volunteers who are recruited, trained and supported by my team are empowered to make unannounced visits to police custody suites.

Crucially, they operate independently of the police and

their role is to check the welfare of detainees, ensuring rights and entitlements are upheld.

During visits, ICVs are escorted to the custody area and may speak to detainees in private, out of hearing of officers.

They look at conditions in the suite, access to food, water and hygiene, and assess if people understand their rights.

After each visit, they produce a report which is shared with me and with the police. These reports enable issues to be identified quickly, improvements to be made, and trends to be monitored over time.

Throughout January, we trained a new cohort of ICV volunteers to bolster those already in post.



With Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody

They all bring a breadth of life experience and perspectives that will strengthen scrutiny.

Their willingness to give their time, often at unsocial hours, is deeply appreciated.

Transparency is at the heart of public confidence in policing, and custody is no exception.

I remain committed to supporting the volunteers whose independent oversight ensures that fairness, accountability and dignity remain at the core of policing.

WHAT'S ON

Various days and dates

BLAISE COMMUNITY GARDEN behind Blaise Museum BS10 7QS open Wednesday 10-12 and Saturday 10 to 2, interesting walled kitchen garden, free entry, new volunteers needed & welcomed, plants available. Events : Café on the 14th March 9.45am-2pm, and further Cafe on 11th April

March 18

BRISTOL OPERA CLUB - Bristol Opera Club presents a talk on The Flying Dutchman. David Martin will seek to explain the background to and the revolutionary nature of this seminal opera using DVD excerpts. 6.30 for 7.00pm, All are warmly welcomed. The Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral, Worcester Road Entrance. £8.00/£1.00 cash only please, Dedicated parking, Bar. Details: borkmail100@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 GET FITTER AND STRONGER?

Our Nordic walking classes and NEW indoor Women's Strength classes are run by friendly, professional instructors
Nordic walking beginners are on Clifton Down 4th, 14th, 18th & 28th March.
Women's Strength is every Tuesday and Fri in Henleaze.
Visit www.bristolnordicwalking.co.uk or call Ros on 07886885213.

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

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

MAY

14th & 22nd - Monthly Wine Tour- Emilia Romagna
21st & 23rd - Dry Whites & Big Bubbles
16th - Wine & Dine Dinner Party - 5 regional courses paired to 6 wines - Calabria

JUNE

11th & 19th - Monthly Wine Tour- Emilia Romagna
12th & 18th - Dry Whites & Big Bubbles
27th - Wine & Dine Dinner Party - 5 regional courses paired to 6 wines - Calabria

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.

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 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 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

■ **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, 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

WHAT'S ON

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

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/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.

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. No auditions, and ability to read music not necessary. Contact Jeanette on 9685409 or Jane on 07752 332278.

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

Centenary celebrations

ST Peter's Church in Henleaze is continuing its year-long celebration of its centenary by inviting local people to put a Post-It note on a timeline display in the church marking their contact or involvement with the church over the last 100 years.

Stretching down one side of the church, the timeline has a space for each of the last 100 years, the challenge being to see whether every single year can attract some connection with the current community.

Baptisms, confirmations, marriages, dances, youth groups, Guides and Scouts... anything you, your family or friends enjoyed at St Peter's can all be recorded. St Peter's invites local residents to pop into the church any time and make their mark.

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

With a long history of engaging with its local community, the church hall served as a military convalescent hospital during WWII. It was also a venue for dances, youth groups and amateur dramatics during the 50s, 60s and 70s.

The Later Life Hub launched in August 2024 is going from strength to strength. St Peter's Hall and Church provide space for around 36 activities catering for local seniors each month. The Hub is being developed by local charities (Age UK Bristol, Bristol Dementia Action Alliance, Alive Activities and BRACE), commercial companies (Harold Stephens Financial Planning and Home Instead) and St Peter's Church, working in partnership with each other.

Thanks to the award of a grant from Harold Stephens Financial Planning, the latest fruit of this partnership is the creation of a programme of Live Music Mornings to take place at the FAB Café run by Age UK Bristol at St Peter's from 10.30am -12.30pm on the first Wednesday of the month from March to July. First up, on March 4, will be the FAB Twins and their renditions of Beatles songs along with all the hits from the 50s, 60s and 70s. Dancing will be encouraged so do come along! Entrance to these Live Music Mornings is free. Donations to a good cause on each occasion will be welcomed.

Look out for Easter bunny

AN Easter bunny trail for children is taking place in Clifton Village.

Thirty-five hand-made felt bunnies will be hidden in shops and businesses that take part in the trail.

It is being organised by Clifton Business Improvement District (BID).

Children will need to complete an entry form and list the names of the bunnies they have found.

"Everyone who completes the trail by finding all the bunnies will receive a treat, and this year the top prize will be a special bunny for one lucky winner," said a spokesperson for Clifton Bid.

The bunny trail will run from March 30 until April 12.

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Redland **£325,000**
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Westbury on Trym **£895,000**
Fantastic four-bedroom semi-detached family home offering generous ground-floor living space, well proportioned bedrooms, multiple bathrooms, open views over the University of Bristol playing fields, off-street parking, a level rear garden. EPC C.



High Kingsdown **£565,000**
A four-bedroom home in a central Bristol location. An architecturally recognised development from the early 1970s. Light-filled with large windows and a south-westerly orientation. Pleasant courtyard garden and single garage. No onward chain. EPC C.



Redland **£720,000**
Set in an elevated position on a quiet side road on the Cotham/Redland borders this comfortable three-bedroom home offers classically proportioned accommodation in a great location. Benefits from downstairs WC and garage. EPC E.

Experts in residence

Westbury on Trym 0117 962 2299
125 Stoke Lane, Westbury on Trym,
Bristol BS9 3RW ♥ wot@leeseandnagle.co.uk

■ PROPERTY OF THE MONTH

**Clifton:
Offers over
£550,000**

This is a truly special two double bedroom garden flat set in an attractive Victorian property.

Beautifully presented, incredibly spacious throughout, in a great location and benefitting from a large south-west facing rear garden. If you are seeking a premium garden apartment in Clifton, this one is hard to beat. EPC D.



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sales@leeseandnagle.co.uk

125 Stoke Lane
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BS9 3RW



■ VINEYARD NEWS with INGRID BATES

Turning all that rainwater into wine

OUT in the vineyards, we've been experimenting with rainwater collection systems. The last few summers have been noticeably drier, which for established vines isn't a problem, but for young vines it can be disastrous. Contrary to popular belief, newly planted vines need a good supply of water during their first year while their root systems are establishing. Depending on soil type, it can actually take three or even four years for a vine to develop a strong, resilient root system.

Our new site near Bath sits on a south-facing slope with very free-draining soil and no access to natural or mains water, so we're planning ahead to make sure any freshly planted vines get the best possible start. We've installed large water butts in the lower corner of the field and are experimenting with different ways of channelling rainwater down towards them - a surprisingly satisfying process to watch!

Elsewhere in the vineyard, vine pruning is almost complete. We've been marking weaker-looking vines so that we can easily return to them over the coming weeks

and give them a helping hand in the form of willow mulch. The soil at our Wrington site is heavy clay and the vines sometimes struggle in drier areas during summer. The willow mulch improves soil nutrient levels but also helps retain moisture so growth can continue even in drought conditions.

Paradoxically, for all this talk of dry weather, the main challenge right now is the opposite - the ground is too wet! The vines are dormant so it's not a major issue, but they'll certainly be feeling a little stressed with their roots sitting in waterlogged soil. Unfortunately, there's not much we can do except wait for things to dry out.

On the wine front, we still have our usual range of sparkling wines and still rosé available. Just get in touch if you'd like to find your nearest stockist or check free local delivery.

hello@dunleavyvineyards.co.uk
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Clifton, Bristol | Guide Price £POA

A superb semi-detached four-bedroom family house on a quiet and sought-after road overlooking Clifton Lawn Tennis Club; complete with a walled rear garden, outdoor kitchen and off-street parking.

Stylish semi-detached family house in the heart of Clifton | Off-street parking for two cars | Walled rear garden with a built-in outdoor kitchen | Family sitting room
Stunning open-plan kitchen and dining room | Garden Room | Cinema & play room | Master bedroom suite with en-suite shower and dressing room
Three further double bedrooms | Two further bath / shower rooms (one en-suite) | Utility room and additional storerooms | Directly opposite Clifton Lawn Tennis Club
No onward chain | EPC: C

In all circa 2559.3 sq. ft (237.8 sq. m)

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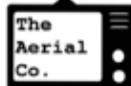
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