

cliftonvoice

April, 2026 Issue 32

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FREE EVERY MONTH IN CLIFTON AND SURROUNDING AREA

Thanks, Chris, for 26 years' service

Chris Booy, who has been chairman of the Clifton Suspension Bridge Trustees for 26 years, is stepping down.
Report: Page 2



Downs licence fees under fire

Commercial users of the Downs and Bristol's parks will have to buy licences from this month, following decisions that have met widespread opposition.
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Hopes rise for pop-up venue

More details have emerged of the plans for a pop-up restaurant on a site in the centre of Clifton that's lain derelict for 15 years.
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Mixed views on 20mph zones

Nearly 100 new 20mph zones could come in on 'residential main roads' across Bristol, including Upper Belgrave Road.
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Tributes paid to Matt Salter

Tributes have been paid to Clifton rugby hero Matt Salter, who has died at the age of 49.
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'Last chance to save heritage'

CAMPAIGNERS have stepped up their battle to save Bristol Zoo Gardens in Clifton.

Save Bristol Gardens Alliance and Clifton and Hotwells Improvement Society circulated an open letter to the trustees of Bristol Zoological Society.

They said it was a "last chance to save one of Bristol's finest heritage sites from the bulldozer".

The letter said: "The people

of Bristol have nurtured and supported the Bristol Zoo Gardens for almost 200 years. We remain implacably opposed to the destruction of our heritage."

Councillors were told the proposed development on the site would deliver 'affordable' housing and retain a free public space in perpetuity, but they were likely to be disappointed, the campaigners said.

They are calling for the zoo's trustees to end discussions with Acorn Property Company immediately, claiming the firm is not a suitable developer for the site.

The campaigners began the first of a series of weekly demonstrations outside Acorn's offices on March 11.

Bristol Zoo in Clifton, which had opened in 1836 and was
Turn to Page 3

An advertisement for Ocean Estate Agents. The background is a photograph of a modern kitchen with a white countertop, a black sink, and a black faucet. A QR code is located in the bottom left corner. Overlaid on the image is a large, semi-transparent circle containing the text "the place for you...". In the bottom right corner, there is a logo for "ocean estate agents" consisting of a white circle with a smaller white circle inside, and the text "ocean estate agents" below it.

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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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NEWS

New chief for bridge

CHRIS Booy, who has been chairman of the Clifton Suspension Bridge Trustees for 26 years, is stepping down.

A born-and-bred Bristolian, he joined the trust in 1999 in what he describes as a "nano-second decision". Since then he has overseen a vast programme of conservation work including a full repainting of the bridge and lighting scheme, major hanger inspections and replacements and conservation of the bridge's stone towers.

Under Chris Booy's leadership the bridge has become more community focused especially with the opening of the visitor centre and museum in 2015.

"My role as chair has always been to bring out the best in people and help shape ideas so we can achieve what we set out to do.

"I feel very reassured knowing I'm leaving the bridge in extremely capable hands. Our new Bridge Master, Tristan Ralph is excellent, and our new chairman, Brian McConnell is excellent too. And of course, our trustees remain in place, providing the stability and dedication that keep this bridge running so well.

"So I'm confident we're in a really good place for the future. I'm naturally sad to be stepping down, but that's probably on me for when I first arrived, many of the trustees were quite senior, and we agreed we needed to bring in younger trustees to keep things moving forward he said."

The new chairman Dr Brian McConnell is an engineering geologist who was educated at Bristol University. He joined the bridge trustees in 2024.

People power

BRAVAS in Cotham has been allowed to keep its outdoor seating after councillors overturned advice from planning officers to refuse permission following overwhelming public support.

Applause rang out from the public gallery at City Hall as the planning committee approved the application from the popular Cotham Hill tapas restaurant by 8-0 votes, with one abstention, after hearing that rejecting the proposals would be "petty and vindictive".

The decision followed Avon Fire & Rescue Service's 11th-hour decision to withdraw its objection, which it initially made amid concerns the al fresco dining structure did not leave enough room for a fire engine to

get past on the street, which was pedestrianised during Covid.

But after revisiting the premises, off Whiteladies Road, Redland, to measure the gap, it reversed its decision and found that the width on the highway was adequate for emergency access – by a whole metre more than previously stated.

About 1,200 people wrote in support of Bravas's bid to retain the seating, making it one of Bristol's most popular planning applications ever.

The venue now faces a fresh battle with Bristol City Council's highways authority for a pavement licence for the terrace, which is also required for it to trade outside despite now having planning consent.

Councillors' update: Page 18

LETTER

The times are changing ...

THANK you to Clifton Voice for publishing the article about our £30,000 appeal to restore the Christ Church clock appeal (March edition).

I wanted to bring to people's attention how to donate to the fund. They can do this either through the website ticktockchristchurch.co.uk or to the office.

Donations can be made in person to our Operations Manager Mark Parsons at the church office at Linden Gate, Clifton Down Road, Bristol BS8 4AH

David Daniels

NEWS

From Page 1

the world's oldest provincial zoo, closed in 2022, with most animals transferred to a bigger site near Cribbs Causeway. The gorillas remained, but were moved earlier this year, ahead of the opening of the zoo's African Forest on April 1.

BZS announced early last year that it had exchanged contracts with Acorn for the 12-acre site, which was granted planning permission three years ago for the creation of 196 homes, a park, cafe, playground and conservation hub.

Progress was held up by a Judicial Review brought by the campaigners, which was dismissed in December.

Save Bristol Gardens Alliance told the Voice in a statement: "Acorn Property Group is a wholly unsuitable developer for the Zoo Gardens site, and it seems clear that BZS Trustees have failed to complete independent due diligence on Acorn.

"Our concerns relate directly to the reputation, financial resilience, track record, and funding model of Acorn, as well as to the likelihood of Acorn not delivering on its agreement with BZS, the development itself or indeed any of the so-called 'public benefits'

"We urge the BZS Board to address the concerns we have raised fully and transparently before any contractual commitment is completed. Otherwise BZS risks making a reckless decision, which could be catastrophic for trustee reputations, BZS's reputation and of course for a treasured

Last-ditch battle to save zoo site



A demo outside Acorn

part of Bristol's heritage."

Justin Morris, chief executive of Bristol Zoological Society, told the Voice: "The plan for the old zoo site, which Acorn Property Group will deliver, includes making the old zoo accessible for free for the first time in its history, the creation of a new café, playground, and 196 homes (20% affordable). The iconic zoo entrance building will be turned into a new Clifton Conservation Hub.

"Despite accusations to the contrary, Acorn is 100% committed to the delivery of this scheme in accordance with the planning permission, including public access and affordable housing. Acorn is already in detailed dialogue with the proposed housing association partner in relation to the social housing to ensure the proposed scheme meets their needs.

"This is another example of campaigners who don't want new housing in Clifton, taking steps to purposefully delay the sale of Bristol Zoo Gardens.

Despite a planning consent that will see the gardens being opened for free to the public for the first time and the opportunity for a new zoo at Bristol Zoo Project focused on animal welfare and conservation, they continue to prevent Bristol Zoological Society from accessing the proceeds from the

sale, harming our charity and work. As previously reported, responding to campaigner's lawyers and claims has already cost the charity £300,000 in fees, which could have been spent on education and conservation, and this campaign is another example of this."

A spokesperson for Acorn Property Group said: "We are fully committed to successfully delivering this prestigious scheme on this historic site, including creating a new

community space, opening the gardens for free public access, and providing a mix of affordable and open-market homes.

"Bristol City Council granted planning permission for the development, and the judicial review ruled in favour of the development last December.

"Acorn Property Group has a strong track record of delivering award-winning and complex projects in and around Bristol. We have always had an open door when it comes to engaging with the community on this scheme – we have met with local councillors in the last few weeks and are due to meet with the Save Bristol Gardens Alliance in the next week.

"We are therefore really disappointed with the decision to demonstrate outside our offices. We will always welcome open dialogue, but this has to be in a constructive forum."

Councillors' update: Page 19

Farewell to Jock

Just weeks before the opening of its new African Forest, Bristol Zoo has said farewell to its oldest male gorilla, 42-year-old Jock.

The silverback's health deteriorated a few days after he and the rest of the troop of eight western lowland gorillas was moved from Bristol Zoo Gardens in Clifton to Bristol Zoo Project near Cribbs Causeway.

Sarah Gedman, curator of mammals, said: "Jock's legacy at Bristol Zoo, as a leader, father, and ambassador for his species, will live on through the gorillas he helped raise and the countless people he inspired. His life was a reminder of both the beauty and fragility of wildlife, and the importance of conservation efforts everywhere."

African Forest opens on April 1 and a special tribute will be paid to Jock. The new site means visitors will for the first time be able to see western lowland gorillas living under a tree canopy.



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NEWS

'A money-grab gone wrong'

BRISTOL City Council's plans to bring in licences for commercial users of its parks from this month are continuing to face criticism.

Among those who are likely to have to pay are professional dog walkers and a choir for mothers and babies.

The choir leader claimed that the fees were a "money-grab gone wrong".

Julia Turner, whose BYOB - 'bring your own baby' - meets in St Andrews Park and three other parks, spoke out at a meeting of the public health and communities policy committee on March 20.

She said: "We're out in all weathers, with no bandstands for

shelter and often no safe, clean, functioning toilets nor changing facilities for babies, so the odds are against us."

The parks licences will also affect other businesses, such as personal trainers running bootcamps.

After a public push-back, a half-price discount was given to professional dog walkers, which Ms Turner said was discriminatory.

Liberal Democrat Councillor Stephen Williams, chair of the public health committee,

said: "The parks licensing fee is for businesses that are running commercial activities within parks, where the business offer that they're making to



customers relies on being able to use the parks, so for instance outdoor personal trainers running bootcamps. That's what the licensing scheme is for: to check that they're qualified and insured and there's a licence fee to cover that. It's not necessarily a money-raising opportunity."

Licences for one park will cost £480, and licences for up

to seven parks will cost £720. Licences for between eight and 15 parks will cost £960. All these figures include the council fee plus VAT.

For commercial dog walking, licences for up to seven parks will cost £360, while licences for eight to 15 parks will cost £600. There is also a £60 application fee.

Licence fees 'will contribute to Downs upkeep'

PERSONAL trainers on the Downs will soon have to pay "eyewateringly expensive" licence fees after an attempt to pause their roll-out fell on deaf ears.

From this month personal trainers must start paying for licences to hold exercise classes on the Downs. For classes with 19 or fewer people, the fee will be £900 a year, while for classes with 20 or more people, the fee will be £2,600 a year. Classes will also be confined to certain zones.

The Downs committee voted by seven to two against pausing the introduction of the licence fees. The committee is made up of Bristol City Council councillors and members of the Society of Merchant Venturers.

Rob Perry, a personal trainer, told councillors: "The prices are eyewateringly high, destructive to local small businesses, and ultimately there is no alternative but for the local people to pay this. They're already paying council tax, they want to come and use a local green space that is near to their home, and they now have to pay extra to do so."

He added that the £2,600 fee was almost

a quarter of his yearly takings before tax.

The licence fee income will help pay to maintain the Downs, including potential new security patrols to clamp down on anti-social behaviour. No forecasts have been carried out to estimate how much income the licence fees will be generated. It's also unclear how the council will enforce classes run by personal trainers who haven't paid for a licence.

Bootcamp classes will be confined to a few areas on the Downs and not allowed to operate outside of these.

Jonathan Baker, the master of the Merchant Venturers, said: "The café that operates on the Downs contributes around £25,000 a year. The ice cream operator contributes to being on the Downs to the tune of about £40,000 a year. The Bristol Downs League and student leagues pay circa £50,000 a year.

"The figure we arrived at for charging came from the amount we charge each football team. Bearing in mind they play less often and on a smaller area, we felt that was a good benchmark on which to operate.

We are not stopping people from using the Downs. We are asking people to contribute to a community upkeep of a community asset.

"The Downs runs at a loss every year, something that for many years we have tried to correct. We are doing our best but it's very difficult. We will review any contract after 12 months of the first year and maybe after that."

He added that the Downs committee was following the lead of the council, which is planning to roll out licences for other parks elsewhere in Bristol.

Green Councillor Guy Poultney suggested that the committee pause the licence fees, until they carry out a business case and equalities impact assessment and estimate how much income will be made. But he was voted down by a majority of the other members, so the licence fees will be introduced in April.

The committee initially voted to approve the fees in September in a closed meeting.

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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NEWS

Restaurant in a tent starts to take shape

MORE details have been unveiled for the planned pop-up restaurant in the heart of Clifton Village.

Speare Developments, the owners of the former WHSmith site, are working on a scheme for what is called a “meanwhile use” for the land while they develop their long term plans for it.

They say the restaurant will be inside a stretched tent marquee, no more than one storey high. It will occasionally be used for workshops, demos or as a community space when needed.

A kitchen inside a shipping container will be linked to the restaurant area, which will have seating for up to 150 people.

A cellar with a bar attached will be inside another shipping container.

There will also be space on the site for trestle tables and gazebos to form a shopping market. When the market is not operating the gazebos and tables will be taken down and stored in containers.

The restaurant and the market will be managed by the same tenant, who has not yet been officially named, although Clifton Ward Councillors Paula O’Rourke and Jerome Thomas say that Speare Developments are working with renowned chef Josh Eggleton.

“The specific type of tent is yet to be confirmed due to availability when the application is approved and construction can begin. The design proposes a stretch tent marquee across most of the site, but not all.

“The timescale of construction largely depends on



How the pop-up restaurant in Clifton could look

when and if planning consent is granted by the city council but Speare Developments are keen to open the site and for it to be active again, not fenced off and forgotten.”

The kitchen and bar, being front facing and visible from the surrounding streets, will be clad in timber and metal cladding.

The site will be landscaped with raised timber planters containing a variety of plants.

The metal railing design

around the site has been inspired from the heritage railings around Clifton Village such as along the perimeter of the Mall Gardens. These will provide the main secure boundary treatment around the site.

WH Smith closed in 2010 and the site has remained unused other than for a temporary ice rink in 2014.

The eyesore site is now covered in weeds, shrubs and bushes and is surrounded by hoardings.

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NEWS

More e-scooter parking bays on way

PARKING bays for electric scooters are planned to be installed in Bristol and the wider area after a raft of complaints. Pedestrians and people in wheelchairs will be all too familiar with clambering around a scooter parked in the middle of the pavement, but new bays could soon help the situation.

Construction is due to start by the end of the year in Bristol, Bath and South Gloucestershire,

although it's unclear how many bays there will be in total. The West of England Combined Authority is responsible for managing the electric scooter and electric bike trial run by Dott.

An update was given to councillors on the West of England audit committee in March. The combined authority is working with councils in the region on where the bays will be

created. £1 million has been set aside for creating them, but more could be spent in future too.

Rental e-scooters are still technically a trial, which began in 2020. At some point the government will decide on whether to legalise them permanently. Permission to run rental schemes runs out in 2028.

Lib Dem Cllr Stephen Williams said: "Lots of residents are unhappy with scooters and



bikes being parked all over the place and not in designated bays. But we are effectively making permanent something that legally is still a trial."

Bays will be created both off the street and on the street.

Have your say on planned new 20mph zones

NEARLY 100 new 20mph zones could be introduced in Bristol – among them major routes such as Gloucester Road and Kellaway Avenue.

Bristol City Council is considering lowering the speed limit from 30mph to 20mph as part of a wider push for safer streets.

It will open a six-week consultation this month on proposals for 97 roads. Councillors on the transport policy committee, meeting in March, approved plans to seek views about the proposed lower limits.

With opinions were split, with the plans being welcomed by members representing Hotwells and Totterdown as well as Clifton, where Upper Belgrave Road next to the Downs is included, but opposed by councillors from other areas.

Green Councillor Serena Ralston, representing Clifton Down, said: "When I was 11 my best friend was knocked down by a speeding hit-and-run driver on a zebra crossing just outside her home. She was in hospital for months and sustained a brain injury. We know that lower speeds save lives and reduce

injuries."

It's expected that public opinion will also be divided, with people tending to want lower limits where they live but not where they drive through. The last time limits were lowered en masse, a decade ago, was also controversial.

Liberal Democrat Cllr Nicholas Coombes said: "I'm not clear that the public consensus has been built up yet. Are drivers, pedestrians and cyclists in favour of these changes? When this was implemented in Wales a couple of years ago, there was pushback that caused a political U-turn on several of those roads which are going through the process of being reversed now."

The Tories are criticising the plans, which they say could lead to more congestion, longer journeys and higher emissions. Drivers might also be encouraged to divert onto "unsuitable residential streets", which would be less safe than using main roads.

After the meeting, Cllr Mark Weston, leader of the Conservative group, said: "The proposal to include long stretches of the A4018

(Westbury Road and Falcondale Road) on a round-the-clock basis makes absolutely no sense. At peak times, traffic is already at a standstill. Outside those periods, there is no justification for artificially slowing vehicles unless the intention is to push motorists off the road through pressure and disincentives.

"These creeping restrictions look like the latest phase of an ongoing anti-car agenda pursued by successive administrations and now enthusiastically adopted by the Green-led council. I urge the travelling public to take part in the consultation and make their objections and suggestions known."

The council has come up with a list after assessing all roads in Bristol with a 30mph speed limit. It would mean further restrictions on a total of 59 miles, or about five per cent of the city's road network. Three in 10 of serious and fatal casualties in Bristol happen on these roads. If all 97 roads had lower speed limits, that could mean 46 fewer slight casualties and seven fewer serious or fatal casualties every year.

Between 2010 and 2014, many roads across Bristol had

their speed limit lowered to 20mph. This is estimated to have saved between four and five lives every year, as well as preventing 11 serious injuries annually and boosting active travel by a fifth.

Some roads would have their speed limits changed only on sections, rather than the whole road. Main roads such as Bond Street and Temple Gate already have low average speeds of around 10mph. The full list of proposed roads is as follows:

These are some of the roads that would be affected:
 Westbury Road and Falcondale Road South
 Filton Road and Gloucester Road
 Filton Avenue
 Kellaway Avenue
 Muller Road
 Southmead Road
 Wellington Hill West
 Southmead Road and Henleaze Road
 Clifton Down
 Shirehampton Road
 Parys Lane
 Avonmouth Way
 Henbury Road
 Westbury Road and Falcondale Road North
 Penpark Road
 Stapleton Road and Bell Hill
 Upper Belgrave Road
 Greystoke Avenue
 Sylvan Way, Dingle Road, Canford Lane and Canford Road
 Kings Weston Road
 Stoke Hill, Druid Hill and Stoke Road
 Shaldon Road and Romney Avenue
 Avonmouth Road

FOREIGN cars and fake number plates have been blamed for a huge amount of Clean Air Zone fines being written off. Drivers of older vehicles who should pay to enter the zone but don't are hit with a penalty charge notice, but it has emerged that many are simply not paying these fines.

From April 2024 to September 2025 Bristol City Council wrote off £22 million of unpaid Clean Air Zone fines. Leading councillors faced questions about why so much money owed to the council has not

£22m fines written off

been paid, during a meeting of the transport policy committee on Thursday, March 19.

Green Councillor Ed Plowden, committee chair, said: "An awful lot of those cars, we just cannot trace the owners. Some of them are from other countries and there does seem to be some persistent offenders. It may be that we're seeing fake number plates or other things.

"Somebody in my ward [Windmill Hill] had a car registered to his address and had bailiffs turn up at his front door, which nobody wants. And it turns out that he doesn't own that car and has never owned that car. So there's a lot of people doing all sorts of nefarious things to buck the system."

The figures were revealed in a recent report to the strategy and resources policy committee.

**REPORTS BY ALEX SEABROOK,
LOCAL DEMOCRACY REPORTER**

SPORT

Clifton Rugby mourns Matt Salter

CLIFTON Rugby Football Club was deeply saddened to learn of the death of Matt Salter early in March.

Matt, 49, was a hugely respected figure in the Bristol rugby community. An iconic player for Bristol Rugby, where he captained the club for four seasons and was named captain of the Guinness Premiership Dream Team in 2006, he also played professionally for London Broncos and Leeds.

Following his playing career, Matt dedicated himself to developing the next generation of players, serving for many years as Head Coach at Clifton RFC and as Director of Rugby at Clifton College.

Matt's impact on the game in Bristol will be felt for many years to come. As a player, captain and coach, he inspired countless teammates, players and students, and his passion for rugby and for helping others develop through the game was clear to all who worked with him.

Many will consider his finest moment at Clifton was leading Clifton's successful promotion to National League One at the end of the 2024-25 season by winning the hugely competitive National League 2 West

Tributes to him were made in the national press and from across the world of rugby.



Matt Salter with coaches Paul Fincken and Luke Cozens winning promotion in 2025

Thoughts remain with his wife Charlotte and their children.

Huge admiration was shown before the first home game since his passing against local rivals Dings Crusaders, a clash he would have relished.

The next home game this season is with Birmingham Moseley at Station Road at 3pm on April 18.

The first game after Matt's passing was a challenging visit to London to face promotion candidates Rosslyn Park. Emotions understandably ran at a high level throughout the day. The occasion was honoured by the attendance of Matt's parents on a ground where he made his Clifton playing debut in 2009.

The game was a fine tribute to him with pulsating open end to end rugby. During the exciting afternoon the outcome was a 43-40 win for the Londoners with the lavender and blacks returning with two richly deserved bonus points. Clifton had the first strike and, although trailing at half time, fought back to take the lead as the game entered its final quarter before the Park responded to take the spoils by a narrow margin.

The players and travelling fans earned great respect for handling such a sensitive occasion with dignity, courage and the utmost respect for a fine rugby man.

• A memorial service to celebrate the life of Matt Salter will take place at Bristol Cathedral, College Green, BS1 5TJ, on Thursday April 16 at 1pm.

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SINCE 2012, Clifton's Business Improvement District (BID) has been working quietly and consistently behind the scenes to support local businesses and safeguard the character of our village.

So, what is a BID?

A Business Improvement District is a business-led partnership. Local rate-paying businesses contribute collectively to a shared fund, which is then reinvested directly back into the area. In Clifton's case, that means practical support for traders, thoughtful promotion of the village, and initiatives that strengthen the local economy while preserving what makes this place distinctive.

Each year, around £67,000 is reinvested into Clifton Village. This fund goes towards promotion and events — including the much-loved Ester trail, Clifton Village Day, Christmas events, seasonal celebrations and cultural activities, as well as marketing campaigns that drive footfall and raise the village's profile.

This funding also supports seasonal



events throughout the year such as Police Open Clinics, defibrillator training, and informal networking sessions. These efforts help maintain Clifton not only as a thriving destination, but as a well-supported and well-managed place to work and do business.

Clifton BID represent a business community of around 250 rate-paying businesses. On their behalf, we work closely with Bristol City Council, local councillors, and strategic and cultural partners to ensure Clifton voice is heard and its interests are protected.

At the core of the BID is a volunteer

committee of local business owners and representatives who bring practical experience, local knowledge, and a strong sense of responsibility to the role. Meeting regularly, the committee reviews priorities, considers new initiatives, and ensures decisions reflect the needs of the wider business community. It is not a closed group.

We actively encourage businesses within the BID area to get involved, share their perspective, and help shape the direction of our work. Clifton's strength has always come from the commitment of its business community. By working together, we protect what makes the village special while ensuring it continues to thrive in changing times.

If you are part of the BID area, we invite you to join us — contribute your voice, your experience, and your support — and play an active role in shaping Clifton's future.

We are looking forward to hearing from you. bidmanager@bidcliftonvillage.co.uk

■ FROM BRISTOL CENTRAL'S MP

Safety through unity, not division

THIS month, I've been thinking a lot about safety — particularly who gets access to it and why. The idea of safety is increasingly used by the likes of Reform, who suggest that our safety is threatened by the most marginalised. But in reality, safety is shaped by political decisions.

For example, Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood has just made major, cruel overhauls to the asylum system, which will impact tens of thousands of people seeking sanctuary in the UK each year. Now, many people fleeing war and persecution will be denied access to the tools that would grant them basic safety.

Those who were previously granted five years' leave to remain will face reviews every 30 months. Study visas from Cameroon, Sudan, Myanmar and Afghanistan have been halted, shutting down those safe and legal routes. Some will be offered £40,000 to leave — a rehash of an old BNP policy. The government has also removed its legal duty to financially support

asylum seekers.

In my constituency office, I and my team already do what we can to support asylum seekers who face many years of uncertainty, living on less than £10 a day. With Labour's changes, more people will be pushed into poverty. I and other Green MPs will continue to stand up for migrants in our communities, whether they came here for work, for love, or for safety.

Political decisions also influence our children's safety. Tech giants knowingly expose them to addictive, algorithm-driven extremism, negative body image content, exploitation and abuse — all in their pursuit of profit. It's clear that something needs to change. I and my fellow Green MPs are calling on the government to stand up to these forces — advocating for tougher regulation to protect children (and adults!) from online harms.

—To get the solutions right, policymakers and representatives need to listen to the experiences

of children, parents, carers, teachers and children's organisations. If you are invested in the issue of children's online safety, please respond to the government's consultation on the topic, which opened this month, and is on the gov.uk website. I've often been struck by how insightfully children speak about this issue, complementing the voices of parents, carers, loved ones and teachers. It's government listening to these voices, not the profiteering tech companies, that will keep children safe.

Finally, a sense of safety and wellbeing was in full force the other day when I went along to help out at Redcliffe's first community Iftar, organised by community development practitioner Samina Iqbal, where people of all ages, faiths and backgrounds came together to break fast, celebrate and socialise. This family-friendly event was packed with kids, including an adorable boy who sidled up to



**Carla Denyer
writes for
the Voice**

me to say: "You look like that lady that's Green."

• 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

NEWS



Young musicians from Redland Green, Fairfield and Ashton Park schools relish the experience of the big stage

Battle of the Bands rocks the Beacon

STUDENTS from Fairfield High School and Redland Green School took to the stage for an electrifying night of live music at the Bristol Beacon.

Excalibur Academies Trust's first Battle of the Bands, which also featured Ashton Park School, featured everything from energetic rock sets to powerful vocal performances, highlighting the talent of performers from Year 8 and above.

Performing on the Bristol Beacon stage was a privilege for the students, who benefited from professional sound, lighting and staging, giving them a true live music experience.

The judges crowned Turbo Island from Redland Green School as the winning band. Their performance not

only secured them the top prize and the opportunity to perform again, but six hours of rehearsal time in a professional studio space.

Tim Roderick, music teacher at Fairfield High School and co-organiser of the event, said: "The first Battle of the Bands was a resounding success, celebrating the incredible musical talent of students across the Trust. With such an unforgettable atmosphere, we hope this event will become an annual highlight."

Richard Uffendell, headteacher of Ashton Park School, added: "Judging the Battle of the Bands was an exciting and challenging experience. We were amazed by the talent and creativity of the students."



Turbo Island from Redland Green were the winners



Students shine in spring showcase

MONTPELIER High School's Spring Showcase at the Bristol Beacon brought together singers, instrumentalists, choristers and poets for an inspiring evening of performance.

A school spokesperson said: "We are proud to have held this celebration at the Bristol Beacon, a venue that plays a central role in music education across the city, delivering an award-winning schools programme, offering instrumental lessons, whole-class ensemble tuition and enrichment opportunities."





Clifton High School

Pre-School to Sixth Form



Join us at our Junior and Senior School Open Evening
on *Thursday 30th April 2026*
to discover how your child can become a champion
in sport and beyond.

NEWS

Group puts mature actors centre stage

A SEMI-PROFESSIONAL theatre company, which puts on contemporary plays and new writing in and around the Bristol area, has now been running for four years and is about to present its latest production.

Misplaced Theatre was created with the idea of bringing back actors to the stage whose acting careers had been put on hold for a variety of reasons. The company also support younger actors/writers at the start of their careers by giving them opportunities to work with a committed team of producers/directors looking to bring interesting, high-quality theatre to the arts scene in Bristol and beyond.

The four co-founders all met for the first time on a Shakespeare summer school at the Bristol Old Vic; Ciaran Corsar is an actor and had been working with the White Rabbit Theatre Company in Switzerland and was new to Bristol; Amy Tanner, an acting tutor, was looking to enhance her teaching skills; Norberto Bogard, who is primarily New York-based, had been working as a journalist for many years before deciding to pursue an acting career; Joanna Butler already had a vast amount of experience as a singer/actor and director but was keen to try something different in Bristol. While working on 'A Midsummer's Night's Dream' at the Summer



The four founders of Misplaced Theatre, who met at a summer school at the Bristol Old Vic

School, the four immediately bonded and setting up a theatre company seemed a natural progression.

The first Misplaced production was *Decadence*, a satirical study of 1980s Thatcherite Britain, by Steven Berloff. It received excellent reviews and inspired the team to keep up the momentum and they followed this up with *Tender Napalm*, *Life in the Theatre*, *Doubt* and *Switzerland*. With Norberto working on projects in Mexico and Joanna focusing on her music and writing, Ciaran and Amy, who both live in St Andrews/Montpelier, took the reins,

and they are now in intensive rehearsals for their next production, *A Bright New Boise* by Samuel D Hunter.

The play explores themes of family, faith and fundamentalism and the desire for connection set in the confines of the Hobby Lobby Store in Idaho.

Describing how the play came about, Amy, the play's director, said, "I saw this play performed by LAMDA students in London in 2024. One of our network, Robert Furey, was the assistant director. It left a powerful impression on me, so I am really excited to have the opportunity to put this on in Bristol. It is a great play for actors as Hunter has created such interesting complex characters, each with a full inner life of their own. We are lucky to have Louie Wanless as our assistant director. Louie starred in our last play, *Switzerland* and is now very much part of the Misplaced family."

Cast members of *A Bright New Boise* are: Tyler Landry as Will, Maya Hingorani as Anna, Jack Parrott as Alex, Jaleelah Galbraith as Pauline and Rhys Myhill as Leroy. It is on from April 14-18 at the Alma Tavern Theatre, Clifton.

You can buy tickets on the Alma Tavern website: <https://www.almatavernandtheatre.co.uk/>



SPORTS OPEN EVENING

Friday 15 May 16.00 - 18.30

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of your choice



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BADMINTON
SCHOOL

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Explore the Early Years at Badminton School Prep.
Join our next 'Stay & Play' session on Friday 8 May.



NEWS

Girls rise to Lego contest challenge

YEAR 6 pupils from Redmaids' High Junior School showcased their talent and teamwork at a Lego League regional competition held at GKN in Filton.

The event brought together young innovators from across the region. The Redmaids' High team began by presenting their innovation project: a thoughtfully designed prototype robot to assist archaeologists in delicately brushing away dirt and soil to uncover fragile discoveries.

The competition then moved into the action round, where teams navigated a Lego robot through a complex obstacle course.

Redmaids' High Juniors were the only all-girls team competing and were significantly outnumbered by boys. However, the team approached the competition with enthusiasm and self-assurance, demonstrating that STEM is a field where they feel entirely at home.

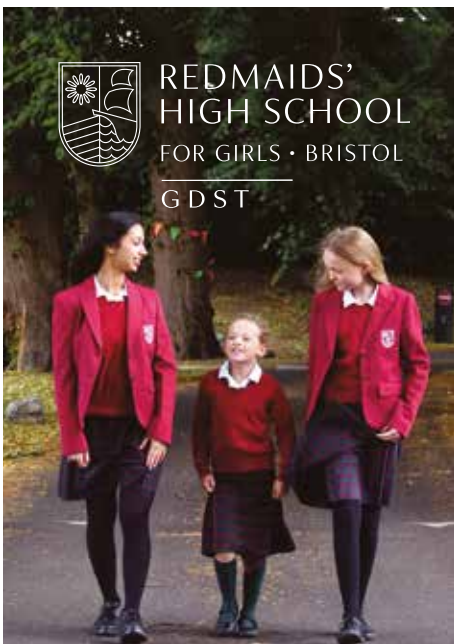
Their dedication and innovation were



ultimately rewarded with the Innovation Project Award — a recognition of their hard work and ingenuity.

A school spokesperson said: " Their

achievement marks an exciting milestone, and the school looks forward to seeing where their curiosity and talent will take them next."



REDMAIDS' HIGH SCHOOL
FOR GIRLS • BRISTOL
GDST



Whole School Visiting Morning



Scan to join us on Tuesday 5 May to explore our Junior and Senior School



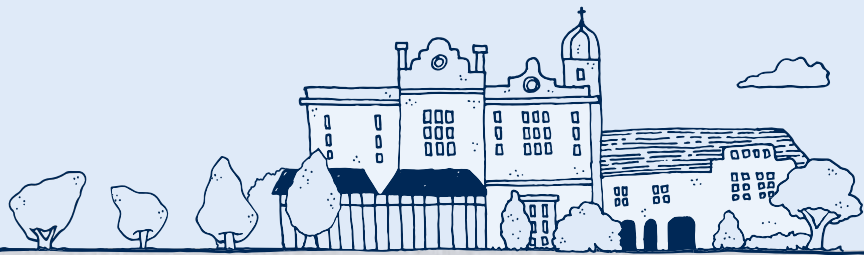


**BADMINTON
SCHOOL**



**From Thornbury,
Backwell & Portishead**

Educating girls aged 3 - 18



Whole School Open Morning
Friday 1 May

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



Scan to book your place

A young boy with light brown hair and blue eyes is smiling broadly while climbing a rope on a playground. He is wearing a dark blue tracksuit with red piping and a crest on the chest. The background is a blurred green field.

Inspired
today

Unstoppable
tomorrow

Bristol
Grammar
School



Open Morning
Thursday 7 May

COMMUNITY NEWS

FRIENDS OF BISHOPSTON LIBRARY

The friends of the library (all volunteers) are hosting more workshops and talks this spring and summer. If there's a topic that you'd like to hear more about, do email us and we will find an expert speaker to run it. On **Tuesday April 21**, 6.45-7.45pm, our talk is for all genders, and covers how to "Overcome sleep issues to tackle stress and anxiety" with local therapist, Debs Penrice (pictured).



Doors open at 6.30pm and tickets including refreshments cost £4 plus booking fee via Eventbrite. When you can't sleep, it makes everything more difficult. Thoughts circulate, stress levels rise, and you might start worrying at the point when you want to lie down and relax.

What if you could quieten your mind, feel safer in your body, find a better routine and allow sleep to come naturally again? This session will help with learning:

- What might be affecting your sleep and anxiety levels
- Is this insomnia or something I just have to put up with?
- How can I change my routine to get more sleep?

- What works beyond standard sleep hygiene?
- How do I handle not getting enough sleep?

The week after, on **Thursday April 30** from 7.15-8.15pm, we are hosting Alison Boulton for an interesting session on "Telling Tales: bringing your family history to life." Alison has studied family history for years and has found unexpected ways of researching and tracking down the facts beyond a family tree. If you are curious about your own family, she'll provide valuable tips on where to start. So many families are not so ordinary as they seem on the surface. Doors open at 7pm and tickets including refreshments cost £4 + booking fee.

On **Saturday May 9**, we are holding our Birthday Café, celebrating the anniversary of our library opening. Come along for drinks and cake from 11am-1pm while the library is open. For our evening events, we use the side entrance, through the gate next to the car park gates. A volunteer will come down to let you all in.

Booking links are also on the Bristol Libraries Events page <https://bristol.events.mylibrary.digital/> and our Facebook page as well as Eventbrite.

Please join our mailing list or check our Facebook page for more information.

We would love a few more people to join in the Friends of Bishopston Library group. Get in touch with us: friends@bishopstonlibrary.org.uk

FRIENDS OF REDLAND LIBRARY

The Friends of Redland Library is a voluntary group set up to support Redland Library. We organise talks and panel events. Screenwriter, director and author Tim Sullivan will be talking about his bestselling novels The George Cross Mysteries at Redland Library on **Wednesday April 15**.

The critically acclaimed crime series is set in and around Bristol and features the brilliantly persistent DS George Cross who has Autistic Spectrum Condition. This clever, twisty, touching and funny series has won an army of fans and is critically acclaimed on both sides of the Atlantic. It has sold over one million copies and been described in the national press as "iconic" and hailed as the best detective series since Sherlock Holmes.

Sullivan, who grew up in Bristol will talk about how the city has shaped both him and the rich ensemble of characters who populate his books.

Signed copies of his books will be on sale. Starts 7.45pm; doors open 7.30pm.

Tuesday April 28 - Desert Island Books on Nature. A panel of experts discuss books on nature. Starts 7pm; doors open 6.45pm.

Admission is £3 (pay at the door – cash only)

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



BOOK REVIEW

Bread of Angels

by Patti Smith

THE singer, songwriter, poet and author Patti Smith was born in Chicago on 30 December 1946. Due on New Year's Eve, she arrived a day early, denying her mother the opportunity of receiving a promotional New Year gift of a new freezer.

Patti was the eldest of four children, with a brother Todd and sisters Linda and Kimberly. The family relocated twelve times in her first four years before settling in New Jersey. Plagued by ill health including pneumonia, tuberculosis and scarlet fever Patti finds solace in art, books and music. For her seventh birthday, her mother takes her to the local bookshop where it was store policy to let a child fill a shopping trolley with free books on their birthday. Her father takes her to the Philadelphia Museum of Art where she is spellbound by the works of Picasso and Modigliani.

Another birthday sees her mother presenting her with Another Side of Bob Dylan.

We follow Patti through her teenage years including getting pregnant at 19 and giving up her baby for adoption. She leaves home for New York City where she meets a soulmate in the photographer Robert Mapplethorpe. Patti starts performing her poetry in front of live audiences in art galleries and museums, whilst working in a local bookstore. She composes Piss Factory, a song based on her experience as a factory worker in New Jersey. The single was pressed and sold in the streets for two dollars. She signs with Arista Records insisting on full creative control of her work. In 1975, she releases Horses her highly acclaimed debut album.

Patti goes to Detroit where she meets the love of her life in

Fred Sonic Smith, guitarist and member of the rock band MC5. Fred and Patti get married and Patti retreats from public life, moving to Detroit where she gives birth to her son Jackson and her daughter Jesse.

Patti then suffers the trauma of losing the three most important men in her life in close succession. Robert is the first, dying of AIDS in 1989. Five years later, her beloved Fred dies of a heart attack with her brother Todd dying from a massive stroke a month later. A devastated Patti gradually rebuilds her life, rediscovering the joy and therapy of writing and of performing on stage.

This is a moving and intimate memoir from one of our greatest living artists, available from your library.

Review by Bob Deacon, from Bishopston Library



Clifton Library opening hours

Monday 10am-2pm

Tuesday 1pm-5pm

Thursday 1pm-5pm

Friday 10am-2pm

Saturday 1pm-5pm

FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

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

Making our roads safer

Apsley Road, between Whiteladies and Pembroke Roads, has a problem with rat-running and speeding. Residents successfully bid for Community Infrastructure Levy funding a few years ago to tackle this. We've been pushing for something to happen ever since and so we're delighted to report that work will start soon. The project should be completed over the next year. Last month, we arranged a meeting with the residents' group and the project team so that some residents could view and comment on the initial design. Ideas included speed cushions, one-way sections, wider pavements and pedestrian crossing points in certain locations. Formal public consultation is set to begin shortly.

Upper Belgrave Road

After many of you wrote to us about the dangers of speeding on Upper Belgrave Road, we are pleased to say that it is one of the roads being formally considered for the 20 mph limit. We had already raised this at Area 3 committee last year. As we write, the transport and connectivity committee was about to review analysis of 100 roads with a 30 miles per hour speed limit, including Upper Belgrave Road. It will consider evidence that shows lower speeds would significantly improve safety on these roads across the city, ahead of proposals for potential 20mph

limits to be published for public consultation. Serena is to speak at the committee.

Supporting local business

Along with Cotham ward councillors Guy Poultney and Mohamed Makawi, we supported local restaurant Bravas on Cotham Hill in its campaign to keep its outside seating structure.

After more than five years of successful operation of the outside seating and 1,200 public comments in support of the planning application, we are pleased that this popular, independent restaurant has now got its planning permission.

As local ward councillors, we liaised with officers to seek solutions and spoke in support of the application at planning committee.

The seating area is essential for the future of this restaurant and for protecting local jobs. It also contributes to the vibrancy of the pedestrianised Cotham Hill. This stretch of street recently appeared in Time Out, celebrating the area as one of the coolest neighbourhoods in the country.

We are proud to support local businesses and will continue working to ensure our neighbourhood remains vibrant and welcoming for everyone.

St Josephs change of use

We have recently been made aware of plans to convert St Josephs, a former care home on



Discussing plans for a safer Apsley Road'

Cotham Hill, into 131 student studios. A planning application for change of use is expected to be submitted to the council shortly. We have asked local residents and businesses for their views and, as we write, are planning to meet the applicants. If you have views on these plans, please do get in touch with us.

Cross-pavement gully EV charging trial

If you are a household without off street parking, you can now express your interest in taking part in a citywide trial run by the council to test a new way to charge an electric vehicle (EV) at home.

Beginning in the summer, the trial will test a 'cross pavement gully' solution. These are narrow channels installed in the pavement that allow a charging cable to run safely from a home charge point to an EV parked on the street. The household would need to cover the cost of installing the channel, but the

council would licence the work on the pavement and organise them.

The aim is to understand whether this approach can make home charging possible without creating trip hazards, obstructing the pavement, or impacting other pavement users.

Find out more by going to the Bristol City Leap web page Cross-Pavement Gully Charging Trial – Expression of Interest - Bristol City Leap.

Ward surgeries

We won't be holding an April ward surgery as the date falls on the Good Friday bank holiday. We are also reviewing arrangements for future surgeries and will be back in touch with more details.

Contact us

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

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



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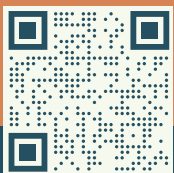


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FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

News from Clifton councillors

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



Zoo update - holding Acorn Property Group to account

Acorn Property Group is the Zoo's chosen developer for the former Zoo site. Paula and Jerome recently met with three Acorn directors and the project manager responsible for the former Zoo site. We are aware of recent concerns in the public domain about the financial track record of Acorn and we posed some questions about their track record. However our primary focus at this meeting was on the Council's responsibility to ensure that the developer complies with the planning conditions attached to this important heritage site.

There are 70 conditions attached to the planning approval — an unusually high number, reflecting the planning team's concern to protect this sensitive heritage site. We will therefore be holding regular meetings with both Acorn and Bristol City Council planners so that any changes are properly scrutinised.

In the coming months Acorn intends to submit a Section 73 application, which allows minor amendments to an existing planning permission.

Having previously served on the Planning Committee, Paula knows how important careful oversight of such applications can be, and she was pleased that Acorn agreed to keep her involved in discussions about any proposed changes.

Work on the site will take place over several years and in a number of phases. At present the focus is on "enabling works." This includes relocating certain trees in preparation for future construction.

We were concerned that this work might risk breaching regulations relating to the bird nesting season. We therefore asked for written details of the ecological management plan and received the following assurance:

"As it is now within the bird nesting season (1 March to the end of August), the works are being undertaken by professional and experienced contractors and are being overseen by both an Arboriculturist and an Ecologist to ensure that works can proceed without any harms to any legally protected species which may be present.

A number of measures are in place to safeguard trees and local wildlife, including:

- A briefing for all contractors by the project Ecologist and Arboriculturist before starting work;
- Ecological and Arboricultural Clerks of Works present to oversee the works;
- Tree protection fencing installed around retained trees;
- Trees being checked for nesting birds before any felling takes place;
- Sensitive clearance of vegetation. For example, long grass is cut in two stages: first it is left high, then cut low after 48 hours to give any hidden wildlife time to move away;
- Installation of first phase of protected species mitigation/enhancement features in preparation for future works to buildings.

Acorn's team has told us it is committed to following best practice and the highest environmental standards to ensure that wildlife and habitats are protected during the works."

Before the planning application was originally submitted, Paula had urged Justin Morris, the Chief Executive of the Zoo to consider creating a permissive right of way across the site, rather than relying solely on the Section 106 agreement to guarantee public access. At the time he was not persuaded.

However, Paula raised the idea again in this recent meeting and was delighted that Acorn is now willing to explore the possibility of a

time-limited right of way. Most city parks close at night, so it would be entirely reasonable for access to this site to be limited to daylight hours only, while still preserving an important route for residents and visitors.

Neighbourhood Policing briefing

For the past 18 months neighbourhood policing briefings have not taken place because of staff shortages, so it was very welcome news to see them reinstated. Paula attended the latest meeting and was pleased to meet Clifton's new Beat Officer, Ellie Ince — and, most importantly, to obtain her phone number. One of the main topics discussed was the growing problem of Sur-Ron electric bikes being ridden dangerously in the area. The police confirmed that some bikes are now being seized and disrupted, although there was general agreement in the room that more action is still needed to tackle this problem properly.

Neighbourhood Forum - April 20

Please do join us for the Clifton Neighbourhood Forum at Clifton High School at 7pm on Monday 20 April. These meetings are an important opportunity for residents to raise questions directly with councillors and local service providers. Representatives

from the Police will be attending and we are hoping to welcome representatives from First Bus and Bristol Waste Company as well. If there is an issue you would like discussed, please do email us in advance so we can add it to the agenda.

Friends of Birdcage Walk



Paula founded the Friends of Birdcage Walk in 2021, and the transformation since then has been remarkable. Thanks to the dedication of volunteers, the graveyard is now far better managed and much more enjoyable to visit.

Working with guidance from God's Own Acre — a national organisation specialising in churchyard conservation — volunteers have managed to keep the site in the "Goldilocks zone": allowing the wild, natural character of the graveyard to flourish while still protecting the historic gravestones.

We are currently looking for a new volunteer to take on a particularly enjoyable role. Our previous volunteer researched the archives to discover who is buried in the graves and wrote a monthly "Grave of the Month" feature for the website. Our long-term ambition is to create a graveyard trail to guide visitors to some of the most interesting and historically important graves.

If you enjoy research, local history, or simply wandering around historic graveyards, this might be the perfect project for you.

You can find out more about the group at <https://friendsofbirdcagewalk.org.uk/>

Contact us

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

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

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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BOOK REVIEW

plastic by Matthew Rice

MATTHEW Rice arrives at 19:57 for his overnight shift in a plastic factory in Northern Ireland. At 20:03 he is bagging and tagging the latches for tables affixed to aeroplane seats. Beside him during the gruelling shift is the contraband to get him through: a copy of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight (he doesn't say which edition; perhaps he has smuggled in different ones over the years).

Rice's poetry collection comprises one night in the factory, bringing Irish political history, Jonathan Swift, pop culture and the earliest recording of a human voice into time-stamped poems about manual work and cerebral art. Machines mould thousands of identical items; he moulds language to create something unique.

The work is repetitive and dangerous, the threat from what the workers breathe in perhaps worse than that of sudden violent harm, though that is present too. At 21:03 a colleague is telling a story heard many times before. A minute later his wrist is crushed by one ton of machinery. This does not shut down work for the night.

Mundanity and magic operate like the machines throughout. Time moves with painful slowness and cruel irregularity, as the reader watches the clock alongside the poet, noting the gaps between poems, piecing together the images, scents and noise of the factory. Yet Rice is not there. While parts are cut for aeroplanes, he is in Cittiglio's hills watching a dyer hang silks from a wall.

'Man is born free, and everywhere he is in supply-chains-' he writes at 22:22, in one of those lines that is so apt it temporarily distracts the reader from the setting and the page, perfect since the poet, tethered to his machine, is in fact entering a rat's body to escape a prison within a dream.

The poems vary in form and length reflecting that the setting is both fixed and transitory. His colleagues come alive, not just in description but in his imagining something else for them - wee Gail's hands at a piano rather than at her work is a beautiful image. As the shift nears its end, two short poems call out to be read several times. Are they hopeful or melancholy? Is this the shape of happiness forming? Would we recognise it if we were?

Elizabeth Moss, Heron Books, Clifton

NEWS

Royal recollections

IT was seventy years ago this month that Queen Elizabeth II made her first visit to Bristol since being crowned three years earlier in 1953.

The Queen who was accompanied by her husband Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh, had a busy day of engagements after arriving by royal train at Temple Meads station.

Her first visit was to nearby St Mary Redcliffe church. The Queen and Prince Philip were given a private tour by the vicar the Reverend Richard Cartwright and his church warden.

The Queen exclaimed to the vicar 'this wonderful church' as she was guided around it. She was shown the charter granted by one of her predecessors Queen Elizabeth 1 which gave the church the right to hold a free school which could teach literature and grammar. After the royal visit, which lasted fifteen minutes, the churchwardens said that the Duke was most interested in the various plaques fixed to the walls.

The police said that 20,000 people packed the church grounds and surrounding streets to watch the Queen and the Duke arrive at St. Mary Redcliffe and leave. School children were given the morning off from lessons so they could enjoy the royal visit.

From the church the Queen and the Duke were taken by open car to Albion Dockyard. Then it was by barge to Broad Quay.

The Queen's next engagement was to officially open the new Council House on College Green which replaced an older building on Corn Street.

Afterwards the royal couple had lunch with the Lord Mayor and other civic dignitaries at the Mansion House on the edge of Clifton Downs.

In the afternoon the Queen officially opened Chew Valley Lake.

Maurice Fells



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NEWS FROM THE METRO MAYOR

Next stop: better buses

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin

writes for the Voice

quieter streets too.

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

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

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

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NEWS

Bristol widow's message as she backs new hospice campaign

44 days might be all you have – so make sure you live them well ...

TACEY Bain knows how precious the final days of a loved one's life can be.

Her husband David spent the last two weeks of his life at St Peter's Hospice, where specialist staff cared for him after a sudden cancer diagnosis. Now Tacey is sharing her family's story to support the hospice's new 44 Days fundraising campaign.

The campaign highlights the average amount of time a patient spends under the charity's care and asks people to reflect on an important question: what would you do with 44 days left?

For Tacey, from Westbury Park, those final days together were made immeasurably easier because of the hospice.

"David was a lovely man," she said. "He was a very good family man – he regarded his greatest achievement as our three children and was enormously proud of them. He worked as a family law solicitor, supporting people during some of the hardest moments in their lives, which made him appreciate all the things that were good in life.

"He loved sport. At the age of 71 he was still playing hockey at Masters' level. His team won the European Spirit of Masters Gold Cup in Valencia a year before he died."

Cycling was another of David's great passions. He completed Land's End to John O'Groats with a friend and regularly took part in charity rides, including the St Peter's Hospice Tour de Bristol.

In 2024 the couple walked the Camino de Santiago, but towards the end of the trip David began suffering from stomach pain. At first, they assumed it was caused by something he had eaten but by the time they returned home, the pain had worsened significantly. After



David Bain with his daughters, wife Tacey and enjoying his active life, which included walking and hockey

several hospital visits and scans, the couple received devastating news.

"Just one month after coming home David was diagnosed with cancer and we were told there were no treatment options available," said Tacey.

When David's pain became too difficult to manage at home, he was referred to St Peter's Hospice directly from hospital.

"The diagnosis was entirely unforeseen and a big shock to us all, especially as David kept so fit and healthy," she said. "It was a very overwhelming time but being at the hospice felt completely different.

"Everything ran so smoothly once we were there. They know what they're doing and they're good at it. There was no moving between beds and wards, we could really settle.

"We found great comfort in the calm environment and the time it gave us together. The room was hotel standard and the food was brilliant. Even though it was hard for David to eat we



felt nourished by the generosity. The whole set up made things far easier."

For Tacey, one of the most important aspects of hospice care was the privacy it allowed.

"You can close the door, and even the curtains if you like, and create a private space. Because of the pace of David's illness there was a feeling of 'what do I need to say before it's too late'.

"Our nine-month-old granddaughter was made to feel welcome, which in turn made it much easier for our daughter to visit.

"All three of our daughters' partners were able to go into the room one at a time and reassure David that they would take care of them. This was incredibly important for David. And because of the Hospice, he was comfortable enough to hear it."

David spent his final days at St Peter's Hospice, just 100 metres from his childhood home, and died peacefully on 6 June 2024, less than two months after returning from holiday.

This sense of giving quality time to patients at their end-of-life, is central to the new 44 Days campaign the Hospice is running to raise vital funds.

Their aim is to fill those precious days with love and light, taking on the paperwork, the medication and the practical aspects of care, so that families can simply enjoy being together.

The 44 Days campaign also holds a special significance for Tacey and her family.

She said: "Forty-four was David's lucky number. It was the number on his school locker, he used it when he raced Clubman cars in his 40s and it was in his email address.

"We feel so lucky that he was referred to the hospice and would encourage everyone to donate to this amazing campaign. Even now the hospice are supporting me through bereavement support, it is such a vital community resource."

To support 44 Days, visit <https://www.stpetershospice.org/support-us/44-days/>

WHAT'S ON

Various days and dates

BLAISE COMMUNITY GARDEN, behind Blaise Museum, BS10 7QS. Open Monday, Wednesday and Saturday 10-2. Interesting walled kitchen garden, free entry, new volunteers needed & welcomed. Plants always available. Cash & cards accepted. Events: Café on 11th April 9.45-2pm and Spring Market & Café on 9th May 9.45-3pm.

Wednesday 15th April

■ **BRISTOL OPERA CLUB** Roméo et Juliette: we will be viewing the brilliant 2008 Salzburg Festival production of Gounod's wonderful rendering of Shakespeare's heart-rending tragedy, for some the finest French opera ever written! All are warmly welcomed. 6.30 for 7.00pm. The Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral, Worcester Road Entrance. £8.00/£1.00 cash only please, dedicated parking, Bar. Details: borkmail100@gmail.com 01275 848526

Various days and dates

■ **ITALIAN CLASSES** Learn Italian in friendly, small-group classes in Bishopston and Henleaze. Daytime and evening options for beginners to advanced, taught by an experienced teacher. We hold sociable aperitivo events too. Trial lesson £14. <https://ruthspencelanguages.co.uk/> Email: ruthspence@live.co.uk

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 1st, 11th, 15th, 25th, & 29th of April. Women's Strength is every Tuesday and Fri in Henleaze. 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

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Join us for one of our signature Wine Tastings led by our in-house sommelier:

April 2nd & 9th - Liguria & Valle D'Aosta
 April 10th & 23rd - Spanish Wines Special
 May 14th & 22nd - Emilia Romagna
 May 21st & 23rd - Dry Whites & Big Bubbles
 June 11th & 19th - Emilia Romagna
 June 12th & 18th - Dry Whites & Big Bubbles
 SPECIAL EVENTS - Wine & Dine Dinner Party Tasting
 Menu - 5 courses, 6 paired wines:
 April 4th - Rome (Lazio)
 May 16th - Calabria
 June 27th - Calabria

Tickets at www.lascaladeli.com/tickets and in-store - more dates online

2nd May

■ BRISTOL ARROW BOWLING CLUB

OPEN DAY Saturday, 10am to 4pm At: Bristol Arrow Bowling Club, 80 Redland Road, Bristol, BS6 6AG (Adjacent Bannatyne's Health Club). Put on your flat-soled shoes, then drop in to meet us and try lawn bowls for free. Whatever your age, bowls is brilliant for concentration, mobility, strength, flexibility and balance. Expect lots of gentle, meditative exercise in good company, plenty of craic and some healthy competition too. For more information: Kathryn Nicholls (Club Secretary); mob. 07811 097199; email: bristolarrow.sec@gmail.com 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.

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 of every month. 1-3pm. Golden Hill Sports Ground, Wimbledon Rd, BS6 7YA. A vibrant, lively new afternoon WI in BS6. We have an

WHAT'S ON

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

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■ ADVERTORIAL

Adventure, opportunity and community: Woodhouse Park shows what Scouting makes possible



Adventurers start young
at Woodhouse Park



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

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

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

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

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

Over the past five years, the site has been transformed into a thriving hub for outdoor adventure thanks to the passion and dedication of the team who run it. Andy, who lives on site and works closely with staff and volunteers, says his approach is

simple: whenever young people or volunteers come forward with an idea or an activity they'd like to try, his aim is to find a way to say "yes."

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

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

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

Challenge

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

One volunteer I spoke to joined when her son was a Beaver. Years later her son is now a Group Lead Volunteer, and she is still involved alongside her husband. When I asked what her favourite part of Scouting was, she didn't hesitate.

"Camping," she said. "And encouraging kids to try new things."

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

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

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

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

Experiences like those taking place at Woodhouse Park show

what Scouting is all about. Adventure, confidence, teamwork and creating opportunities for young people to grow.

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

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

From lighting campfires and supporting activities to helping young people climb higher than they thought possible, volunteers are the people who make Scouting happen.

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

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

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

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

NEWS

Hope lights up north Bristol streets



Our Chandos Window Wanderland was held at the end of February – after all the rain, Saturday was a beautiful dry evening for a wander round our area. Sunday's weather was slightly less appealing!

We had windows inspired by the Window

Wanderland organisation theme of Hope, using the lovely dove stencils provided. One window was a shadow theatre of an artist painting the dove, who then took flight. One road became the Street of Modernised Art with several reiterations of classic art work with a modern

touch. Jack appeared, chopping down the Beanstalk leading to Trump castle. There were teddies, a safari, bakehouse and many strings of lights to brighten up the streets.

Fiona McVey,
Chandos Neighbourhood Association

Share your group's activities: Email us on news@cliftonvoice.co.uk

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Clifton, Bristol | Guide Price £3,250,000

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and en-suite bathroom | Home office (bedroom six) and a separate family bathroom | Four further top floor double bedrooms with further bath / shower rooms (one
en-suite) | Extensive lower ground floor footprint and potential for a large self-contained flat (STC) | EPC: D

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VINEYARD NEWS with INGRID BATES

Vineyard visits are on the calendar

THE fruit growing season is fast approaching, and it's been lovely to have a reminder of what a spring or summer day feels like over the past few weeks.

It's amazing how quickly we can forget the smell and feel of a warm spring day when we're in the depths of winter, but we've been lucky enough to experience a few days like that recently.

In the vineyard, we've finished pruning the vines. The grass has started to shoot up, so we've invited our farming neighbour to lend us some sheep to delay having to mow for a few more weeks. The willow windbreak has come into leaf and looks quite beautiful. We're still working



our way through them all, cutting them back to a one-metre stump as we do every spring. I'm always amazed at how much they grow over the course of just one summer.

On the wine front, we have two bits of exciting news. The first is that we're hosting a wine and cheese tasting



evening with our friends at the Bristol Cheesemonger on Gloucester Road on May 21st. Please visit the Bristol Cheesemonger website for details and tickets.

The other news is that we've released information about a series of vineyard tour days that we'll be running from our

Wrighton site this summer. These will take place on the first Sunday of every month, starting in May and running through to September. Please visit our website for more information.

In a couple of months we'll also be releasing information about a free open day at our new site for Crowdfunder supporters. We'll also be in touch with our Adopt-a-Vine supporters to find out the name they'd like for their baby vine!

hello@dunleavyvineyards.co.uk

www.dunleavyvineyards.co.uk

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LEESE & GORDON

INDEPENDENT ESTATE AGENTS



Henleaze Guide Price £1,650,000

One of Henleaze's signature properties, with 4 double bedrooms set on a corner plot of one fifth of an acre. Retains many of period features, creating a feeling of heritage and distinction. Annexe, double garage and parking. Over 3800 sq.ft. EPC D



Henbury Guide Price £1,200,000

A simply superb 5 double (2 ensuite) bedroom family home. Tastefully extended, updated, fantastic open plan family living spaces, formal living rooms. Extensive off-street parking, garage, and private plot of one third of acre with circa 120 ft rear garden. EPC D



Westbury on Trym Guide Price £825,000

A fantastic 4 bedroom semi-detached family home featuring a beautiful south-westerly facing rear garden, off-street parking. Excellent location close to highly regarded local schools. EPC E



Failand Guide Price £950,000

Beautifully presented, spacious (c.2,615 sq/ft.), flexible family home with up to 5 double bedrooms and 3 baths/shower rooms. With a rural outlook in a very popular village enjoying convenient access to Bristol/Clifton via Brunel's Suspension Bridge. EPC C

LEESE & GORDON

125 Stoke Lane, Westbury on Trym, Bristol BS9 3RW
Tel: 0117 9622299 | www.leeseandgordon.co.uk



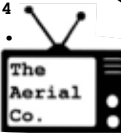
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PRESCHOOL - YEAR 6

Open Event

FRIDAY 1ST MAY

Clifton College is an independent co-educational day and boarding school nestled in the heart of Bristol, for pupils aged 3-18 years. Join us on Friday 1st May to see the classrooms, meet our wonderful supportive staff and speak to other parents in the Clifton College community.

📍 Clifton College Prep School

The Avenue, Clifton, BS8 3HE



Daily minibus service from North & South Bristol available*

YEAR 6 - YEAR 9

Open Event

FRIDAY 8TH MAY

Join us at our state-of-the-art sports complex, where you can meet our teachers, take part in a fun selection of interactive activities and learn more about what life at Clifton College can offer.

📍 Chellaram Sports Complex

*Clifton College Sports Ground,
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