

cliftonvoice

June, 2026 Issue 34

www.cliftonvoice.co.uk

FREE EVERY MONTH IN CLIFTON AND SURROUNDING AREA



Bristol Libraries Development Service manager Leon with FoCCaL committee members

Sharing our love of reading

THE proceeds from the successful Clifton LitFest are making a meaningful impact on literacy initiatives across Bristol in the National Year of Reading.

The annual book festival is held in November and is run by volunteers from The

Friends of Clifton Centre and Library (FoCCaL). It celebrates literature while reinvesting its profits into projects that inspire a lifelong love of reading.

This year, FoCCaL has donated £5,000 to Bristol Libraries. The funding has

enabled the launch of a Book Bingo initiative, a reading challenge for adults running alongside the popular Summer Reading Challenge for children. Designed to encourage participants to explore a range of **Turn to Page 3**



Clifton have lots to celebrate

Despite dropping out of National League 1, Clifton Rugby Club have plenty to celebrate including loyalty and individual success at all levels.

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Concerns over festival noise

Neighbours fear noise and nuisance from a food festival on the Downs next month that has been given to expand to takesplace over two weekends.

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It's party time for theatre school

Bristol Old Vic Theatre School, which overlooks Clifton Downs, is marking two significant anniversaries this month.

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July deadline

Our July deadline is June 17. To ensure your news or letter is included, please contact us by this date. Advertisers are also asked to contact us by the same date.

Your views

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

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Mon-Fri 8.30am-5pm

Weekends 10am-2pm

Complaints

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

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

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NEWS



Tibetan momos were just one of the treats on offer

Momos on menu

ST JOHN'S C OF E PRIMARY

NOW in its third year, St John's Culture Café has become one of the most eagerly anticipated events in the school calendar. This May it was bigger and better than ever, transforming the school hall, playground canopy and a classroom into a bustling global food market for the afternoon!

Forty-four stalls, each run by a school family, represented a different country or culture, offering homemade tasters from around the world. Around 600 pupils, parents and community members came along, buying tokens to sample dishes spanning continents: Cuban fried plantain, Peruvian alfajores, Ukrainian pirogi, Taiwanese bubble tea and a Gambian baobab, along with Welsh cakes, Irish soda bread and Scottish Dundee cake and shortbread. There was food from every corner of the globe and something for every taste bud.

Proceeds were split between a charity supporting international education, chosen by the Year 6 School Council, and new multilingual resources for the school library.

Headteacher Justin Hoye said: "This is such a great opportunity to bring our school community together and celebrate the amazing diversity we have in our school. The food is so varied and delicious. Huge thanks to all our contributing families and to Mrs Laura Swithinbank for her supreme organisation."

One pupil running the Italian stall shared the feeling: "It's great for people to get together and spread the word about their culture. I really enjoyed making the food with my mum and running my stall, sharing pizza, pasta, fried dough with ham and mozzarella and a yummy Italian tart."

Every dish was homemade by the families themselves, making each one a genuine reflection of the culture behind it. With 44 countries represented and barely a taster left by the end of the afternoon, St John's Culture Café proved once again that food is one of the very best ways to bring our community's varied background together!

NEWS

TONY Hall, 81, who founded Bristol Dementia Action Alliance (BDAA) 13 years ago, set himself the challenge of walking a mile for every year along the 13-mile route of the Bath to Bristol railway path to mark the start of Dementia Action Week 2026, which took place from May 18-23.

Tony's purple patch

On May 16, Tony had his hair dyed with BDAA purple to make sure he stood out on his walk. Student Ellie, who has been volunteering at BDAA's Happy Days Cafe in Westbury, created an amazing purple

jacket as part of her GCSE project – which Tony wore on the day.

Tony founded BDAA in 2013 as his personal response after his wife Barbara lived with dementia for more than 20 years.

Tony continues to lead the charity as founder and chair.

Noise nuisance fears as food festival is allowed to expand

ORGANISERS of a food festival on the Downs have been given permission to expand its capacity by 1,000 and put on a second weekend of concerts.

Feast On will now run for four days in July, followed by four nights of concerts the following weekend.

The food festival launched in 2024. Last year, local residents complained that the music was too loud, so now the festival's organisers have promised to limit noise levels and replace "excessively" large speakers with smaller ones.

Feast On stalls run by some of Bristol's best restaurants and street food traders, such as Cor, Bianchi, the Bank Tavern, Sky Kong Kong and Danny's Burgers. A market also includes stalls from local favourites like the Cheese Connection, Easton Chilli and Somerset Charcuterie. Cooking classes and wine tasting are also planned, as well as axe throwing and live music.

This year the festival runs from Thursday, July 23, until Sunday, July 26. Councillors at a licensing hearing at Bristol City Council on May 14 voted to permit changes to the festival's licence. This increases its maximum capacity from 4,999 people to 6,000, and permits four extra nights of live music the following weekend.

Feast Live runs from Thursday, July 30, until Sunday, August 2. The Friday night will host a West End-style family show, while Saturday will see Hacienda Classical combining club culture with a 30-piece orchestra, DJs and singers. On Sunday pop singer Becky Hill will perform. Thursday's act has not yet been announced.

Speaking at the hearing, festival director James Haggart said: "Over the past couple of years Feast On has operated successfully in Bristol and has become a well-established part of the city's summer event calendar. The events have attracted over 20,000 happy attendees over the past two years.

"Our team works around the year planning these events and we will have over 500 local crew working on site at this year's events. We're also proud to support local charitable and community organisations including the Square Food Foundation and the Mazi Project, helping to promote food education, wellbeing and support vulnerable young people across the city."

He added that this year the festival will employ acoustic consultants to monitor sound levels and prevent noise complaints from local residents.

Last year people living in flats nearby, on Upper

Belgrave Road, said the "throbbing bass" was incessant and questioned why a food festival needed to play music so loudly.

Jonathan Frere, one local resident, said: "The Downs are not, as some people seem to think, a showground in an isolated location, but a public open space in a densely populated urban area that is designated for the quiet enjoyment of all people, where the playing of loud music is normally expressly prohibited by byelaws.

"The worst aspect of this is the persistent, throbbing bass that provides the continuo of most modern music genres. This is especially penetrative and disruptive for those living nearby. I hesitate to mention this, but I'm sure it's been mentioned before: Section 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998 does impose a duty on public authorities to protect us from noise."

Residents raised wider concerns about the increasing frequency of events happening at the Downs. As well as Feast On, there is a circus, cabaret show, and the Forwards Festival too, among other events. These help raise money to pay for maintenance of the Downs – although they also damage the grass which then requires further maintenance.

Councillors on the licensing hearing said they had to follow national rules when deciding whether to permit the application. These dictate that councillors must focus on the four licensing objectives: preventing crime and disorder, public safety, preventing public nuisance, and protecting children from harm. Wider concerns could not be taken into account at the hearing.

However they suggested local residents contact both the Downs Advisory Panel and the Downs committee, if they wanted to complain about how often events were taking place there and impacting their quality of life. The Downs committee is responsible for the area, and is made up of councillors and members of the Society of Merchant Venturers, a business group.

Green Councillor Guy Poultney, chair of the hearing, said: "I would strongly advise all residents and anyone who's a stakeholder in the Downs to make their feelings known to the Downs Advisory Panel and the Downs committee. Because at the end of the day, it's those groups who have a say when it comes to the use of the space as a whole."

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

Supporting reading in our city

From Page 1

books, the programme promotes reading for pleasure and helps foster a deeper enthusiasm for literature across all ages.

Participants can win a £100 book token prize. Readers sign up online or at their local library, then work through a bingo card featuring broad reading categories—allowing flexibility to choose any book that fits, from romance to non-fiction. Participants can track their progress at home or have their card stamped at a library, before returning completed cards by December 31 2026.

FoCCaL has also given £500 each to Hotwells Primary School and Christ Church CofE Primary School to support the purchase of books and end-of-term show expenses, while up to £1,000 has been allocated to enhance the children's area at Clifton Library.

A £500 donation will support a prison library book club, promoting wellbeing and rehabilitation through reading. A further £2,500 will help create the inaugural Children's LitFest, with a vibrant programme of literary events for younger audiences, which will take place on July 13-14 across venues in Clifton.

Chair of LitFest Paula O'Rourke said: "Clifton LitFest is about more than celebrating books, it's about giving back to the community. We are thrilled that the funds raised by our festival are helping libraries and schools inspire a love of reading across Bristol. The Book Bingo challenge is a wonderful example of how these donations make a real difference."

Leon from the Library Service added: "The Book Bingo challenge will engage people throughout the summer, encouraging them to discover new books and enjoy the many benefits of reading."

Clifton LitFest attracts leading authors and enthusiastic audiences each year. The 2026 festival is scheduled to take place from November 13-15.

NEWS

Advice for end-of-life decisions

TWO free booklets have been developed in partnership with North Bristol NHS Trust, Gentle Dusk and Bristol Memorial Woodland Trust to support individuals and families navigating end-of-life decisions and bereavement.

Guide to End-of-Life Planning and When Someone Dies aim to empower people by providing information, support and advice when facing death - whether their own or that of someone close to them. This includes practical guidance about funerals, estate planning, and legal requirements as well as information and support on making end-of-life care decisions and navigating grief. Feedback so far from both professionals and bereaved families has been overwhelmingly positive.

The project was led by Mireille Herbert Hayden, a health psychologist who works closely with Bristol Memorial Woodland Trust, with input from the specialist palliative care team at NBT and Gentle Dusk service users. Mireille also drew upon her own experience of a family member's cancer diagnosis.

The booklets are available to both the public and healthcare professionals and have been translated into five languages.

Find the booklets at <https://www.bristolmemorialwoodlandtrust.org>

Glass artists start new chapter



Celia and Jake at their studio on Chandos Road and their work at St Werburgh's Park Nursery

by Ailsa Marshall

AFTER three decades based on Chandos Road, Opus Glass Design has moved its studio to a home workspace in BS7, where glass artists Celia and Jake continue their long-running practice in Bishopston.

The pair, who run the business together, have been part of Bristol's artistic community for decades, producing stained and decorative glass for homes and public buildings across the city and beyond.

Their work blends traditional glass-making techniques with a contemporary approach, ranging from bespoke domestic commissions to large-scale installations in hospitals, schools, and libraries. They also carry out restoration and repair of historic stained glass.

Jake says the business began from a shared ambition. "We met as friends and we always knew we wanted our own business,"

he explains. "We wanted to specialise in contemporary art, and we sort of dreamt up this plan."

Their long association with Chandos Road began when they found a studio space there and quickly felt at home. "We found the place on Chandos Road and thought it'd be perfect," Jake recalls. "When we saw it, we fell in love with it - and then we were there for 30 years."

Over time, much of their work developed through local connections and word of mouth. Celia reflects that this became the foundation of their reputation: "People got to know us over the years, then it was mainly word of mouth."

Commissions have included work for St Werburgh's Park Nursery, Southmead Hospital, Hengrove, and libraries in Filton and Bradley Stoke, as well as larger hospital projects in Manchester. "We weren't too

proud to do anything - we'd take on anything," she adds.

For Celia, the appeal of stained glass lies in its relationship with light and colour. "People have a very basic response to colour and light and I think together it's the most amazing thing," she says. "It can tell stories, it can draw people in, it can inspire them."

She notes that its changing nature is central to its effect: "It changes through the day, it's never the same. It looks different in different light, it's something that's constantly changing." Celia also reflects on the personal aspect of the craft: "You can put your soul into people's houses." From their BS7 base, Celia and Jake continue their established practice in stained and decorative glass, working on commissions for both domestic and public settings, with a continued focus on Bristol and its surrounding communities.

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NEWS

It's party time for Old Vic theatre school

THE curtain goes up later this month on a grand summer party at the renowned Bristol Old Vic Theatre School. It marks the seventieth year since it moved into premises overlooking Clifton Downs.

The school, an independent organisation, is also celebrating its eightieth anniversary since it was founded by the actor and theatre director Sir Laurence Olivier in 1946. Special events will be staged throughout the year.

The school's early years were spent in a cramped room above a wholesale fruit merchant's warehouse in Queen Charlotte Street, opposite the stage door of the Theatre Royal. It was affectionately known as the 'fruit school' due to its closeness to the fruit and vegetable markets that then surrounded the theatre.

It was in 1956 that a piece of theatrical serendipity meant that the school could move into its present home – two rambling Victorian villas in Downside Road.

The cost of purchase and converting the buildings into



The Clifton home of BOVTS since 1956

a drama school was £12,000, of which £7,000 came from a highly successful Theatre Royal production of the locally written musical Salad Days.

After its premiere in Bristol, Salad Days was transferred to London's West End and later moved on to Broadway.

Since those days the theatre school has played a major part in the careers of some of Britain's best known stars of stage and

screen including Olivia Colman, Jeremy Irons, Stephanie Cole, Daniel Day-Lewis, the late Jane Lapotaire and Amanda Redman. Besides actors the school has also trained many designers, theatre directors, prop makers and stage managers

"To see the school turn 80 is

so special to the team and me. The fact that the school is still going strong after this many decades gives me hope for the future of theatre and shows the enthusiasm and need for drama school training. I'm glad we are cemented as part of Clifton's history and hope we can welcome some of its residents to our 80th anniversary celebrations" said Rob Langley-Swain, the school's head of marketing and development.

The summer party on June 27 will include tours of the school, entertainment, and an archives exhibition.

A highlight of the 80th year celebrations will be a school production of Romeo and Juliet. It will be directed in the autumn at The Tobacco Factory Theatres by Sir Gregory Doran, an 'old boy' of the school and a former Artistic Director of the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Maurice Fells

Rebound with Rovers

AN initiative this month will put the spotlight on women's mental health and improving mental wellbeing through football.

Rebound with Rovers is a free mental health football programme delivered by the Bristol Rovers Community Trust.

Held at Lockleaze Sports Centre, sessions consist of a football activity, followed by a confidential 'check-in' where participants can share any concerns or discuss their progress with a fully qualified football coach and trained mental health first aider.

Run with backing from NHS North Bristol, Bristol Girls Can, Her Game Too, and the Gas Girls, the programme launches on June 3.



Clifton & Hotwells OPEN GARDENS

Sat 6 & Sun 7 June
10:30am-5pm

Visit the fascinating communal gardens hidden behind the elegant terraces of Clifton and Hotwells.

TICKETS

Tickets are £7. They cover both days and are available in advance from Eventbrite and on the day from 10:30am under the archway on Boyce's Avenue in Clifton Village and from selected gardens listed on our website.



gssg-bristol.com

Image © Tony Phelps / naturepl.com

LETTERS

Double deckers bring danger

I WOULD like to endorse the letter by Don Shapland in the May Voice where he gives a detailed breakdown of the bus situation in Clifton.

Recently, two, or sometimes three, new double-decker buses (as well as our regular number 8, and 505) have been running on Upper Queens Road, a narrow, winding residential road. These double deckers (5, 77, and 34) usually run empty. They often exceed the 20mph speed limit, and with the traffic doing the same, the noise and pollution with these extra buses has made life most uncomfortable in Queens Road, Clifton and I am no longer eager to open my windows.

I have written to the council regarding the speed limits and lack of significant 20mph signage; I have written to Helen Godwin, Metro Mayor, twice; I have spoken with our local councillors about

the speeding, which is dangerous when the pavements in some places are so narrow that they are only one person wide. I get scared, as a pedestrian, when a huge double decker comes hurtling down the road making wind turbulence. And this is dangerous also for the pupils of the nearby school.

Why have these double deckers been introduced? Who are they for?

Why will the Council not monitor the speed limit, and make visible signage both ends of the road?

Why was the 'old' number 9 (which cut through Alma Road to Clifton Down) cancelled?

Who is really in charge of these buses?

J M Barker

Does Metro Mayor care about buses?

LAST month you kindly published a letter of mine where I suggested

that it was disingenuous for Metro Mayor Helen Godwin to imply in your April issue of the Clifton Voice, that by asking for our views on what matters when travelling by bus that she has any statutory authority over bus routes in the Clifton Area; indeed in Bristol at all.

Further to that letter I wrote to Helen Godwin that "Rather than conduct yet another a paperwork gathering exercise can I suggest you join me for a few hours and explore the local bus services, which currently exists in Clifton (No's 5, 8, 77, 505) and see for yourself how random and useless they can be. Bring walking shoes, you will need them!" I also pointed out to her that the curious routing of the No.8 service can take 40 minutes to reach Temple Meads Station from Clifton and that in contrast to Southmead Hospital, there are no buses at all in Bristol and beyond to the Bristol Royal Infirmary.

Sadly I had no response from my email to her, no acknowledgement, no reply,

nothing at all. It really does bring into focus whether Helen Godwin really wants our views on public transport in Bristol and whether or not she is prepared to properly research the topic.

It is worth noting that in contrast Helen Godwin was in Bristol recently for personal publicity relating to the long drawn out saga of the rail reinstatement to Portishead.

Therefore I cannot help but be cynical as to whether Helen Godwin has any real interest other than for political gain in our views on public transport and whether she really has any influence over the routing of buses in Bristol at all. She should, at the very least, not give First Bus any more money until passenger views on their services are implemented.

As I have suggested before, our local politicians seem to suffer from the 'Hans Anderson Syndrome' where the Emperor really does not have any clothes!

Don Shapland

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■ ADVERTORIAL

BID has the perfect recipe to support businesses

I AM Nick Mitford. I run two businesses in Clifton. The first is called The Kitchen Man, designing, making, and installing mid- to high-end bespoke kitchens over a wide radius. The second, Kitchen Artillery, which we started after lockdown, is a lovely kitchenware and cookware retail shop, and we are the only independent cookshop in Bristol.

On a personal level my interests are, amongst others, 'extreme' snowboarding, motorbiking, hill walking, camping, playing golf and cricket, and reading! I live on the hill above Backwell.

I am the Treasurer of BID Clifton. This voluntary role encompasses all financial transactions for the BID, paying suppliers, and a general oversight and management of the BID finances. I sit on the BID Board, the members of which are all voluntary and made up from a whole range of



member companies of the BID. With help from all the businesses in Clifton, BID organises, and pays, for business- and public-oriented events around the village throughout the year, including the whole Christmas tree and lighting in the village every winter

If you are a business in Clifton you will automatically be part of the BID team, via Bristol City Council, and we would love you to be involved at any level – on the Board, helping to organise events and works we do, or even just coming up with ideas on how the BID could help you and other business in the area.



■ FROM BRISTOL CENTRAL'S MP

Greens make change happen

ON May 7 the Green Party had its most successful local election results ever. Up and down the country hundreds of new Green Councillors, and two new Green Mayors, are getting straight to work tackling issues affecting their local communities – and I couldn't be more proud.

In Bristol we know how much difference having a Green in the council chamber – or even better in administration – can make. In 2025 our Green-led council oversaw the building of a record number of affordable homes with many more in the works. That same year Bristol was recognised as the best city in England on climate action. And, in January, the Local Government Association praised the “progress, leadership and direction” at the council, noting that our collaborative committee system “is in robust health” and “showing signs of maturity” just two years after it was introduced.

The progress on affordable homes has been amazing to see but I can't help thinking about

all the people in our community who continue to struggle with unaffordable private rents.

On 1st May the Government's new Renters' Rights Act came into force. Although this is a step in the right direction, without any serious action to address the unaffordability of rents it's just not enough.

Yes, it put an end to no-fault evictions, but when the landlord can still hike the rent until people can no longer afford to stay, isn't that just no-fault eviction by another name? I know there are thousands of private renters across the city still at the whim of landlords charging extortionate rent for poor quality housing.

I was out on Whiteladies Road recently talking about this very issue – hearing how much people spend on rent, and the things they have to forgo in order to do so. On average, renters in Bristol spend 57% of their incomes on rent, the highest figure in the country outside London. Even with prices this high, I am still regularly hearing cases of tenants

living in terrible conditions. Recently, I have been helping some constituents whose private landlord has left them living for over a month in a house where waste from the toilet, sink and shower is flooding into their conservatory. This is unacceptable.

The local election results show that after two years in government the Labour Party has not delivered on the promises they made. People up and down the country feel that the things that matter to them the most, like housing and energy bills, are being ignored.

Green representatives do things differently. Straight after the local elections I teamed up with the Green Party's two new Mayors, who represent Lewisham and Hackney, putting pressure on the government on these issues. We wrote to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to demand the government start doing something that would actually benefit the thousands of people renting privately in our areas:



Carla Denyer writes for the Voice

introduce rent controls.

• 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

Former refugee becomes Lord Mayor

A FORMER refugee who fled war in Somalia has become the lord mayor of Bristol and will represent Bristol City Council for the next year. The lord mayor is largely a ceremonial role and acts as a figurehead for the city council as well as playing a key part in citizenship ceremonies.

Green Councillor Yassin Mohamud was sworn in as lord mayor for the new civic year during a full council meeting on May 12. The “first citizen” of Bristol stays in post for a year, and is chosen by other councillors. They chair full council meetings and attend events.

Speaking during the meeting, he said he wanted to use the platform to celebrate Bristol’s diversity and celebrate the different cultures and faiths in the city. He added that serving as lord mayor was the “greatest privilege of my life”.

Cllr Mohamud said: “It’s a deep honour to stand before you today as the first lord mayor of Somali origin in Bristol. I look forward to serving all of Bristol over the next year.”

The lord mayor was born in Mogadishu, the capital of Somalia, and grew up in the south of the country. He later worked in the government’s plant protection department, before fleeing the war there and coming to Bristol with his family. They now live in St Jude’s. He was first elected as a councillor in 2021, representing the ward of Lawrence



Councillor Yassin Mohamud, Lord Mayor

Hill, and was then re-elected in 2024.

He added: “Like so many people who arrive in a new country, the transition was not easy. But luckily for me, the city I arrived in was Bristol. Moving to a country is a great challenge: you must learn a new language and new customs, and work out unfamiliar systems. You must find schools for your children, a job, and most importantly, find community.”

“Like many people in our city, my understanding of politics did not begin in a formal setting. It came from my lived experience of moving to Bristol. It came from seeing how decisions affect everyday life, the

quality of housing, the safety of streets, the opportunities available to young people, and whether communities feel seen and heard.”

Following the Barton House evacuation in 2023, he worked with colleagues to push for changes that better support residents affected by unsafe housing conditions, and has supported efforts to reopen and protect community spaces in tower blocks.

The outgoing lord mayor was Conservative Cllr Henry Michallat, who will become the deputy lord mayor for this year. Colleagues praised his “wisdom above his years”, while he said he had attended more than 420 events over the course of last year, and oversaw more than 1,200 people becoming British citizens.

Cllr Michallat said: “One of my highlights was championing my theme as lord mayor: supporting the arts, culture and history of the city. It was also an honour to represent Bristol on the world stage. In March I went to Guangzhou in China and met the mayor and various politicians and people within the local community, as we approach our 25th anniversary of our twinning relationship. In April I went to Bordeaux in France and met the deputy mayor at their City Hall, ahead of our 80th anniversary of our twinning.”

By Alex Seabrook, Local Democracy Reporting Service

ADVERTISING FEATURE

NESTLED in the heart of Clifton Village, an award-winning mortgage advice firm is quietly earning national recognition for its expertise in equity release and other types of later life lending. Established in 2018 and based at 20 The Mall, Family First Finance alongside its sister brand Clifton Mortgages, has rapidly become one of the UK’s most respected names in this specialist field.

Founded by Director Edward Payne, the firm was built on a clear vision: to provide thoughtful, tailored property finance advice to older borrowers. Since its launch, the business has grown steadily and now comprises a team of three advisers, all committed to delivering a highly personalised service. Central to their approach is a strong focus on consumer duty—ensuring that every recommendation is made with the client’s best interests at heart.

Unlike many firms operating

Clifton Based Mortgage Advice Firm Has Been Recognised With Multiple Awards

in the later life lending space, Family First Finance pride themselves on not pigeonholing older borrowers. Instead, they take a holistic view of each client’s circumstances, offering a range of solutions that reflect individual needs, aspirations and long-term financial wellbeing.

This commitment to excellence has been widely recognised across the industry. The firm has received multiple prestigious accolades, including “Best Broker for Later Life Lending” at the British Mortgage Awards in 2023, “Best Individual Adviser” at the Equity Release Awards in 2024, and “Later Life Broker of the Year” at the Mortgage Introducer Awards in 2025. These awards highlight not only the firm’s technical expertise but also the trust it has



Edward Payne

built among clients, lenders and professional peers.

They regularly help customer’s children and grandchildren on to the property ladder too through gifted and zero deposit mortgages

If you would like a free no obligation appointment, please



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A lifetime mortgage is a long-term commitment which could accumulate interest and is secured against your home. Equity release is not right for everyone and may reduce the value of your estate.

Your home may be repossessed if you do not keep up repayments on your mortgage and you may have to pay an early repayment charge to your existing lender if you remortgage.

NEWS

Flying high! Rapid response on Swift Street

THE residents of Egerton Road have been preparing their street for some very special visitors and it has involved some extreme DIY.

At this time of year our skies should be full of those glorious streamlined birds called swifts. But, over the last 30 years their numbers have dropped by around 90 per cent in the Bristol area so now, where there used to be ten swifts, only one is left.

Swifts only nest in buildings, usually in roofs. They prefer pre-Second World War buildings. Bishopston (and much of Bristol) is therefore perfect for them.

But, every roof repair and loft conversion risks swifts being blocked out of their former homes. Repeat this across Britain and the birds are in deep trouble.

Fortunately, there is a solution – provide nest boxes and they will come. So the residents of Egerton Road, with invaluable advice and guidance from Mark Glanville of the wonderful website www.bristolswifts.co.uk, decided to act. Host families bought, or made, boxes and even, when their own house proved unsuitable, gifted a box to a neighbour. Double boxes – even a few triples – were

preferred because, just like us, swifts prefer a choice. A doughty crew of carpenters and builders was assembled and fitted the boxes working atop the longest ladders the street could provide.

But a problem arose: swifts like to be up high – they want to be up near the roof – and some houses were too high for even these intrepid swift-box fitters to reach on a ladder.

Step up Justin Grew and Jon Gedman of Gristwood and Toms. This company, part of the landscaping and tree surgery Nurture group, very kindly provided a cherry-picker and these two enthusiastic operators, to allow the higher level boxes to be mounted safely.

“I just want the birds to be happy,” said Justin, “and it was an exciting adventure which we were happy to be involved with.”

It was especially exciting for Toby Partington who got to fit the highest boxes, after spending several hours perched on a ladder fitting (slightly) lower ones.

“I definitely prefer the cherry picker!” was his conclusion.

Your correspondent supervised from below with a “right a bit” and



Two double boxes just installed on the house on the right. Toby and Justin decide to check the swift's eye view, which you can see below

a “have you got the spirit level?” Then, as we were waving goodbye to Justin and Jon, right on cue two swifts appeared overhead to check out the results.

Thanks to all involved, and good luck to Berkeley Road who

are now making and fitting swift boxes to help grow our Bishopston colony.

• More about swifts can be found in this month's wildlife column on Page 18.

Dawn Lawrence



Justin, left, and Jon saved the day by providing a cherry picker for Egerton Road's swifts



From the top of the cherry picker on Egerton Road – the Cricket Ground lights can be seen in the background

FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

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

Visitor parking permits saved

Following our pushing for free visitor parking permits to be saved, we are delighted to report that the idea for their removal has been scrapped. This will be formally confirmed shortly. We pushed for this reversal after many of you got in touch. We were concerned that getting rid of all free permits, which would have halved the visitor permits allocation, was unfair. We expressed these concerns to the chair of the transport committee as well as replying to the formal consultation.

Members of all political parties on the transport committee had approved this proposal unanimously in September 2024 alongside many other decisions about parking.

Waste Improvement Project

The Waste Improvement Project is operating in our area, including on Whiteladies Road. Its aim is to reduce clutter on our streets and pavements. Businesses are no longer able to store their bins or waste for collection on the street or pavements. Instead, they must store their waste bins on their own property or land.

The new approach ensures waste is safely contained and not able to spill over or be ripped open

Council teams are working closely with businesses and commercial waste operators to help them adapt to the changes. Where it's difficult for businesses – especially where they have insufficient space – officers visit and look at other options together.

Since launching the new scheme in other areas of Bristol over the last few years (including the city centre and Clifton Village),



businesses have stopped storing more than 728 commercial waste bins on the streets.

Do you have views on how the project is going as a resident or business? Get in touch and let us know.

Have your say: New library strategy

The council is preparing a new five-year plan for the library service. The council is not planning to reduce funding for libraries. The new

plan is about what can be done differently within the budgets it has.

The mission with the new plan for libraries is to inspire everyone in the city to read more widely, support those who face additional barriers to get the help they need to thrive and enable people to come together to make things happen in our communities.

Have your say on the draft plan by completing the online Library Strategy Survey on the council

website. This will close at midnight on Monday 22 June.

Nearly there: Whiteladies Road flood alleviation works

We asked for an update on these works at the bottom of Whiteladies Road to fix flooding and provide new segregated cycle paths. They are expected to be finished later this month. Once completed, the works will make a huge difference to alleviating the flooding that has plagued the area for many years as well as providing for safer cycling. Thank you to everyone for your patience!

Faded zebra

We have spotted that the zebra crossing stripes paintwork at the top of Blackboy Hill (southbound lane) are very worn. We reported this to the highways team who have confirmed that the crossing will be repainted in the upcoming batch of road repainting works.

New year, new roles

Last month was the start of the new municipal year for the council. This was ushered in by the Full Council AGM on 12 May. There have been some changes to committee memberships. Serena is now chair of Planning Committee A, having already served as a committee member for two years. She has also joined the transport and connectivity committee. George has joined Planning Committee B and is the new Home to School Transport Committee Green lead member.

Contact us:

Cllr.george.calascione@bristol.gov.uk

Cllr.serena.ralston@bristol.gov.uk



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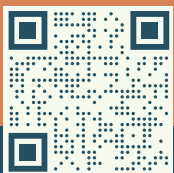


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FROM YOUR COUNCILLORS

News from Clifton councillors Paula O'Rourke (Independent) and Jerome Thomas (Green)



Paula and Jerome at the Zoo Gardens with John Young of Acorn

Bristol Zoo Gardens update

In recent weeks, Paula and Jerome have met with the Chair of Trustees and Chief Executive of the Zoo, as well as with developers Acorn Property Group, regarding the proposed residential development at Bristol Zoo Gardens. We also continue to meet regularly with local campaigners and raise the concerns they bring to us.

Concerns about Acorn Property Group have been widely reported, but the decision about the sale of the Zoo Gardens rests with the Zoo. The sale has not yet been completed, although both the Zoo and Acorn expect this to happen in early summer.

Some amendments to the approved plans are expected through a Section 73 application to Bristol City Council. We are clear that these changes will need careful scrutiny and have been assured by Acorn that councillors will be informed of, and able to comment on, proposed amendments before submission.

Alongside the design changes, Paula and Jerome are particularly focused on the Management Board required under the Section 106 agreement in the planning consent. This board will oversee the long-term management of the gardens and help safeguard public access in perpetuity. We are pleased that the legal agreement requires an independent incorporated body

to manage the gardens for the benefit of the wider community in the future.

Some enabling tree works and site clearance have recently taken place. Bristol City Council planning enforcement and tree officers are regularly visiting the site to ensure works comply with planning permissions. Paula and Jerome also visited the Zoo Gardens on 29 April to better understand the current condition of the site, the proposed development sequence, and the likely impact on local residents.

Encampments on and around Clifton Downs

Your local councillors have been actively involved in ensuring that Clifton Downs are available for the enjoyment of all the city's residents. This means that van dwelling and encampments are not possible.

At the same time, the city is trying to ensure that alternative accommodation is available for people currently living in vans and caravans around the Downs. In particular this includes council operated secure 'meanwhile' sites where vehicle dwellers can have access to water, waste and toilet facilities, for the payment of a monthly charge.

On 16th April the council was granted a possession order covering the roads surrounding the Down and notices to leave were served on 30 April. On 7th May the council also secured an antisocial behaviour injunction



Paula and Jerome with members of the Keep Clifton Clean Team

preventing new vehicles from parking to live on and around the Downs. The injunction runs until May 2027, with a review scheduled for September.

Already numbers of lived-in vehicles have declined significantly, and we expect this trend to continue. The situation may change when possession orders and anti-social behaviour orders expire, but your councillors will carefully monitor any future changes.

Surface dressing in Clifton

Surface dressing works to 159 Bristol roads have started. These include a number of roads in Clifton.

Surface dressing is a cost effective way for the council to prolong the life of roads across the city by preventing damage from water and UV sunlight. It can extend the life of a road by 10 to 15 years, ensuring safer and smoother journeys for all road users. It includes a number of different stages which need to be carried out on separate days and are dependent on weather conditions.

Councillor Ed Plowden, Chair of Bristol's Transport Committee says,

"We know that temporary road closures can be frustrating, but these short periods of disruption will help deliver smoother, safer roads for years to come. We really appreciate residents' understanding while this essential maintenance work to our road network is carried out."

Neighbourhood Forum and local police feedback

The Neighbourhood Forum meeting took place at Clifton High School. Topics covered included the Zoo Gardens, latest WH Smith site news, updates on buses and public transport and feedback from Ellie Ince, the beat officer for Clifton. While crime figures in the Clifton area remain relatively low and stable the highest police priority is shoplifting, which has seen a big increase over the last year and anti social begging. On August 8 between 10 and 12 the police will be doing a bike marking event at the Whiteladies Road Farmers' Market.

Keeping Clifton Clean

Keeping Clifton Clean volunteers are meeting regularly for litter picking and tidying, to add to the routine street cleaning and litter pick carried out by Bristol Waste. We are supported by Bristol Waste who provide us with waste bags and litter picking kit. If you would like to join us please email Paula or Jerome and we will add you to our WhatsApp group.

Councillors' surgery

Jerome and Paula continue to meet residents at Clifton Library on the first Wednesday of each month at 5pm. If you have a matter which your councillor can deal with, do pop in for a chat.

Contact us

cllr.jerome.thomas@bristol.gov.uk
cllr.paula.orourke@bristol.gov.uk

■ FRIENDS OF REDLAND LIBRARY

BRISTOL author Harriet Baker will be in conversation with Stephen James in Redland Library on Thursday June 11.

Harriet Baker is a writer and critic. She has written about books and art for the London Review of Books, Paris Review, New Statesman, Times, Financial Times and TLS, among others. She has appeared on BBC Radio 3's Free Thinking, Radio 4's Woman's Hour and Today.

Her first book, *Rural Hours: The Country Lives of Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Townsend Warner and Rosamond Lehmann*, was published in 2024. It was awarded the Biographers' Club Tony Lothian Prize and the Sunday Times Charlotte Aitken Young Writer of the Year Award.

Dr Stephen James is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English of the University of Bristol.

Signed copies of Harriet's book will be on sale.

The event starts at 7pm and doors open at 6.45pm. Admission is £3 (pay at the door - cash only).

For more information on this and other events organised by the Friends of Redland Library, please visit <https://FriendsOfRedlandLibrary.org.uk>

If you would like to volunteer with the Friends of Redland Library, please email FriendsOfRedlandLibrary@gmail.com



Harriet Baker

■ FRIENDS OF BISHOPSTON LIBRARY

JOIN us to celebrate from 11am-3pm on Wednesday 24 June for National Writing Day.

The main event is taking place upstairs at Bishopston Library with talks in the meeting room downstairs.

There will be a poetry corner, a family history and historical fiction focus, a life stories and stories that heal corner and starter exercises to help you plan, write, publish and market your book.

At 11.15 am, author Lucienne Boyce will run a talk about research for historical fiction and hold a short writing workshop upstairs after her talk: *Another Time and Place: Researching and Writing Historical Fiction*. Please book your seat via Eventbrite – limited number.

Poet and author Melanie Leeder, who also writes historical fiction, will be on hand in the poetry corner to help ignite your creative process.

Family historian Alison Boulton can give a steer about which resources can help you go beyond surface level research.

Crime author A.A. Abbott will

be on hand to explore ways to build suspense because real life is often stranger than any fiction.

Author and therapist Debs Penrice can help those thinking about how their life stories could inspire others, reflecting on a healing or transformational journey.

Tim Martin will be ready to support you on thinking about marketing to reach readers while you write or once your story is ready, and there will be resources available to help you plan your book or writing idea.

Look out for the full programme on Eventbrite <https://www.eventbrite.ca/o/friends-of-bishopston-library-15995170881> or sign up for our Friends of Bishopston Library email newsletter.

If you'd like to join the team of volunteers – or suggest an event that you'd like to attend – or introduce us to speakers who would like to give a talk – please contact us on the Friends email address: friends.of.bishopston.library@gmail.com

More info at <https://bishopstonlibrary.org.uk>

■ BOOK REVIEW

The Wax Child

By Olga Ravn

DURING the years 1617 to 1625 a witch was burned every five days in Denmark.

The Wax Child is a novel based on an series of Danish witch trials that took place during this period. Our narrator is a child shaped in beeswax.

The wax doll was borne by its creator, Christenze Krukow, a Danish noblewoman, for forty weeks under her right arm as if was a proper child. The wax child sees everything in the past, present and future. It sees the Viking ships that journeyed far across the sea to lay claim to territory, it sees the ships of the Danish East India Company filled with slaves in the darkness of their holds and observes the rising of realms, the founding of states, the creation of steam

locomotives and the splitting of the atom.

The narrative is interspersed with spells taken from so called black books, dating from 1400 to 1900. The novel beautifully evokes the friendship and sisterhood of women, struggling to survive in a misogynistic world. They bond over the plucking of geese, the picking of hops, the daubing of walls and the nursing and rearing of children.

Christenze and her friends Maren, Dorte, Apelone, Mette, Elle, Else, Bodil & Sidsel meet up on the twelfth of December 1620, to laugh, dance and to weave magical spells. Their evening of revelry is rudely interrupted by a local fisherman Peder Fisker, who accuses them

of witchcraft and reports them to the local magistrate who is determined to silence them once and for all.

This is an evocative and beautifully written novel illustrating the power and brutality of men who resorted to hearsay and torture whenever their lives were threatened by strong and independent woman. The language is physical and visceral, allowing the reader to smell and taste the blood and guts of these violent and turbulent times.

Visit your local library where you can enjoy this engaging novel which was longlisted for the International Booker Prize. *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

NEWS

Louise's novel takes us back to 80s rave scene

AUTHOR Louise Ellis calls on her own experiences as a journalist in Bristol in the 1980s to write a novel set against the backdrop of the underground acid house scene in the city.

In *Overlapping Circles*, the main character Anna who lives in Clifton, is grieving for her fiancé who died after taking ecstasy at a rave.

While cycling across the Downs to her appointment with her bereavement counsellor, she is knocked down by a hit and run driver. Billy, her rescuer that fateful day, could just be the perfect boyfriend.

However, as she is drawn into his life, she realises he is hiding something from her. On a weekend away, secrets emerge which connect them in ways they couldn't have imagined. And they both find themselves fighting to keep their lives from spiralling out of control.

Louise worked as a journalist at HTV during the late 1980s and 90s, and remembers the stories on the news about police trying to stop raves

being held in abandoned warehouses in Bristol.

She explains, "Young people gathered in pubs and service stations, waiting for a message about where that night's rave was happening. Mobile phones were still new, and not everyone had them. The location was kept secret until the last minute, to stop police raids.

"I went with friends to a few raves, one in a warehouse next to the Watershed on the harbourside, which has now been turned into a restaurant.

"But people saw an opportunity to make money, and drug dealers sold pills, including ecstasy, cut with toxic substances."

Overlapping Circles is published this month by Cinnamon Press, and is available from local bookshops and on Amazon.

Waterstones in Clifton is hosting a launch event on Wednesday, 17th June, at 6.30pm. Tickets are available on their website. www.waterstones.com/events/an-evening-with-louise-ellis/bristol-clifton



Novelist Louise Ellis, who worked as a journalist in Bristol

BOOK REVIEW

The Unworthy by Roy Jacobsen

THE *Unworthy* begins with a punch, literary and literal. 'Wallop!' Jacobsen writes and we question how to react to this almost comic whack. Carl is unsure too: how much to risk in responding to an adversary, though not a tormentor. He'll remember this moment but the picture of his father may transform into that of a tough, principled, admirable man. Or blur into many impressions.

Outside, Carl's friends are fixing up a bicycle, definitely not stolen, in order to sell it on. The next morning, Carl undertakes his usual paper round returning with a loaf of bread and coke for the fire, both purloined. Over one summer, Carl, Olav, Roar, Jan and Vidar 'imbibed a deeper draught of life than in all the previous summers put together. Every other evening they went out one by one and disappeared into the shadows of the town like mice into windowless cellars. They scrambled over fences, forced gates and stole vegetables as they ripened in allotments all over town...' They steal food, skis, newspapers, bottles – in short anything they can. Yet we root for this gang and not because of a misplaced sense of glorious high jinks, though there may be an element of that, for this is a working-class neighbourhood in Oslo under Nazi occupation and they have siblings to feed and mothers, whose days are spent queuing, to help. The boys are doing everything they can, some of it fun, some of it frightening, for their families.

But they are just boys. Over the years of the occupation and their childhood they will lose parents, risk everything to put food on the table, find themselves raising young siblings, be beaten and imprisoned and face the utter confusion of living through a war, with no one speaking about what is happening. What is unsaid to the boys, undepicted on the page and unexplained to future generations is nevertheless here, captured in Jacobsen's extraordinary, intricately plotted story. And when it is over? Will they ever understand what happened, what they did, what drove them and if it was right? Their humanity and their endeavour offer hope as well as devastating realism. Their lives lift off the page with an intensity that resounds long after the exquisite, final punch.

Elizabeth Moss, Heron Books, 7a Regent Street, Clifton



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■ MESSAGE FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Putting the right help in the right place

At some point in our lives, most of us will either experience mental ill health ourselves or support someone close to us who does.

The mental health charity Mind estimates that one in four people will experience a mental health problem in any given year, making it clear how important it is that the right help is available when people reach crisis point.

The police are not always the right agency to respond to every incident: most of the time health professionals are far better placed to help. Recognising that - and building services around it - is essential to protecting people at their most vulnerable.

There are times when an emergency service response is necessary. That is why I am a co-commissioner, alongside the NHS and the fire service, of the Integrated Access Partnership (IAP). This model brings together mental health services, ambulance services and

out-of-hours primary care to ensure that when emergency services are contacted, people receive the most appropriate and timely response to their mental health needs.

The IAP is delivered through a multidisciplinary team within Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership, working alongside South Western Ambulance Service and BrisDoc.

In practice, this includes:

*The Mental Health Specialist Desk, where mental health nurses review and triage 999 calls involving mental health needs, supporting decisions about the most appropriate response.

*Mental Health Response Vehicles, providing blue light responses directly to people in mental health crisis, led by specialist clinicians.

*The Emergency Services Professionals Line, giving police, fire and ambulance staff immediate access to expert clinical advice while responding to incidents.

A particularly important development has been the deployment of the Mental Health Response Vehicles. More people who trigger emergency call outs are now being supported and treated at the scene, rather than taken to hospital. This reduces distress for individuals and relieves pressure elsewhere in the system.

The Mental Health Specialist Desk has also been crucial in reducing unnecessary police attendance at mental health-related incidents. This has been strengthened by a dedicated police link officer role, based within the South Western Ambulance call centre.

Officers in this role work alongside clinicians on a 24/7 rota, supporting the triage of calls. Where the link officer is in place, police deployments to mental health incidents have reduced by 20 to 30%.

The IAP has calculated that for every £1 invested in this role, £3 is saved – a clear example of how doing



With Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody

the right thing for people also delivers better value for public money.

This approach means that, where appropriate, police officers and ambulances can be stood down and replaced by specialist support better suited to the situation. We avoid unnecessary trips to emergency departments, deploy clinicians directly to people in crisis, and free up emergency services to respond where there is an immediate risk of harm.

Police will always attend when there is a real and immediate threat to life. But getting people also means getting them the right support, at the right time.

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■ ADVERTISING FEATURE

Celebrate Whiteladies Road Market's 20th anniversary

BEGINNING in June 2006, this volunteer-run market has grown into a stalwart of the community.

"It was created by local residents who cared deeply about the natural world and wanted to galvanise local action," says Angela, a founding volunteer who still helps run the market.

"We started a group called Sustainable Redland in March 2005 and after a year of getting the right permissions, the first market took place on 22nd June 2006."

Initially held monthly on a Friday, the market's popularity soon warranted a move to Saturdays and, since 2015, an increase in frequency to weekly. The number and range of stalls grew rapidly. Community groups such as Metford Road Orchard and Avon Wildlife Trust host occasional stalls, along with other community activities such as bike repairs.

Two decades on, the market is thriving. On a typical Saturday, the air fills with the smell of freshly baked bread and freshly brewed coffee, and neighbours stop to chat as they pick up their



weekly essentials. Passers-by pause to listen to the sounds of local musicians or choose a gift for a special someone. From the first traders setting up in the morning to the last stall being packed away, there's a friendly, steady buzz. Many stalls champion low-waste, locally sourced, and environmentally-friendly products, giving shoppers the chance to support greener choices whilst enjoying the lively atmosphere.

Market days offer an impressive range of local products, from Leigh Court Farm's fresh fruit and veg to ever popular 'Jacqui's Sweets', alongside local crafts and woodwork. 'Old Sodbury Lamb', serving farm produce and

luscious hot bacon rolls, have been a lynchpin since the beginning. Andy and Sarah who run the stall remember: "We sold out by coffee time on that first day in 2006 and had to pop back to the farm to fetch more. It's great here because you see the same faces, and you get to chat to people!"

The queue for Farro Bakery stretches to the bus stop, Stream Farm and Gotherney Farm are regulars, as is Steve's Fab Green Coffee Van. As Leo from L'Affinage Fine Cheeses puts it: "This market has friendly and mutually supportive traders, as well as an incredibly loyal customer base."

The market is always open to potential new traders, space permitting, and encourages an offering of local, ethical, and environmentally-friendly products.

Charlie of 'Gert Lush' has been selling homemade granola at the market for just shy of a year, saying: "It's a lovely market. There are a lot of people nearby who are interested and like to pop in."

The market also prides itself on providing a first 'testing ground' for

start-ups, some then expanding to supply local shops or even set up in permanent premises.

Simon Bennett, who also sells his home-grown plants, became market manager in 2024.

"It's more than just a market. It's a community event, somewhere people can come to, sit down, enjoy each other's company. Being a Community Interest Company means we can keep fees for traders relatively low. Lots of behind-the-scenes work is done for free by residents, and a team of youngsters are employed to help with set up and take down. The traders feel well supported and welcome"

Whiteladies Road Market is every Saturday at 08:30 - 13:00, on the corner of Whiteladies Road and Apsley Road. Save the date for **Saturday June 27**, when a special celebration will be taking place.

Find out more about what's on at the market by following @whiteladies_market on Instagram, searching 'Whiteladies Road Market' on Facebook, or visiting the market's website at www.wrmcic.co.uk.

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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 13th June 9.45-2pm, Henbury Flower Show 18th July 1-4.30pm and further Café on 25th July 9.45-2pm

Wednesday 17th June

■ **BRISTOL OPERA CLUB** invites you to a screening of Die Tote Stadt. The fabulous Jonas Kaufmann stars as a young widower trying to cope with the loss of his wife in the prodigious Erich Korngold's melodic and hauntingly beautiful opera. All are warmly welcomed in The Apostle Room, Clifton Cathedral, Worcester Road Entrance, 6.30 for 7.00. Entrance £8.00 (cash only please). Dedicated parking, Bar. Details: borkmail100@gmail.com 01275 848526

20th June

■ **BRISTOL BACH CHOIR**, All Saints Clifton, BS8 3ED, 7.30pm. A fascinating programme of secular music by Whitacre, Lauridsen. Tickets: from £15, students £1. www.bristolbach.org.uk 0117 214 0721

24th June

■ **HENLEAZE CHORAL SOCIETY** will be performing their popular MIDSUMMER CONCERT and ARTISAN PUDDINGS tasting at 7.30pm in Holy Trinity URC. A plethora of music to include Sacred - Jazz - Opera- and songs from Loewe and Lerner's MY FAIR LADY. Tickets £18, students £9 to include Puddings, Programme and glass wine or mocktail. Available on the door or from www.henleazecs.org.uk Children go free.

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July 18th - Emilia Romagna
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Tickets at www.lascaladeli.com/tickets and in-store - more dates online

8 - 18 July

■ **ART NOW!** Celebrating 120 years of Clifton Arts. An exhibition of art and a sale of artists' work. Victoria Methodist Church, 1 Whiteladies Road, BS8 1NU. Open daily 10.00 - 5.00 (Sunday 12 July, open 2.00 - 5.00). Admission free. www.cliftonarts.org

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 6th May, 16th 20th & 30th May. 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 Monday, Wednesday and Saturday 10-2. Interesting walled kitchen garden, free entry, new volunteers needed & welcomed. Plants always available. Cash & cards accepted. Events: Spring Market & Café on 9th May 9.45-3pm and further Café on 13th June 9.45-2pm

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

WHAT'S ON

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 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 CAFE

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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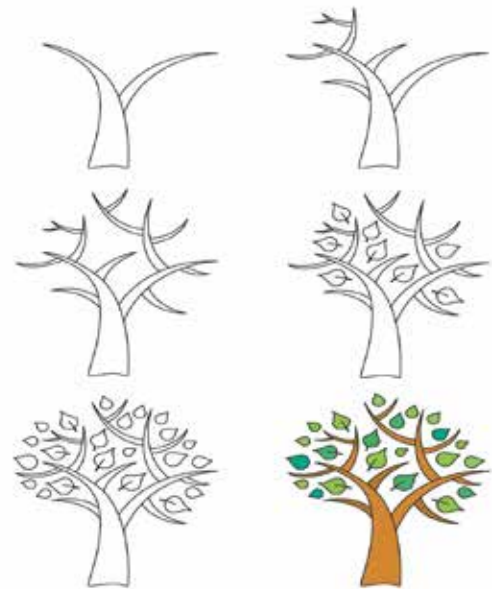
Sudoku

Each row, column and square (9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, without repeating any numbers within the row, column or square.

5		7						
					8		4	6
							3	
			1			5		
6				4			2	
2	3				5		6	
		2			9			
	6		5					9
	8		6		3			

For younger readers

Learn to Draw a Summer Tree



Learn to Draw with www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

NATURE WATCH

with Dawn Lawrence

How you can get a piece of swifts action

YOU may have noticed, earlier in this edition, a news item on swift box installations at Egerton Road in Bishopston. Swifts are very well-known, indeed they are exceptionally beloved – but they are in trouble. Nationally their numbers have dropped by around 68 per cent in 30 years (down by 90 per cent in the Bristol region) putting them on the Red List meaning they are of the highest conservation concern.

The good news is that we can help. It is not often that nest box schemes are a vital missing part of a bird's conservation needs but swifts are highly unusual in depending entirely upon us for their nest holes. Despite the widely acknowledged losses in insect populations, providing nest boxes is proven to increase the numbers of swifts. They are colonial birds, needing to nest in company with other swifts, and this means that the more boxes you put up the happier they are. Indeed, at the Swift House colony in Stoke Bishop, Mark Glanville has put up



A swift at the Swift House colony in Stoke Bishop Photo by Jane Glanville

25 boxes on his semi-detached house and last year 19 of them were occupied, resulting in 36 fledglings. This extraordinary success means that the Swift House colony has been the largest in Bristol for several years. You can follow the progress of these birds by going to www.bristolswifts.co.uk and also learn more about how you can help.

Swifts remain faithful to their nest site for their whole lives, unless it is blocked or removed (which can

lead to tragedy as the pair search desperately for their old hole and sometimes die in the attempt). The young birds return to their birthplace each year, getting to know the neighbourhood – whilst flying continually without landing for their first two years of life (really!) Then, at three years of age and old enough to breed, they seek a nest site in the vicinity.

Swifts are supremely adaptable: if the weather is poor in Britain, our

swifts have been known to fly as far as Finland, feed up on insects there for a few days, then return to their patient chicks, quietly sitting out the hungry interval. Their excitement at the parents' return can well be imagined – indeed at the Bristol Swifts website it can often be watched as most of the Swift House boxes have got webcams and the videos are regularly posted.

From now into August we can listen for the screaming cries of the swifts above us, we can admire their dashing silhouettes cutting ornate figures across the Bristol rooftops. What more can you ask than this wonderful entertainment? So why not get together with your neighbours and make a plan? You can go to the Bristol Swifts website and learn how to spot the best locations for swift boxes in your street and how to build the best types to fit your spaces – or where to buy them. And let's Save the Swifts together!

© Dawn Lawrence

SPORT

Clifton have reasons to celebrate

OVER the summer months rugby clubs take time out to reflect on the past season, take stock, and prepare for the 2026-27 campaign kicking off in September.

Clifton faced a tough challenge in National League 1 and, in spite of some fine performances, will return to National League West to face some respected and long-standing opponents. Clubs that survive the pressure of National 1 tend to have their teams bolstered by loan players from Premiership clubs. Clifton have resisted that option out of loyalty to their own club members who have brought them success.

It is testament to the internal growth of players and team bonding that already eight of this season's 1st XV squad have committed their futures to Clifton over the next two years. Many players have progressed from the club's flourishing mini and junior club to 1st team appearances and joining Premiership clubs over the years.



Ollie Harris, Clifton's Young Player of the Year

A great example is in last season's Colts XV who were the Bristol champions after some outstanding games. This was recognised at the club's annual dinner in May when their coach Rich Davies was awarded the much-coveted Beloe Cup as Club Man of the Year for his management and running of the Colts programme. Also, great to

these players, as true Clifton men, volunteering at 1st XV games and appearing in the club's second and third teams.

The Wanderers [second team] have enjoyed a great season and were high in their league which included many clubs not long ago on the 1st XV fixture list. The Misfits [third team] were highly placed with a great try scoring

record. No fewer than six players appeared in all three senior teams to demonstrate the pathway.

Player's Player of the Year was dynamic flanker Jay Evans whose attack and defence were outstanding. The Coaches Player of the Year was full back Harry Johnson whose solid moments under the high ball, line kicking and attacking thrusts were magnificent. Ollie Harris, a former Clifton Junior and now in the Bears Academy was Young Player of the Year. His strong running, try scoring and defence promise so much for the future.

Caps for 50 games went to Evans and hooker George Davey with Zak Hamid receiving his 100 award. Zak is another former junior who has come through the ranks and is the son of club chairman Aftab and mother Sarah who together embody the Clifton spirit. The same sentiment held by prop Ricky Cano getting his 150th cap!

Roger Opie

Cote Lane
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Abbots Leigh, Bristol | Guide Price £2,850,000

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Circa 6333 sq. ft six-bedroom family home | Grade II Listed Georgian semi-detached family house | Stunning rear gardens and grounds approaching a little over 1 acre
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 Exquisite family kitchen with AGA opening onto the snug | Sitting room, family room and dining room | Utility, boot room and two cloakrooms | Principal bedroom with an en-suite shower and dressing room | Five further double bedrooms and three further bath / shower room | Playroom & fitted study space | Excellent outbuildings, established fruit cages and an outdoor kitchen / BBQ | No onward chain | EPC: D

In all circa 6333 sq.ft (588 sq.m)

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room * First floor cinema room / family room * Utility room, plant room, boot room and downstairs w.c. * Integrated double garage * Private and tranquil south-facing rear

garden with dining area, outdoor lighting and water feature * Gated off-street parking for several cars * Circa 260 sq. ft of balcony space * In all circa 0.3 of an acre * EPC: C



**14 Waterloo Street, Clifton,
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VINEYARD NEWS with INGRID BATES

Exciting times at vineyard No2

AS some of you may know, we now have two growing sites; our original vineyard in Wrington which we have rented for around seventeen years, and a new site near Bath Soft Cheese in Kelston on the other side of Bristol.

The two vineyards are very different in appearance and are at very different stages of development. At the Wrington site, the vines are much more established with a mixture of 17 and 4-year old vines that crop really well. Whereas our new site is being planted as we speak! For the last few weeks we've been hand-planting small numbers of Regent and Seyval vines (the same as our Wrington site) to form the basis of what will eventually be a larger vineyard.

The process of hand planting is really enjoyable because the field has the most incredible views across the River Avon towards Saltford and Keynsham. We can even watch the Avon Valley steam train as it puffs its

way across the valley below! It feels like a very special place and is exciting to imagine how the vineyard will evolve over the coming years.

At our Wrington site, we ran our first vineyard tour of 2026 this month which was a great success. Thank you to everyone who came along. Details of upcoming summer tours at our Wrington vineyard can be found on our website. Once the new vines at Kelston become more established, we're hoping to open up opportunities for visitors there as well.

E: hello@dunleavyvineyards.co.uk

W: www.dunleavyvineyards.co.uk

Tiktok & Instagram: @dunleavyvineyards

Facebook@DYvineyards

Phone: 07779 085420



Some of the new vines at the Kelston vineyard

NEWS FROM THE METRO MAYOR

New powers to make big decisions

THE WEST of England has secured new powers to make more decisions locally.

The landmark English Devolution and Community Empowerment Act is great news for our transport, strategic planning, economic development, and health services – just like the overnight visitor levy (or ‘tourism tax’) powers, which are similarly set to come our way.

Important decisions in these areas will be made for people who live and work here, by people who also live and work here.

We want the West to be somewhere everyone can grow and thrive. Our Child Poverty Action Plan is focused on reducing the cost of living for families, supporting children, connecting our young people and families to opportunity and services, and pioneering new approaches for children and families.

In May, I announced that Kids Go Free will return on our buses until 2029 for every summer, Christmas, and Easter school holiday. Journeys from low-income areas doubled year-on-year thanks to the offer. That is alongside our regional fare freeze, which will keep children’s regular bus fares fixed at £1 until 2029.

Last month we launched our Child Poverty Partnership Board. Across our region 67,500 children are growing up in poverty - enough

to fill Ashton Gate, the Memorial Stadium, Twerton Park and the Bath Rec at the same time, and more.

These numbers will fall dramatically with the abolition of the two-child benefit cap, making families in our region £23 million better off.

We also have big ambitions to get our region moving. I visited the new Charfield station, which is under construction, in May; it will be so exciting to see passenger trains return to this part of South Gloucestershire for the first time in 60 years when it opens next spring. Bristol Brabazon is also taking shape and is set to open this autumn.

The contract for building new stations in Portishead and Pill was also signed recently - a historic moment for the whole of the West of England. Through this new £200 million train line, the West of England and North Somerset can connect more people to work, nature, and leisure.

It seems particularly fitting this should happen at the same time as North Somerset Council have voted to join the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority.

We already work closely together on so many projects, so this feels like a natural next step.



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

With our region’s geography soon to match the reality of life here, which doesn’t stop at council boundaries, we are in a great position to secure even more funding and deliver more change that people can see and feel.

I’m thrilled to announce that Councillor Tony Dyer, the leader of Bristol City Council, is my new deputy mayor for the next 12 months - the first appointment of a Green Party politician as deputy mayor of any combined authority.

I’m very grateful for the support and dedication of Cllr Kevin Guy over the past year, and will continue to work with all our council leaders across our region as we start this new chapter, with the role rotating each year.

COMMUNITY FUND

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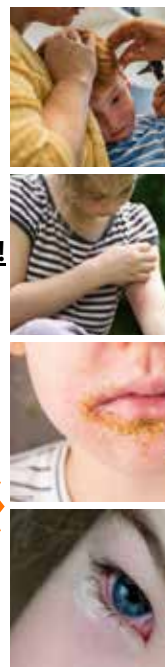


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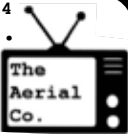
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Stoke Bishop

Guide Price £1,125,000

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Westbury on Trym

Guide Price £995,000

Beautifully presented 5-bedroom semi-detached family home. Stylish, contemporary living throughout with open-plan kitchen/dining space, boasts an ensuite, family bathroom & an additional shower room. Further benefits include off-street parking, store, and a well-maintained rear garden. No onward chain EPC D



Cliftonwood

Guide Price £500,000

Victorian two-bedroom mid terraced house full of period detail and charm. Set in an elevated position on the Cliftonwood slopes within walking distance of Clifton village, Clifton triangle, Harbourside and the City Centre. No onward chain. EPC D



Stoke Bishop

Guide Price £500,000

A 4-bedroom mid-century modern leasehold terraced house offered with no onward chain. Of striking design, this property offers excellent potential to make it your own, with generous living space. Front and rear gardens, a garage, and access to a range of additional resident facilities. EPC E

LEESE & GORDON

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