

keynshamvoice

February 2026

Issue 165

www.keynshamvoice.co.uk



Daddy G
drops in at
store party:
Page 9

FREE EVERY MONTH IN KEYNSHAM & SALTORD

**Out with
the old,
in with
the new:
Pages
28 & 29**



Our tears of joy as respite care service is saved

A KEYNSHAM couple have spoken of their tears of joy at the decision to save a respite care home from closure.

Richard and Julie Franklin's son Ryan is among those supported by Newton House, the only respite care home in Bath and North East Somerset which

offers young people with the most severe care needs short stays away from their full-time carers.

Ryan - who has a condition which means he is small, is non-verbal, and needs medication and a very high level of care - regularly stays at Newton

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**Ryan
is one
of the
young
people
who
benefits
from
stays at
Newton
House**

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March deadline

Our March edition will go to print on Monday February 23. To ensure your news or letter is included, please contact us by Wednesday February 18. Advertisers are 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, Keynsham Voice, 16 Ashmead Business Centre, Ashmead Road, Keynsham, BS31 1SX. The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

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NEWS

Parents' victory

■ From Page 1

House, where his parents say they know they can trust the team and do not have to worry about him.

For parents of children who, even into adulthood, require a near constant level of care, the service is a "lifeline."

But at the end of 2024 they were told it would have to close as it had become "unaffordable." The current arrangement had been set to end in October.

Now, after a year of campaigning, families have been told that Bath and North East Somerset Council is negotiating a contract for the service for another five years.

It was on January 13 - a year to the day that four Newton House parents came to the council to share their stories and urge it to keep Newton House open - that they were invited to a meeting to be told the news.

Speaking after the meeting, Richard Franklin said: "It's just a big relief. When I got home with Julie, the pair of us just cried together."

Wendy Lucas, who only gets a full night's sleep on the two nights her daughter Rhiannon attends Newton House, said: "It's wonderful news for all the families and we are beyond overjoyed."

"I cannot emphasise what a huge relief this is and a complete vindication of everything we have been telling the council in meetings for the past 12 months. It's also proof that parent power really does matter."

The 22 families who used Newton House had been sent

letters from B&NES Council and care provider Dimensions in November 2024 telling them the respite care service would close at the end of January 2025.

The letters were sent out before the council's cabinet member for adult services, Alison Born (Widcombe and Lyncombe, Liberal Democrat), had even been told the service was ending.

A few days after the shambolic announcement, the council wrote again to the families of people who use Newton House to apologise for the distress caused and say that the closure had been "paused" - initially to January 2026 and later to October.

Mr Franklin, a Keynsham window cleaner, launched a petition now signed by almost 3,000 people calling for Newton House to be kept open.

His local councillor Dave Biddleston (Keynsham South, Labour) helped him raise the issue with the council.

For a year, the Newton House families were a permanent fixture of council committees each time the future of the service was discussed and joined a council working group on the issue.

On January 19, the future of Newton House was raised at the B&NES Council scrutiny committee for what parents hope will be the last time, as the cabinet member for adult social care, Alison Born, told the meeting she was "delighted" that the council has been able to recommission the service.

The council said it can issue

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NEWS

in long battle against closure threat



Parents (left to right) Derek Greenman, Julie Franklin, Richard Franklin, and Wendy Lucas
Top left, Ryan, who is Julie and Richard's son. Top right, Rhiannon, daughter of Wendy

a direct award to keep it open thanks to new powers introduced in the Procurement Act 2023 as there is no other service in the area.

Ms Born said: "I am confident there shouldn't be further hurdles. As well as working with the families, we have also been

working with the provider. They are on board with the process."

Asked what the council would do to make sure the situation did not happen again, Ms Born said: "The important thing is that we don't make any important decisions - certainly not decisions of that magnitude, but

any decisions which are around changing the way that we provide services for people - without involving the people who use those services in them."

Mr Franklin told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: "I think it could have been avoided if they had been more open. I

think the council recognises that as well. But we are happy with the result."

He added: "As a parent of a person with severe impairments, it means we can plan our lives again. Having somewhere you can trust to leave your loved ones is absolutely vital, and we must never lose this ever again."

Cllr Biddleston said: "Respite care is not a luxury, it is absolutely essential. Parents and carers of people with severe impairments provide extraordinary levels of care, often around the clock, year after year."

"What is sometimes forgotten is that these parents never stop being parents. Their caring role does not end when their child becomes an adult, it continues for the rest of their lives."

"Respite services like Newton House provide vital breathing space, protect carers' physical and mental health, and ultimately help families stay together and well. Ensuring stability, continuity, and choice in respite provision is the right thing to do, both morally and practically."

Cllr Duncan Hounsell (Lib Dem, Saltford ward) added: "I have known Ryan all his life. His amazing mother Julie and stepdad Rich give Ryan devoted care but need a break every now and then with respite care locally, where they know Ryan will be well looked after."

"Well done to all who campaigned for this and the councillors who have found a solution."

John Wimperis, Local Democracy Report Service



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NEWS

Saturday parking charges bid dropped

PLANS to introduce Saturday charges at Bath Hill East car park in Keynsham have been dropped.

The proposal was included in a raft of changes to parking charges and permits proposed by Bath & North Somerset Council for 2026-27.

The council defended its proposal for Bath Hill East by stating that Saturday charges already apply at other council-owned car parks, including those in Keynsham, Midsomer Norton and Radstock, and that all these car parks remain free to use on Sundays.

A public consultation on the proposals closed in November.

But a meeting of Keynsham Town Council has been told that the charges at Bath Hill East will not now go ahead.

Andy Wait (Lib Dem) said the town council, which he chairs, had not been officially approached about the proposed charges and the only reason he knew about them was because he is also a B&NES councillor.



He wrote to Cllr Joel Hirst, cabinet member for sustainable transport strategy, expressing his concerns at the poor consultation process, the short period of consultation and stressing the importance of free Saturday parking at Bath Hill East for the town.

Cllr Wait then contacted Cllr Kevin Guy, leader of B&NES Council, stating that he thought the introduction of Saturday charges at Bath Hill East would not generate much money anyway, as people would park elsewhere, including on residential roads, and he added

a reminder about the amount of housing that Keynsham has taken over past years.

Cllr Guy responded that he had withdrawn the option for Bath Hill East from the parking proposals and that no Saturday charges would be brought in until at least after the next election in 2027.

The news came shortly after Keynsham Labour councillors had released a statement calling for the Bath Hill East proposals to be withdrawn, saying that they would harm the town centre, local businesses, and community life.



They said: "Keynsham has invested time and effort in rebuilding its town centre as a place to shop, meet, and relax. Labour believes that charging for Saturday parking at Bath Hill would undermine that progress and send the wrong signal about the council's priorities."

Cllr Dave Biddleston, a Labour town councillor and a B&NES Labour for Keynsham South, thanked Cllr Wait for his efforts in getting the proposals withdrawn.

Charges at Bath Hill East car park currently apply Monday to Friday 8am to 6pm.

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■ NEWS

New Aldi 'still a threat to town centre'



An image of the Aldi store proposed for a site on the A4 Bath Road

Right, Tesco in the town centre



CONCERNS about the effect of a new Aldi store in Keynsham on Tesco and the town centre have been re-stated in a new report.

The supermarket chain wants to build a store on a site between the A4 Bath Road and World's End Lane.

Its planning application will be decided by Bath & North East Somerset Council, which has commissioned a fresh report from Nexus Planning on the likely effect of a new Aldi store.

Previous Nexus reports – in August 2024 and January 2025 – had concluded that the proposed Aldi store would have a “significant adverse impact” on the town centre.”

Its latest report is in response to a study – commissioned by Aldi from commercial property agent Avison Young – that concluded that the town centre was in fact thriving and there was no reason to be concerned about Tesco's viability.

Avison Young's report drew on a survey of household shopping patterns conducted last summer. It included information on where people living in and around Keynsham did

their main food shopping and top-up trips, and linked trips they made during these visits.

Nexus Planning said it was unclear why Avison Young had included the west of Keynsham in the same zone as a large part of south-east Bristol, and that this had led to “misleading results” in its financial assessment.

It also says Avison Young's forecast that about one third of Aldi's convenience goods turnover would be diverted from Tesco was an under-estimate.

“The Tesco store is the main competitor for the proposed Aldi store and will be susceptible to the transfer of both main and top-up food shopping trips.

“Indeed, the proposed Aldi store will replace Tesco as the main grocery shopping destination for many residents of the Keynsham catchment.”

Regarding linked trips, Nexus Planning noted that Avison Young's household survey showed that about one fifth of main food shoppers at Tesco linked their trip with the

town centre, with the equivalent figure for top-up shoppers being less than a third.

“It is clear to us that, based upon the applicant's survey, a transferral of grocery spending from the town centre to an out-of-town location in Keynsham will have a material adverse impact upon linked trips to the town centre.

“This has the potential to have an adverse impact upon existing investment in the centre through the loss of business and stakeholder confidence.”

Nexus Planning says that Avison Young's use of a new household survey provides a significantly different turnover for the Tesco store, which raises questions about the reliability of the market share data. Therefore, more information is needed from Avison Young and Aldi before it can reach a final conclusion, it said.

Since Aldi submitted its original planning application in May 2024, B&NES Council's expected decision date has been repeatedly pushed back, and a new one has yet to be announced.

Cancer Research race night in memory of Daniel

A RACE night in memory of Keynsham junior doctor Daniel Money will be held next month to raise funds for Cancer Research UK.

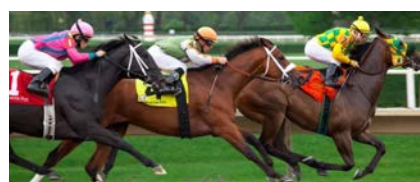
Keynsham Rugby Club will host the event in their clubhouse on Friday March 13 at 7pm.

Daniel attended Chandard and Wellsway schools and went on to study medicine at Birmingham University. He remained in Birmingham for his F1 and F2 junior doctor years.

He was diagnosed with metastatic stage 4 bowel cancer aged 24 in November 2022, with his diagnosis and prognosis coming as a complete shock to him, his family and friends.

As a junior doctor, Daniel knew how important up-to-date research is in helping increase treatment options for people undergoing chemotherapy.

He chose Cancer Research



The family of Daniel Money are fundraising in his memory



UK as the charity he wanted to raise money for, as the research they fund is crucial in the search for new treatment options, early diagnosis and hopefully cures for all cancers.

Daniel died on September 11 last year at Birmingham Hospice. He was 27.

His family and friends want to continue fundraising for Cancer Research UK (CRUK) in

his memory. The current total raised for CRUK is just over £87,000, and his girlfriend Abbie has raised over £14,000 for Birmingham Hospice in Daniel's name.

All proceeds from the race night will go to Daniel's Giving Page on the Cancer Research UK website. After their first thrilling race night in 2023, organisers are looking for local

organisations and businesses to sponsor and name each of the eight races for a minimum donation of £25. They are asked to email Teresa on tkp7ovg@hotmail.com

A raffle will also be held on the evening, giving attendees the chance to donate more money and win some great prizes. Once people have bought their ticket, they will receive further information about how they can own and name a horse for a race.

Individual tickets cost £7, while tables of eight are £50. People are advised to get their tickets early as they are limited. To buy tickets, email Teresa on tkp7ovg@hotmail.com

Anyone who is unable to attend but would like to donate is asked to do so through Teresa's Giving Page at CRUK's fundraising website - visit <https://tinyurl.com/4fz26wra>

NEWS



Mummers keep tradition alive

THE annual Keynsham Mummers Play brought some traditional warmth to a grey and very chilly Boxing Day.

Crowds braved the winter temperatures to watch the Bristol Morris Men perform the outdoor show in three locations - St John's Church, the library and the New Inn.

They were entertained by a cast of seven - Father Christmas (Clive Du'Mont), Little John/Prince (Grant Glanville), King George (Andy Brewer), the Turkish Knight (Nigel Cooke), the Doctor (Dave Leverton), Thomas (Jack Neal) and the Shepherdess (Peter Lord) - who entertained the audience with verse, comedy, singing, dancing and combat.

The Bristol Morris Men first performed the play in 1976 at a Bristol University folk dance and began performing it in Keynsham the following year. This Boxing Day marked their 49th performance of it - 48 live and one online during the Covid lockdown.

The play is based on a version that was performed on December 27, 1822, by the Christmas Boys, as they were then known, and watched by a vicar, Joseph Hunter, who got a copy of the script from one of the actors.

The play, as collected, has no proper ending, but the current performers have rearranged various lines to bring the play to a neater conclusion.

Andy Brewer, who plays King George in the show, said: "The play was never recorded before 1822, as far as we are aware, so no one knows how long the play had



been performed before then, or indeed, its origins."

He added: "I think that the appeal to the performers is the fact that we are keeping alive a tradition which is hundreds of years old.

"Also, as morris dancers, it appeals to our love of performing - a morris dance was inserted into the middle of the play when it was revived in 1977.

"The audience keep coming back each year because, as well as being entertaining, I hope, the majority have a connection to Keynsham and are interested and proud of its traditions. A lot of the audience have been coming regularly for many years."



NEWS

Call for action over absent MP Norris

LOCAL MP Dan Norris has reportedly refused to step down despite calls for his resignation.

He was arrested in April last year on suspicion of sexual offences against a girl, rape, child abduction, and misconduct in a public office.

Mr Norris, MP for North East Somerset and Hanham, was suspended from the Labour Party and is understood to have been banned from the parliamentary estate. He remains on police bail and has not been charged.

According to the BBC, Mr Norris said he continues "to represent" his constituents as well as "staying across local and national developments". He added that he was also "handling casework and policy queries and asking parliamentary questions".

The *Voice* asked Mr Norris's office for a response but although they provided some background information, they did not offer any comment for publication.

Among those calling for a resolution to the matter is Alan Hale, Bath & North East Somerset Independent councillor for Keynsham South.

He said: "As a district councillor, it is vital to have a fully operational MP that you can turn to when there are matters brought to you that are beyond the remit of the council.

"Yes, Mr Norris has a proxy vote and can put written questions to parliament, sent to him through his party office, but when you are trying to resolve matters of importance to your constituents, you do not want to be involved in a paper relay chase to get an answer."



Cllr Hale has written to the Speaker of the House of Commons to seek a resolution, possibly a recall petition, which is the process by which voters can remove their MP between elections.

Voters in the relevant constituency have six weeks to sign a petition saying they want their MP to lose their seat. If at least 10% sign the petition, a by-election will be held, in which the recalled MP can stand as a candidate.

The House of Commons has replied indicating that such a petition would have to be instigated by the Speaker or parliament but that there is no sign of that currently. This advice has been echoed by the Electoral Commission.

Cllr Hale also wrote to Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody to ask how much longer it would be before there was an outcome to the police investigation of Mr Norris.

But despite acknowledging his "understandable concerns", she replied that she was unable to take action to resolve the situation.

In response to his email, Chief Constable Sarah Crew, of Avon and Somerset Police, reassured

Cllr Hale that the investigation was being conducted with all due diligence.

Cllr Hale told the *Voice*: "The sooner this investigation and all of the matters surrounding it are completed, the sooner we can get back to having full representation by Mr Norris or a new MP, subject to the outcome.

"As a district councillor - and there are other district councillors in North East Somerset, cross-party - there is an expectation that we should have full normal direct access to our MP and through him personally to parliament by his being able to attend the House to speak."

Cllr Hale said that at a recent meeting of interested parties from Somerset, where councillors and MPs were lobbying the appropriate minister to achieve a better level of support funding for council tax, Mr Norris was not in attendance to represent the

concerns of North East Somerset.

Meanwhile, a petition on change.org demanding the resignation of Mr Norris has gathered over 2,600 signatures.

It states: "The constituents of Hanham and North East Somerset have the right to be represented by someone who can fully dedicate themselves to pressing local and national issues without the burden of personal legal battles.

"It's crucial for Dan Norris to step down, allowing a by-election to appoint a representative who can commit perennially to the welfare of our communities."

Despite being absent from parliament, Mr Norris continues to ask regular written questions, which have recently covered such subjects as the pensions of former coalmine workers, government support for tech start-up companies, and action to tackle homelessness in his constituency.

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NEWS



Daddy G with singer Maisie, the daughter of Longwell Records' owner Iain Aitchison

Daddy G calls in at record store's farewell party

DADDY G of Massive Attack was a surprise guest at Longwell Records' farewell party in Keynsham.

He dropped in at the independent store in Temple Street on its last day of trading before its move to its new location in Clifton Arcade, Bristol.

Owner Iain Aitchison was surprised and delighted by the unannounced visit of Daddy G, made even more special by the fact that Massive Attack are his favourite band.

He said: "He just turned up because he wanted to say goodbye to the shop, which is amazing. When I saw him coming in, I was like, wow, what's going on here?"



Partygoers signed a farewell board at Longwell Records

"Loads of people were in awe, but a lot of the people there know him as a friend."

Also thrilled to see Daddy G – the stage name of Grant Marshall – was Iain's daughter Maisie, 21, a singer whose performances include Massive Attack covers.

At the farewell party,



customers danced to live music and DJ sets from acts including Bristol artists Gardna, appearing before a tour of Japan, and Ray Mighty from Smith & Mighty.

Iain said he wanted to ensure a good selection of male and female acts and that it was the women who "brought the party."



He decided to close the Temple Street shop after almost 10 years because it had been struggling financially in recent times and needs more customers to survive.

Longwell Records was due to reopen in its new location in Clifton Arcade on January 31.

Iain described the farewell party on January 17 as "pretty amazing", adding: "It was obviously really bittersweet because I don't really want to leave Keynsham, but it's a new journey."

However, Iain hopes to maintain Longwell Record's link with the town by running a pop-up stall at Wild About Flowers Farmers' Market.

Horse charity appeal as food bill soars

A BRISTOL-based horse rescue charity is asking for public support after a challenging year of weather has increased the cost of feeding more than 100 rescued animals in its care.

HorseWorld, which has been rescuing and rehabilitating horses and ponies for over 70 years, says a combination of prolonged heavy rainfall followed by extended dry spells left its 180-acre site with almost no grass available for grazing.

As a result, the charity was forced to begin feeding hay far earlier than usual, a situation typically only seen in mid-winter. By early autumn, HorseWorld was feeding more than 500kg of hay



every day to maintain the health of its animals, adding unexpected pressure to its winter budget.

Prices have risen sharply, with large bales now costing up to £95 each, while smaller bales of haylage have increased by nearly 100%. HorseWorld estimates the increase in feed costs alone will add nearly £20,000 to its winter bills.

HorseWorld has launched its Feed the Herd Appeal, inviting supporters to help bridge the winter feed gap and ensure every horse in its care remains

well-fed, warm and safe throughout the season.

For more information or to support the Feed the Herd Appeal, visit www.horseworld.org.uk/hay

Rescuers recover body from river

A BODY has been recovered from the River Avon at Keynsham.

Emergency services were called to the scene opposite the Lock Keeper pub on Keynsham Road on Thursday January 22.

As the *Voice* went to press, a spokesperson from Avon & Somerset Police said: "Work to identify the person and inform their next of kin is ongoing."

"Their death is not believed to be suspicious and enquiries are being carried out on behalf of the coroner."

■ KEYNSHAM COMMUNITY HUB

Active year offers something for everyone

2026 is shaping up to be a lively and welcoming year at Keynsham Community Hub in Queens Road, with a full programme of weekly activities bringing people of all ages together - from babies taking their first outings to primary pupils learning to code, and adults finding friendship, warmth and support.

Mondays – Code Club (after school)

Our Monday Code Club for primary-aged children in Years 4-6 continues to go from strength to strength. It's so popular that demand now outstrips the number of places we can offer. To expand sessions - and to make sure our brilliant volunteers can take well-earned breaks - we're looking for new volunteers. You don't need to be a tech expert; enthusiasm and willingness to learn alongside the children go a long way. This is a fantastic opportunity to inspire young people and help them build confidence in digital skills.

Tuesdays – Public Living Room (12.30pm-4.30pm)

Every Tuesday afternoon the hub becomes a public living room - a relaxed, friendly space where anyone can drop in. Come and meet other people, enjoy a light lunch, have a chat, read the paper, and keep warm. It's about connection, comfort and community, especially welcome during the colder months.

Wednesdays – Lively Craft Group (10am-12pm)

If you enjoy being creative, our Wednesday craft group is the



A Breakfast and Babies group is among the activities hosted by Keynsham Community Hub

place to be. This is a lively, sociable session where you can learn new crafts, try something different, and share your own skills with others. All abilities are welcome, from complete beginners to experienced crafters.

Thursdays – Dorothy House Coffee Connection (10am-12pm)

On Thursday mornings we host Dorothy House Coffee Connection, run in partnership with Dorothy House Hospice Care. This is a warm, supportive space for anyone affected by cancer or a life-limiting illness, whether personally or through someone they care about. Come for a coffee, conversation, and understanding in a non-clinical, welcoming environment.

Fridays – Breakfast and Babies (10am-12pm)

Our Breakfast and Babies group has quickly become one of the hub's most loved sessions. Open to mums and babies aged up to six months, it offers a gentle, supportive start to the day with breakfast, friendship, and the chance to share those early parenting experiences in a relaxed setting.

As well as our regular programme, the hub building is available for hire. It's an ideal venue for meetings, groups, classes and community events - flexible, accessible and right in the heart of Keynsham.

Martin Burton, chair of

Keynsham Community Hub, said: "What really stands out to me is the range of people coming through our doors each week - babies and new mums, schoolchildren, older residents, and people looking for warmth, company or support.

"The hub is about connection and kindness, and in 2026 we want to build on that by welcoming even more people and volunteers to be part of it."

Whether you're looking to learn, meet new people, volunteer, or simply enjoy a welcoming space, 2026 at the Keynsham Community Hub has something for everyone. For details of the activities, see www.keynshamhub.co.uk or email hello@keynshamhub.co.uk

Author puts taboo-obsessed art world in the frame

THE rule-breaking tendency of contemporary art is the inspiration of Saltford author Nigel Halliday's debut novel, *Taboo*.

Nigel studied art history at the Courtauld Institute in London and lectures widely on many periods of Western art, including the Britpack artists of the 1990s.

Taboo tells the story of a young man who goes to art college wanting to be a traditional painter, but he finds that shock art and taboo-breaking are the only kind of art that is encouraged.

He turns out to be unexpectedly gifted at this and produces a series of works, any one of which could win him an international reputation. Sadly, every one of them turns out to have already won an international reputation for someone else. Now in his final year, he is increasingly desperate in his search for a taboo that no one else has broken.



Author Nigel Halliday (right) with local councillor Duncan Hounsell

"I was intrigued by the way modern artists love to be rule-breakers, but they don't like it

when someone breaks their rules," the author explained.

"*Taboo* has a lot of fun with some of the foibles of contemporary art, but I hope it is sympathetic to what many artists are trying to achieve. And beneath it all it asks: where do we get our values from, and why do we know that some things are just wrong?"

Nigel has previously published a history of Zwemmer's iconic modern-art bookshop and art gallery in London, *More than a bookshop*.

Among those welcoming the publication of *Taboo* is Saltford councillor Duncan Hounsell, who said: "I was delighted to congratulate Nigel Halliday on the publication of his novel and give support to local creative writing. I have bought the book and look forward to a wonderful read."

Taboo is available through Waterstones and local bookshops, priced £8.99. A Kindle version is also available.

ON THE BEAT

Teamwork to keep communities safe

IN this edition, I am highlighting some of the key ways we work with our communities to keep our neighbourhoods safe, including Community Speedwatch, Neighbourhood Watch, and how we handle unauthorised encampments.

These areas show how strong partnerships between the public and police make a real difference to everyday safety and reassurance.

Speeding is one of the most common concerns raised with neighbourhood officers. Community Speedwatch gives residents a practical way to help tackle the issue.

Local volunteers are trained to use speed monitoring equipment in areas where speeding has been identified as a problem.

While volunteers do not issue penalties, their observations help us identify repeat offenders and target our enforcement more effectively.

Just as importantly, the presence of Speedwatch teams encourages drivers to slow down,



Sgt Rob Turner
Keynsham Police



creating a safer environment for everyone.

We'd like to thank all our dedicated volunteers for the time they give and the positive impact they have on local road safety.

If you want to know more, volunteer or set up a speedwatch in your area, please go to the Avon and Somerset police website at <https://www.avonandsomerset.police.uk> and search for Community SpeedWatch.

Neighbourhood Watch remains one of the most effective and recognised community led crime prevention schemes. By keeping an eye out for each other and reporting concerns quickly, residents help reduce crime and provide early warning of emerging issues.

Many schemes now make great use of online platforms and messaging groups, making it easier than ever for neighbours to stay connected and informed. The flow of information between Neighbourhood Watch members and our policing teams plays a huge role in building safer, more resilient communities.

If you're interested in joining or starting a local group, we'd be happy to help put you in touch with coordinators in your area.

Reports of unauthorised encampments can cause understandable concern within the community. When these situations arise, we work closely with local authorities, landowners, and welfare services to ensure our

response is fair, proportionate, and legally sound.

Officers assess factors such as community impact, any linked criminality, and the welfare needs of those on site. While police powers do exist to require people to leave land, enforcement is not automatic. Many encampments are resolved through communication and engagement without the need for formal action.

Our aim is always to balance the rights of the community, the landowner, and those within the encampment, ensuring that decisions are respectful, transparent, and considerate of everyone involved.

As I always say, local policing is built on partnership. Whether through volunteer groups like Community Speedwatch and Neighbourhood Watch, or through our problem-solving work around unauthorised encampments, your involvement and feedback help shape our approach.

Please, if you need us, call. Until next time, stay safe.

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NEWS

Passengers kept up to date at bus stops

BUS passengers in Keynsham and Saltford are benefiting from new information screens at bus stops across the West of England.

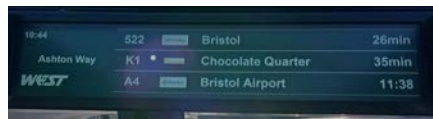
More than 150 new screens are up and running while another 100 were due to be installed by the end of January.

Seven are already in place at bus stops in Keynsham – one at Ashton Way, two at Ellsbridge House, two at St John's Church, one at the rugby club and another opposite the post office in the High Street.

There is also a screen at Tynning Road in Saltford.

The investment in new technology, using funds secured from the government's Department for Transport by the West of England Mayoral Combined Authority, will see over 250 new and upgraded screens installed in total, including:

- 225 upgraded Real Time Information (RTI) screens installed at bus stops and stations, with improved colour screens for service information, including 18 screens to replace



**Above, buses in High Street, Keynsham
Left, a display screen at the bus stop in Ashton Way**

old displays at Bristol Bus & Coach Station.

- 21 'e-paper' digital displays replace conventional printed timetables, from Ashton Gate to Wick, Patchway to Peasedown St John.

- Ten indoor information screens at local hospitals and in other key public places, such as Bath Bus Station, Bath Royal United Hospital (RUH), Bristol Royal Infirmary (BRI), Bristol Parkway

Station, Southmead Hospital, and Weston General Hospital.

- Three new solar-powered screens at bus stops, without the need for mains electricity.

Helen Godwin, Mayor of the West of England, said: "Our latest £1 million improvements for bus passengers add to the start of a bright new chapter for transport in the West."

"New night services and new green buses are rolling out, with

many more on the way; more train stations are being built; and we've secured further record transport investment for the coming years.

"In 2026, these new screens are another sign of what's to come: better buses that are easier to use. As we work together with councils and operators to build a bus network that people can rely on, ensuring more accurate information for passengers is a crucial and continuing part of that effort for our region."

Deputy Mayor and Leader of Bath & North East Somerset Council, Councillor Kevin Guy, said: "Real time, reliable information is what passengers tell us they value as a priority."

"By upgrading screens at key bus stops, hospitals and transport hubs across Bath and North East Somerset – from Whitchurch to Westfield and Bathampton to Bishop Sutton – this funding will make buses simpler to use and help more people get to work, school, universities, appointments and nights out without needing to drive."



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NEWS

12% rise in town's council tax precept

KEYNSHAM Town Council has decided to increase its council tax precept for 2026/27 by 12%.

This means the cost for an average Band D property will rise by 27p per week to a new annual total of £132.44 for town council services.

A meeting of the full council voted to accept the increase recommended by the finance and policy committee, which will result in a deficit of £48,000 being funded from reserves.

They rejected the advice from the responsible finance office (RFO) and town clerk for a 17.7% increase to create a balanced budget – one where income covers all expenditure.

The RFO, Amanda Hazell, said that the council supports a community of 19,300 people, runs eight parks, a cemetery, five football pitches, and an in-house youth team with a small budget.

Even with a 17.7% rise, the council's precept would be lower than that of comparable councils such as Yate, Frome, Nailsea and Chippenham for the services it provides, she said.

But Hal MacFie (Liberal Democrat), chair of the finance and policy committee, said that councillors and officers had already



spent a lot of time discussing the issue and he proposed the 12% rise that was accepted.

Cllr Souzan Leach (Lib Dem) questioned why more of the council's reserves, which amount to about £849,000, could not be spent to mitigate the increase, instead of "hoarding cash".

The meeting was told that the council had agreed a policy last October of keeping £445,719 in reserve as a minimum to ensure it could pay its running costs for six months in the event of a financial crisis. That policy cannot be revisited until October this year.

The RFO said that the council's reserves were gradually coming down.

Cllr Dave Biddleston (Labour) said the budget process has been exceptionally

thorough this year, leading to a much better understanding among councillors.

As well as the council tax rise, councillors at the meeting approved the council's budget of £1.239 million for 2026/27.

Members agreed to an amendment proposed by Cllr Martin Burton (Labour) that the council identify funding sources, including from reserves, to ensure high-quality play facilities for children and young people in Keynsham.

He said there is a concern that no more Community Infrastructure Funding (CIL) will be available for extra infrastructure projects, including the refurbishment or upgrading of play areas.

There is a particular need in Keynsham South, he said, where almost half of the town's children aged up to nine live and about 14% of residents are aged under 10.

Town clerk Dawn Drury said a feasibility study for play areas has already started, involving a review of health and safety documents to categorise them.

The total bill for a Band D property in Keynsham – including parish, police and fire precept – was set at £2,325.10 for 2025/26. B&NES Council will decide on its element of the council tax for 2026/27 in due course.

● Saltford council tax: Page 27



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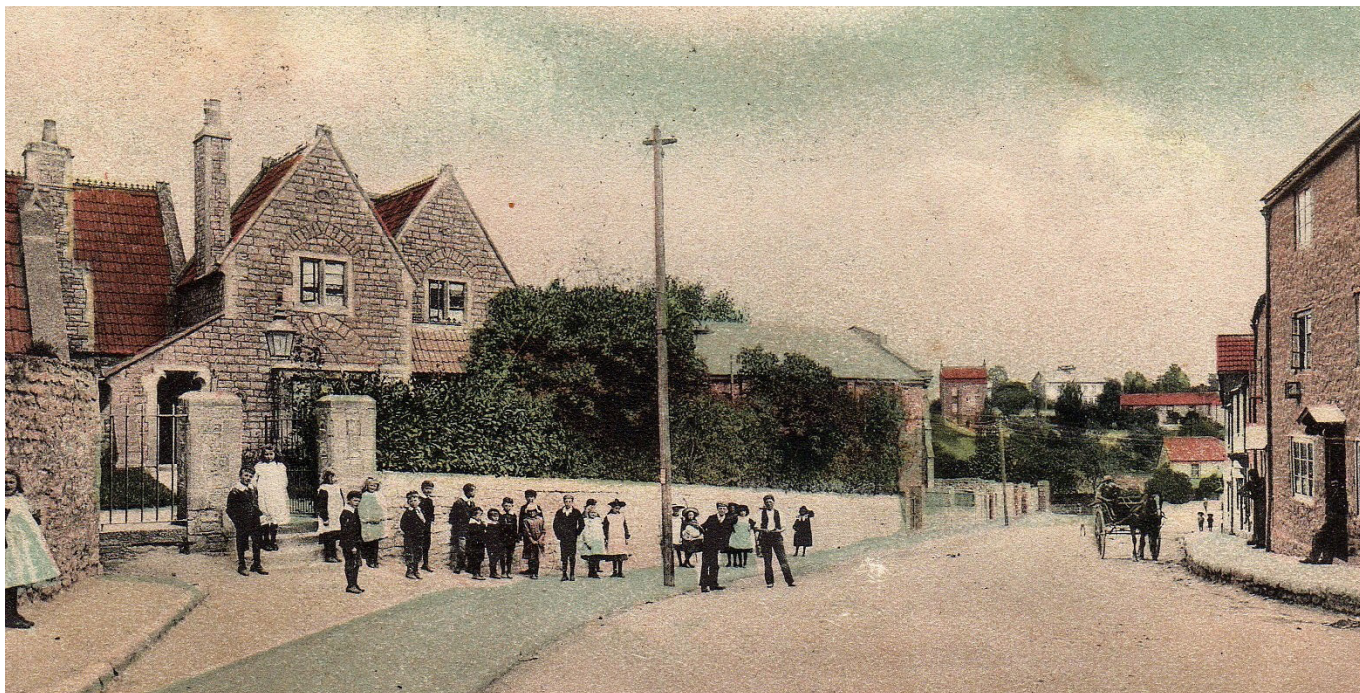
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KEYNSHAM MEMORIES

with Keynsham & Saltford Local History Society



This colourised picture was sent as a postcard in 1905 and shows pupils from Bath Hill School in Keynsham. This was built in 1854 and later became the junior section of a combined

school, with the infants housed at the south end of Temple Street. It closed in 2007 and the buildings were converted into residential accommodation.

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KEYNSHAM AND SALTFORD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY



The parish church in medieval times



The interior of St Mary's, Kempley, Gloucestershire, with extensive early medieval wall paintings

Right, a close-up of one of the paintings – St Peter with his key can easily be identified



At over 750 years, the Church of St John the Baptist is by far the oldest building in Keynsham. Construction started in 1270, but what preceded it we do not know: locals may well have worshipped in the great church of the abbey, consecrated a hundred years earlier.

Life and religion were very different in those medieval times and using records from a variety of sources we can get a flavour of how the parish church may have looked and operated, say shortly before 1400.

At that time, the church was smaller but had recently been extended, with the main nave and south aisle constructed: there was no north aisle or tower. Perhaps there were one or two stone seats but no pews, lighting or heating.

The floor would be beaten earth and there were none of the elaborate tombs we see today. A wooden screen would have separated the chancel, where the altar stood, from the nave where parishioners congregated.

On entering, you would have seen one overwhelming difference from today: walls covered in brightly coloured pictures and images. It is impossible for us, living in a world overflowing with words and pictures, to imagine the impact of these on the medieval mind. Before printing, written words were not used – ordinary folk could not read.

The mass, the principal ceremony of worship, was conducted in the language of the church – Latin – which meant nothing to them. And other pictures simply did not exist. So, it was through these powerful images that most of the faithful absorbed the key messages of Christianity.

Imminent death was a more real threat than it is today, and the themes of Heaven and Hell, and Judgement Day, were prominent. The Apostles and other saints also featured and it was common to have an image of St Christopher on the wall opposite the entrance.

Outside, the porch was a key part of the medieval church and the location of many of the ceremonies that marked and sanctified life's major steps.

First came baptism. Religion was not a choice. All babies were born into the Church and were baptised within a few days of birth. The ceremony started in the porch, with the priest meeting the midwife and godparents and cleansing the child before inviting them into the house of God for the baptism and anointing at the font.

The mother never took part in the baptism. After giving birth, she did not normally attend church for at least 40 days and then going through the rite of "churching". This originated as a ritual purification but became more of a

celebration of a safe delivery; again, it was held in the porch. The priest sprinkled holy water, offered prayers, and the mother, attending with a group of women friends, was then welcomed back into the church.

A large part of the marriage ceremony also took place in the porch.

On Sundays, the mass was a time when the whole community, rich and poor, came together. Men and women were segregated and the atmosphere could be boisterous. With matins and mass lasting up to three hours, people came and went during them. In addition, many saints' days were celebrated, some with processions and feasting. Communion was taken once a year, at Easter, and receiving it was a legal requirement for everyone over 14.

This was the culmination of Holy Week, which started with an elaborate procession involving the whole congregation on Palm Sunday. Good Friday was observed as a day of mourning, with the congregation arriving barefoot.

In those pre-Reformation times, the church and its calendar provided a structure and meaning to life and bound the whole community together. Today, the parish is working to modernise the interior of St John's and restore elements of that community role.

Richard Dyson

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NEWS

Festival shapes up for fun-packed return



The festival's family fun day will return to Saltford Sports Club. Right, Saltford Brass Mill will be open to festival visitors

SALTFORD Festival will return in June with a packed programme of events.

Organisers are busy planning the biennial event, which will run from Friday June 12 to Sunday June 21.

Although the full programme has yet to be finalised, a number of events have already been announced.

They include a murder mystery staged by Saltford Drama Club over two nights, a jazz concert performed by Hannah Wedlock & The Blue Notes, and a Saltford's Got Talent show.

Gardens will be open to the public around the village, visitors can enjoy afternoon tea at Saltford Manor, and

Saltford Brass Mill will be open for the festival.

Other events will include a quiz night, free taster sessions from various organisations, and a series of lunchtime talks. Also taking place during the festival will be Saltford School fair, a craft fair, and a family fun day at Saltford Sports Club.

More information about events will be published in due course on the festival website at www.saltfordfestival.org.uk.

Nearer the time, a festival brochure will be put through all Saltford letterboxes detailing all the events.



The festival craft fair in Saltford Hall in 2024

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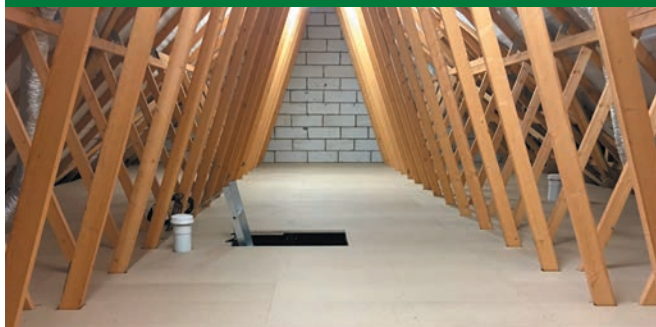
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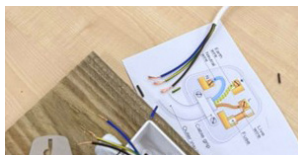
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KEYNSHAM SCOUTS



Bright future ahead for eager learners



MANY thanks to Andy and Edmundson Electrical of Bath who arranged a really interesting challenge night for some of our scouts, teaching how plugs, wiring and bulbs all work.

Everyone brought their 3mm screwdriver but had no idea what to expect. Different types of light bulbs, different coloured wires, plugs, and switches were on offer, and it was up to each scout to figure out how to put it all together.

The hands-on approach sparked lots of curiosity and laughter as they worked out the best way to make everything light up safely.

It was a brilliant evening that gave everyone a real sense of achievement and some useful skills for life.

■ What happens when you take a group of scouts, ask them to bring some fruit and make a smoothie of their choice? Bananas, grapes, oranges, mango, peaches, apples, and strawberries were all on offer.

Scouts pondered the perfect quantity, debated whether to peel or dice, and experimented with different combinations to craft their ideal

blend. The excitement was palpable as everyone got stuck in, chopping, tasting, and comparing their creations.

The competition heated up as judges sought the best-tasting smoothie, the fruitiest concoction, and the most vibrant colour in a glass. It proved to be a fantastic way for scouts to learn practical kitchen skills, as well as teamwork and a dash of healthy rivalry.

Everyone came away with new ideas for their next fruity masterpiece and, most importantly, a sense of accomplishment and fun - skills for life indeed!

■ Book in and support our fundraising spring clay shoot at the Chelwood Campsite on March 21 and 22. Bookings are being taken from individuals or groups up to a maximum of 10 people. It's excellent value and great fun - no previous experience required and all equipment supplied. Each slot lasts around two hours.

To find out more or book a slot for Saturday or Sunday, visit www.1stkeynshamscouts.org.uk/clay, email claypigeon@1stkeynshamscouts.org.uk or ring 07961 394264.



Sparking interest: Scouts learning about lighting and making smoothies



Faith group raises £3,000 to tackle antisemitism

A FUNDING appeal run by the Bath and North East Somerset Faith Foundation has raised £3,000 for a new campaign to tackle and raise awareness of antisemitism across the local area.

The organisation, which aims to encourage social cohesion and dialogue between religious groups, launched a fundraising campaign last year.

Director of the Faith Foundation, Nathan Hartley, said: "Thanks to everyone who has donated to our appeal. We're 100% funded through voluntary contributions and grants, and without the support and generosity of others we wouldn't be able to

carry out the important work that we do."

The £3,000 was raised through donations from the public, plus grants from the Medlock Trust and the Spalding Charity.

The Medlock Trust is a Bath-based grant-making organisation focused on supporting local projects that address deprivation and social need.

The Spalding Charity is a national organisation that funds educational and faith-based projects across the UK that promote social cohesion and interfaith dialogue.

"This funding means we can now launch

our 'stand up to antisemitism' campaign for 2026 and run a series of events throughout the year," added Nathan.

The £3,000 will be used to fund events and workshops this year across the district, which will include tree planting events, school assemblies, film showings, art exhibitions, interfaith and civic gatherings, and a 'Bridging Generations' public awareness campaign.

More details about the campaign and how people can get involved are available from the Bath & North East Somerset Faith Foundation at info@bathnesfaithfoundation.org.uk

■ BACK TO NATURE

Wildlife in transition offers rich experience

FEBRUARY is a time of transition in the UK, winter wildlife combined with the anticipation of spring.

Here are some wildlife highlights and nature-focused opportunities this month in our area, what's distinctive at this time of year and where you can experience it.

Firstly, flowers: despite the inclement weather we often experience, look out for the early blooming of these flowers:

Snowdrops: The first wildflower of the year, often the first to bloom in February.

Crocuses: Their bright yellow stamens and vibrant orange stigmas bringing a splash of colour to the landscape. Not far behind will be daffodils, winter aconites, irises and cyclamens.

Until February, most birds are relatively quiet, although plenty will already be visiting bird tables, feeding up for the breeding season and hopefully giving good results for those who took part in the annual RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch.

In your local woodland, listen out for the drumming of great spotted woodpeckers, noisy rooks and jackdaws, the rattling call of mistle thrushes, and the superb variety of notes of their close cousins, song thrushes.

If you are lucky, nuthatches and (in very harsh weather) winter finches like siskins and redpolls might visit your feeders and local woodlands as natural food becomes scarcer.

On clear evenings near wetlands and fields you might still catch fieldfares and redwings feeding in flocks before their migration back to Scandinavia. Finally, up until late February you can still catch the spectacular

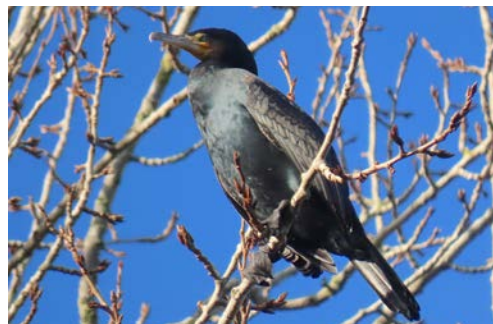


Look out for the "fair maids of February" - snowdrops

Photo: Kathy Farrell

A cormorant enjoying a quiet moment between dives for fish

Photo: Dave Sage



Come along to our next wildlife talk, *A Buzz in the Garden - growing spaces bees will love*, on Friday February 13 with Richard Rickitt, author and bee keeper at Westonbirt Arboretum.

Our pollinators are in peril; bumblebees, solitary bees and honey bees are all under threat from the modern-day onslaught of pesticides, habitat loss and intensive agriculture. Yet between them, the almost 300 species of UK bees, along with other pollinators, are responsible for more than a third of everything we eat.

This fascinating talk will introduce many of the bee species found in the UK and explain how you can help to save them by creating a pollinator oasis in your garden - or window box, if that's all you have.

The talk starts at 7.30pm in the Keynsham Baptist Church Hall, BS31 1DS, entrance £3.50 for Wildlife Trust members, £5 for non-members, to include refreshments served at 7.15pm. No prior booking required.

For more information on our group, visit our website www.keynshamawt.org.uk, email info@keynshamawt.org.uk or phone Kathy on 07850 508702.

starling murmurations over the Somerset Levels and moors, especially at Ham Wall and Shapwick Heath - a dramatic aerial show as thousands of birds swirl before roosting.

February is also the month for early amphibian activity, when frogs and some toads begin stirring from hibernation and may start moving towards breeding ponds, especially on warmer, damp days.

Some local conservation groups run amphibian monitoring (e.g. toad patrols) which show how active frog and toad movement

can be even this early in the year. Take great care driving along roads close to ponds!

Here are some tips for February wildlife watching:

- Dress warm and waterproof: February weather can be cold and wet, but wildlife is still active.
- Check local reserve calendars: Many nature trusts offer guided walks and citizen science activities.
- Early mornings and late afternoons are often the best times for bird and mammal activity, including foxes, deer, rabbits, hares, and even badgers.

There are great local green spaces around Keynsham where you can enjoy wildlife spotting in February - footpaths are open all year and can be rewarding for bird and mammal watching:

Keynsham Memorial Park - the River Chew boasts herons, kingfishers, water rail, and much more. There have even been sightings of otters passing through recently.

Somerdale - a walk beside the River Avon with a good chance of spotting cormorants, herons and even deer.

Manor Road Community Woodland - with birds, small mammals and early signs of spring flora.

Stockwood Vale - a mixture of scrub and open grassland where you might see buzzards, kestrels and even red kites hunting, or flocks of winter visitors.

These sightings are just a few examples of the diverse wildlife you can encounter in our area this month.

Whether you're a nature enthusiast or just looking to connect with the natural world, February offers a rich experience for wildlife watching.

Dave Sage


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KEYNSHAM IN BLOOM

Triangle is shaping up for a fine display



Mary, Keith and Lin working at the railway station

WE were lucky to have dry weather when our volunteers tidied and planted up the Triangle flowerbed at the corner of High Street and Bath Hill.

After an hour's work, most surplus plants from the wooden troughs were safely popped into the soil. A big thank-you to all involved.

Our wooden troughs have been planted with summer herbaceous plants and a central grass for height. For extra colour, pansies will be added this month and antirrhinums in May for summertime. Just writing about these additions makes me smile with anticipation and I hope you feel the same.

A huge mention must go to Dean at That Plant Place in Oldland Common, who supplied the herbaceous plants for our troughs together with a large amount of horticultural knowledge for which I am eternally grateful. His plant nursery opens this month so please keep him in mind.

As usual, we do not rest for long at Keynsham in Bloom and our Pocket Park is in need of some TLC, so we are starting an early get-together shortly.



Mary Woodman, Sally, Barbara, Phil and Sarah at the Triangle

Please feel free to join us for an hour. We are situated on Avon Road. Turn into Fox and Hounds Lane from Bath Hill and just continue up until you see a mural on the left-hand side. We are set down low so not easily seen. My email address is catherinemarywoodman@gmail.com for contact details.

Work to brush away the winter blues has started on the station flowerbeds, and our various containers outside the shops at Queens Road, Holmoak Road and Chandag Road are a work in progress and will look beautiful very shortly.

A date for your diary - March 28, 12pm to 4pm, Keynsham Spring Show at the Scout headquarters in Ashton Way. We will be selling plants, with lots to do for the children. We look forward to meeting you.

We have two new volunteers joining our station team and two have joined Keynsham in Bloom, so the extra support will be much appreciated. Thank you for giving up your time to make Keynsham a pretty town in which to live.

Stay safe, well and keep gardening.

Mary Woodman



Mary Woodman, Jenny, Keith, Sarah and Mary planting up High Street troughs

ADVERTISING FEATURE

Coffee time for good cause

SALTFORD Golf Club are delighted to be supporting Dorothy House Hospice Care at their popular annual coffee morning on Thursday March 12.

Dorothy House provide exceptional palliative care to anyone aged 18-plus as well as supporting their family (including children) and carers. The free services are available within Bath and North East Somerset, and parts of Somerset and Wiltshire, and can either be within an inpatient unit or home environment where more than 90% of their care takes place.

This support can be physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual or practical, partially funded by the NHS but predominantly by donations, charity shops or fundraising.

Please come along for an enjoyable morning at Saltford Golf Club and help us raise the additional vital £4 needed to boost every £1 provided by the NHS.

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at

SALTFORD GOLF CLUB

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Thursday 12 March 2026

10.00 am to 12 noon

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of
stalls

Entry includes free tea or coffee & biscuit

CASH ONLY EVENT

all proceeds to



LETTERS

Letters for publication can be sent to news@keynshamvoice.co.uk or by post to Letters, Keynsham Voice, 16 Ashmead Business Centre, Ashmead Road, Keynsham, BS31 1SX. The editor reserves the right to edit your letter.

We need another public meeting

Our town needs better infrastructure before taking on more new housing... Effect of heritage status is very unfair... Parish council opposes housing sites... Next step in bid for up to 200 homes.

Just a sample of the articles in *Keynsham Voice* in the last couple of months.

Betrayal of Saltford and Keynsham... New homes will add to traffic nightmare... BANES is lowering the quality of our life... We must engage with Local Plan... Now's the time for serious debate.

A selection of the letters from readers from these editions.

The concern centres around the fact that central government has advised Banes Council that it needs to provide 27,000 new homes by 2043, to be apportioned as 14,000 in the city of Bath and 13,000 in the smaller towns and rural areas.

Banes Council's response is that it will take 7,000 in Bath, leaving the remaining 20,000 to be built outside of Bath, using Bath's heritage status as the reason for the decision.

Any sensible citizen of Banes will accept that the historical areas of Bath must be protected, as they are a huge tourist asset drawing much-needed funding into the area.

However, there are numerous green fields on the outskirts of Bath that could be considered for house building in the same way that Banes Council is imposing this on green fields that surround places like Keynsham and Saltford.

In asking why this is not happening, one needs to look no further than the Banes Council website. The planning committee consists of 10 councillors - seven Lib Dems, one Labour, one Conservative and one Independent.

More to the point, six of the councillors represent wards in Bath, all of them Lib Dems, including the chair and vice chair of the committee.

According to the most updated figures, the population of Bath and North East Somerset is 200,000, with 95,000 living in Bath and 105,000 outside.

This is a split of 47.5% in Bath and 52.5% outside, yet one of the most important, influential and possibly contentious committees when it comes to decision-making is loaded 60% in favour of Bath Lib Dem councillors.

How did this occur? The



A public meeting held at The Space, Keynsham, last autumn, ahead of the public consultation on the local plan options document

answer, I think, is simply down to the overwhelming presence of Lib Dem councillors on Banes Council, where they control about two thirds of the council wards, of which about 70% are in the city of Bath.

The council should have had the courage to advise national government it was not able to build 14,000 houses in the city of Bath and that equally it was not prepared to impose the balance on rural areas. But no – the Lib Dem councillors took the easy option and chose to bottle it!

I live in Keynsham East, where I am represented by two Lib Dem councillors who I hold in highest regard, but they stand no chance, as do the other Lib Dem councillors who represent wards in rural parts, of combatting the wishes of the Bath group.

I do believe that a public meeting is called for in Keynsham to which we ask the chair and vice chair of planning to attend, as they are there to consider the views of the public who contribute to the allowances of £28,232 and £15,688 that they respectively receive from the public purse. Is there enough support for this?

Mike Barrow

We must engage with local plan

I thank Paul Sims and Hossein Pirooz for their balanced and constructive letters in January's *Voice* on the critically important local plan process.

Hysterical, wedge-driving sniping from the sidelines, misrepresenting facts and desperately seeking non-existent conspiracies under every bush ill serve the residents of Keynsham and Saltford.

It is essential that we all engage fully in the local plan process over the coming months to ensure

that we achieve the best possible outcomes for our communities.

Fortunately, we are well blessed in the quality and commitment of the great majority of our B&NES councillors, who work long and dedicated hours on the public committees and panels where so much of the real work of the council is done, influencing strategy and creating policy to all of our benefit.

Planning has never been regarded as a party-political issue, and I applaud our Keynsham councillors who have parked their party badges and are working together to identify optimal solutions in the face of the challenges posed by central government. They are a credit to us all.

Alastair Singleton

Has anyone seen our elusive MP?

ANYONE seen Dan Norris MP? He has recently advised that he is not resigning as our MP despite having been banned from the House of Commons since April last year.

He is apparently handling casework, policy queries and asking questions in Parliament - in writing, presumably, as he is banned from the parliamentary estate, which his website gives as his address for contact.

Is he holding consultations with constituents? I see no mention of them on his website. Is he helping anyone or any organisation?

Please let us know - I'm confident he's still drawing his £90k-plus annual salary, whatever his activities.

Personally, I'm beginning to suspect we may be witnessing a politician placing his own interests above those of his constituents, of which I am one.

I hope to be proved wrong when you are inundated with

correspondence detailing his diligence on our behalf. Time will tell.

Greg Bryan

● Call for action: Page 7

Wood smoke adds to my suffering

What happened to the smokeless zone rule implemented to create a safer environment?

I'm 2.5 years into recovering from a very invasive operation called a lobectomy - the top lobe of my left lung was removed to surgically remove an untreatable type of lung cancer. I also have very severe COPD (emphysema) in my right lung.

The smoke from wood burning stoves and heaters causes me a lot of pain and discomfort and makes it almost impossible to breathe. Last night I couldn't sit outside my bungalow for fresh air, nor I could I go for an after-dinner walk, due to the effects of woods smoke on my lungs.

I'm 70 years old and severely disabled and am speaking for countless people like myself, who are suffering because of people's lack of understand and empathy.

Richard Gasiorek

Editor's note: According to the Bath & North East Somerset Council website, the city of Bath is a designated Smoke Control Area, but properties within Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Radstock and the surrounding villages are not.

Christmas Angels came to my aid

On Saturday December 20, I was taken to Waitrose to buy some plants. The helpful taxi company advised of a long wait to return and suggested I ask Waitrose if they could help.

Staff member Linda phoned for a taxi but with no success. I was then taken to the restaurant area and supplied with tea.

As I settled down for my not-unexpected wait, the kindly lady and gentleman at the next table spoke to me, discovered the situation and suggested they would take me home.

My shopping trolley was collected, Linda, the kind counter lady, was alerted, the car boot was opened, my shopping put in, and the trolley taken back.

I was driven home, and everything was taken inside and left carefully in my kitchen.

The Christmas Angels then left. A big thank-you to all.

Evangeline Skinner

NEWS

Students board the bus to their future



Broadlands pupils on the bus with Anthony Dutton

A CHARITY has teamed up with Lift Broadlands – formerly Broadlands Academy – in Keynsham to help students unlock their potential.

I Can & I Am works with hundreds of primary, secondary, private, and special educational needs (SEN) schools across the region to equip young people with skills to nurture self-belief and build resilience.

With 90% of school leaders reporting an increase in the number of students experiencing stress over the past five years, mental health support has become a growing focus in educational settings.

Laura Stone, principal at Lift Broadlands, said: "Working with fantastic organisations like I Can & I Am is essential to provide

our students with the wider support they need to manage the demands of being a teenager today.

"Talking about their feelings, what they are good at, and learning how to think positively in a safe space develops the strategies they need when they face times of struggle."

The charity runs sessions on its two double-decker buses to help young people build practical tools that support personal growth, resilience and a sense of belonging.

Sessions begin with cooking a pizza downstairs to foster togetherness and achievement, followed by a workshop upstairs on the bus, which focuses on inflating the young participants' 'balloons' of self-belief.

Ms Stone said: "The staff on the bus instantly made our students feel welcome and created an environment where it was safe to share. It has been a brilliant few days."

I Can & I Am's workshop leaders have worked with more than 32,000 young people in the South of England since 2015. The average score given by pupils after a workshop is 4.8 out of 5, with 82% saying they feel their self-belief was higher following their session.

The charity is in its 10th year, having been founded by inspirational speaker and former teacher James Shone after he lost his sight due to a brain tumour.

Rebecca Burton, CEO of I Can & I Am, said: "We know, from the work we do in schools and

from neuroscientific research, that how children feel about themselves is critical to learning outcomes.

"Self-belief isn't just a 'nice to have', it directly affects engagement, memory, motivation and long-term outcomes. It is the foundation that learning essential skills and knowledge rest on and supports students' ability to unlock their full potential.

"Every young person should be given the tools and support they need to believe in themselves so they can become who they want to be."

The education charity is planning regular trips to work with pupils at Lift Broadlands, and to potentially extend support to other Lift schools.



LETTERS

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20mph limits exist to protect people

In response to Alan Hale's opposition to the extension of 20mph speed limits in Keynsham ['Road rage fears over 20mph limit bid', *Voice* January issue], he risks confusing poor driver behaviour with a policy that is proven to save lives and improve neighbourhoods.

20mph limits are not introduced to inconvenience drivers; they exist to protect people.

National and international evidence is clear: lower speeds reduce the likelihood and severity of collisions, particularly for pedestrians and cyclists.

At 20mph, a person struck by a vehicle is far more likely to survive

The current 20mph limit along Charlton Road from High Street ends just south of the junction with Charlton Park



than at 30mph. That fact alone justifies their use in residential areas such as those along Charlton Road. I cycle daily around Keynsham and know what it's like having cars speeding past at well over 30mph giving me very little space. As a local councillor, I also speak to families who want to have roads they can cycle along with

their children and feel safe.

In Keynsham, many of the roads where we have 20mph limits pass homes, schools, nurseries, parks and local shops. These are shared spaces, not racetracks.

Residents - particularly parents, older people and those with disabilities - have consistently said they feel safer and more confident

walking and cycling where 20mph limits are in place. That confidence is vital if we want healthier, more connected communities.

It is worth remembering that quieter streets, reduced noise, and improved air quality are all well-documented benefits of lower speeds. These are not abstract ideals; they affect daily life in towns like Keynsham.

Finally, can I ask drivers to respect the 20mph speed limits - they are a sensible, evidence-based measure that prioritises safety and quality of life. Pedestrians, cyclists and road users are often unpredictable, so slowing down might even save someone from serious injury - even if not your fault.

Martin Burton

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

Adult Non-Fiction

February sees the launch of our Festival of Libraries (February 7 to 21) - please pick up a programme at your local library. For two weeks we celebrate all things library, so with this in mind

Reading Allowed

Chris Paling

I love this book and re-read it all the time. The author went for a job at his local library expecting a quiet life surrounded by books. Within two weeks that illusion was shattered.

He describes his average day as dealing with toilet blockages; homeless people; those who are mentally ill; a venue for all things community, such as knitting groups and book groups; and of course, a busy children's area.

Although it is a bit of a busman's holiday read for me, it is funny and heartwarming.

Wild: A Journey from Lost to Found

Cheryl Strayed

This powerful memoir, which was made into a film starring Reese Witherspoon, is about a women's 1,100-mile solo hike along the Pacific Crest Trail in USA, which covers the Mojave Desert through California, Oregon and finally Washington State.

At the age of 22, Cheryl Strayed thinks she has lost everything following the death of her mother and the end of her marriage, and her life goes into freefall. But four years later, she browses through

a brochure about the Pacific Crest Trail at a grocery shop - and with nothing to lose, she decides to hike the trail alone. She faces snakes, bears, intense heat and record snowfalls. She encounters physical agonies, intense loneliness but also the kindness of strangers and the healing nature of travel. This is a funny, sad, raw story that is compelling and brilliantly written.

Adult Fiction

The Winter Belle

Dilly Court

Dilly Court's books regularly top the bestseller lists. This is one of her latest stories. In a snowy London in the 19th century, we meet Kitty, a talented artist who makes a few pennies from her portrait paintings and lives with her mother and her sisters in Soho Square. However, there is always danger lurking around the corner.

One of Kitty's sisters is drawn into a reckless affair with the son of Lord Bracklesham, and her mother is then swindled out of all their money. Can Kitty's courage pull the family out of danger? And what about her own feelings for Inspector Will Barton?

North and South

Elizabeth Gaskell

A classic story by the Victorian author Elizabeth Gaskell, who was a great friend of Charlotte Brontë.

Margaret Hale is forced to abandon her idyllic Hampshire home when her father leaves the

church on a matter of "conscience", and they move to the industrial town of Milton.

Although Margaret is repulsed by the town's ugliness, she soon becomes friends with one of the mill workers and develops of a strong sense of social justice.

Her father begins to teach literature to one of the mill-owners, John Thornton, and so begins one of the great romantic relationships. Margaret initially despises John Thornton for the way he treats his workers and for being in "trade", but as with all great stories, there are many twists and turns before the end.

Children's Fiction

Asterix in Britain

R Goscinný & A Uderzo

This is my favourite story about Asterix, who is hugely popular with children and adults. I still love reading these tales and spotting all the funny cultural references.

Here Asterix and his indomitable friend Obelix are joined by Asterix's far-removed British cousin Anti-Climax, who drinks a cup of hot water with a spot of milk!

His cousin needs some magic potion to help defeat the Romans. So an adventure begins with the Gauls going to the wilds of Britannia. They meet Romans, see an early rugby match and still make it home for a feast. Enjoy!

House of Robots

James Patterson and Chris Grabenstein

What a riot of a book this is! Sammy Hayes-Rodriguez appears to be just a normal boy from a normal family, but that impression changes when he brings a robot to school.

Sammy's life is full of robots - there is Blitzen, the huge

lawnmower robot; Mr Moppen-shine, the crazy robot butler; and even McFetch, a robot dog. But for Sammy, the worst robot is

Einstein, who is convinced he is Sammy's brother and is also really annoying. Read on to discover how Sammy comes to appreciate "E", particularly after a kidnap, and sees how great his unique brother is.

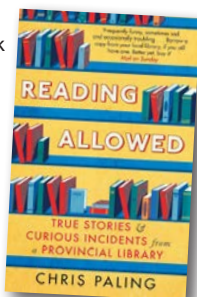
Library news

Look out for the BookTrust storytimes this month for our younger readers. We will be showcasing a selection of books in our Storytime sessions and you get a chance to vote on your favourite.

There is so much going on in all our libraries, and it's all free. So drop in and see what's on offer. Tuesday 9.30-10am and 10.30-11.00am term time only, 0-5 years, for families with children, sing along at Baby Bounce and Rhyme, or get comfy whilst listening to our ever-popular Storytime, Thursday 10.30am at Keynsham Library, term time for 0-4 years.

For adults, we've got book clubs, writing classes, and much more throughout the year. Joining the library costs nothing, so pop in or visit www.librarieswest.org.uk to also access thousands of eBooks, eMagazines, Audiobooks, and a wealth of other resources.

Our 'Virtual Library' has loads going on, including competitions, book reviews and, all our digital offers. Search 'Bath and North East Somerset Libraries' on social media or visit <https://baneslibraries.co.uk/>





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NEWS

'Political decision' on homes claim denied

THE accusation that Liberal Democrats made a "political decision" to concentrate new housing in Saltford and Keynsham has been countered by a local councillor.

Duncan Hounsell (Lib Dem) dismissed as a "wild claim" the statement in a leaflet issued to local households by fellow Saltford councillor Chris Warren.

The leaflet, entitled 'Saltford Under Siege' was distributed in the village on behalf of Cllr Warren, a member of the Independents for B&NES group.

In it, Cllr Warren is critical of both the B&NES draft local plan – which recommends where new housing developments could be built until 2043 – and the West of England Combined Authority's proposals to shape the future of travel along the A4 between Bath and Bristol.

He states that if the proposals are implemented in full, they would create "a permanent and disastrous change to our lovely village, its surroundings and our quality of life."

Cllr Warren points out that the three Saltford sites earmarked for potential new housing in the local plan are on land that was designated green belt to prevent urban sprawl.

"Yet what is being forced on us is precisely that, the further joining up of Keynsham and Saltford."

Cllr Warren then turns on the B&NES Liberal Democrats for what he terms their "betrayal".

"Since those infamous words of Lib Dem councillor Matt McCabe's public statement 'there's no point fighting this', it is now crystal clear that a political decision has been made to concentrate housing in our area, putting immense pressure on the A4, schools and medical provision."

Cllr Hounsell responded to this claim at the January meeting of Saltford Parish Council.

He said: "This statement is untrue because it would be illegal to make such a decision and predetermine the outcome of the public consultations."

"The local plan is being developed at arm's length by the planning department under delegated powers. There can be no political interference in a process whose steps are set out in law. If there were political interference, B&NES Council and individual councillors would have serious consequences."

"My party group has never discussed formally or informally the options for housing allocations. Options for Saltford had to be considered only because of Labour's doubling of the housing target and local landowners offering their land for future housing."

"The only way to resist inappropriate housing development is by providing sound planning objections site by site in the public consultations."

"I thank all the residents in Saltford who did this and responded to the recent consultation and the earlier one at the start of 2024."

In the leaflet, Cllr Warren also says Saltford faces the

prospect of being overwhelmed by traffic because of the district recycling centre in Pixash Lane, Keynsham, new housing developments on the A4 and, potentially, a new Aldi store.

"However, when these points are put to Liberal Democrats, they seem to glaze over and be in denial."

He also accuses B&NES Lib Dems of hiding behind Bath's world heritage status to protect the city from new housing, forcing the burden onto other parts of the district, and for allowing student accommodation to be built in Bath instead of housing.

Cllr Hounsell commented: "This 'Independents for B&NES' group is a small group of three on the council and is hostile to the B&NES Lib Dem administration. I expect more such posturing from them."

The *Voice* approached Cllr Warren for a response but received no reply by the time we went to press.

● **Heritage status row: Page 37**

MESSAGE FROM POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

Neighbourhood policing gets results

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Their checks revealed

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

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

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



With Police and Crime Commissioner Clare Moody

Save the date for Spring Show return

Photos by Mike May



ATTENTION Gardeners, Crafters, Bakers and Artists of every age!

Keynsham Town Council is excited to announce they will be hosting their popular Spring Show on Saturday 28th March 2026 from 12-4:30pm at the 1st Keynsham Scout Headquarters and The Guiding Association Hall on Ashton Way.

With over 100 competitive classes available, there is something for everyone to enter and enjoy. The Horticultural Classes remain a key part of the show, while the popular Cookery Section continues to grow, including an expanded 'Free-from' category to support a range of dietary needs.

The Honey, Preserves and Chutney classes have become firm favourites, and there are also classes available in Arts and Handicrafts, Photography, and an inclusive Children's Category, now offering over five classes.

Now a much-loved event in the Keynsham Town Council's Community Events diary and arriving with the warmer weather, the Keynsham Spring Show returns for its fourth year.

Beyond the competitive classes, the Spring Show offers plenty for the whole family to enjoy. The popular Pet Corner will run from 12-4pm, giving visitors the chance to meet and cuddle rabbits, guinea pigs and other small furry friends. Two face painters will create nature-inspired free face painting for children aged 3 and over.



The 'Speakers in the Shed' will return with local community experts delivering three engaging 30-minute talks throughout the day, covering the topics of small garden insects, artisan bread-making, and bee-keeping. No booking is required, simply drop in on the day to learn something new, spark your curiosity, and connect with fellow community members.

New for 2026! To encourage the young and young at heart to grow their own vegetables, the show is launching a 'Grow Your Own' potato competition, where for just £5 members of the community can take home a potato-growing sack and potato seeds.

Participants will be tasked with nurturing and growing their potatoes throughout the summer months and then bring back the potato sack full of freshly grown potatoes to the Farmer's Market on Saturday 8th August, where the heaviest crop will win a much-sought-after 'Jelly Cat' potato plush toy!

Attendees are invited to bring their colourful Easter Bonnet creations along on the day and

enter the Easter Bonnet Competition.

"It has been incredible to see how the Keynsham Spring Show has grown over the past four years," said Katherine Sears, Deputy Town Clerk, Keynsham Town Council.

"The number of classes have now doubled and it has captured a real depth of skills and expertise from our community. The variety of interest continues to bring people together, and it's exciting to see the show is developing as a great day out for the whole family."

Keynsham Town Council would like to thank their 2026 sponsors: Smart Computers, Redfern Osteopaths, Savour Kitchen and Farm Shop, Keynsham Photo Centre, The Old Bank, Bargain Booze, WW Memorials, FDC Law, Muse Dental, Rose Holistic Therapies, Wild About Flowers and Perfect Fit, whose contributions will make this year's event special.

In addition, a special thank-you to the 1st Keynsham Scouts for their continued support and use of the Scout Headquarters and to Keynsham Guiding Association for the use of their hall, enabling the event to deliver an even bigger, delightful seasonal community event.

Full details of the Spring Show including details of competitive classes and an online registration form can be found on the Keynsham Town Council website or by scanning the QR code printed here.

Keep an eye out on Facebook and Instagram posts for more details and deadlines for entries - <http://www.keynsham-tc.gov.uk>

From cookery to chess, Youth Club is thriving

KEYNSHAM Town Council's 'TimeOut' Youth Club is a vibrant and popular space, with the Centre offering a wide range of age appropriate activities for young people.

Activities such as Karaoke, creative time in the music studio, video gaming, and arts and crafts are enjoyed regularly, whilst cooking sessions remain a core part of the programme. Young people are learning to cook a variety of simple, healthy meals while developing budgeting skills through shopping for ingredients and bulk buying.

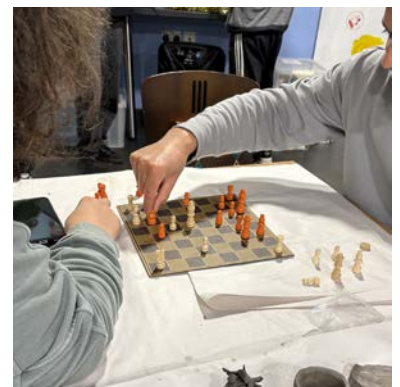
Seasonal activities were a highlight at the end of 2025, including festive crafts, Christmas cracker-making and a successful Christmas dinner cooking session supported by volunteer Maggie.

The Centre also opened for the Winter Festival,

welcoming regular attendees, families and new young people, with existing members helping to support the event. A monthly sports club has launched, attracting 22 young people to its first session including table tennis.

Overall, the Youth Club continues to provide a positive, engaging and supportive environment, helping young people build skills, confidence and connections within the community.

'TimeOut' Youth Centre is located on 16 Bath Hill, Keynsham BS31 1HG and drop-in sessions are as follows: Wednesdays and Thursdays 6-8pm for 14-19 year olds and Fridays 4-6pm for 11-14 year olds. For any further information or queries, please telephone 0117 9868683 or email youthleader@keynsham-tc.gov.uk.



■ NEWS FROM KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Chance to nominate your local heroes



KEYNSHAM Town Council is inviting residents to nominate individuals for the Good Citizen Award 2026, celebrating those who make an outstanding contribution to the town and community.

Established in 2007, the award recognises dedication, compassion, and service, including volunteering, leadership, sporting or cultural achievements, or professional contributions that benefit Keynsham.

The award has four categories:

- Young Citizen Award (Under 25s)
- Good Citizen Award (Over 25s)
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Service to the Community Award

Winners will be invited to the Annual Town Meeting on Thursday 23rd April to receive a framed certificate, a £100 donation to a Keynsham-based charitable cause of their choice, and the opportunity to give a short presentation.

Town Clerk Dawn Drury said: "Our town has many remarkable people whose dedication makes Keynsham a better place. The Good Citizen Award is our way of recognising their contribution."



Scan here to access nomination form

Nominations are open until Friday 27th February 2026. Submit via the QR code or visit the Keynsham Town Council website: <http://www.keynsham-tc.gov.uk>. Paper forms are also available at the council office.

All nominators will be notified by the end of March 2026.



On 12th November 2025, Keynsham Town Council launched 'Shopwatch' via the platform DISC, a new online initiative designed to help local businesses share information on anti-social behaviour, shoplifting and low-level crime.

DISC is a free, secure information-sharing system for local businesses; it does not replace police reporting but supports local awareness through a member-only platform, providing alerts, news and reporting tools.

"We are pleased to announce that 8 businesses have become members of the initiative, and we will encourage more sign-ups from local businesses as it will become a reliable source of information for our business community," said Amanda Leonard, Business and Community Engagement Officer for Keynsham Town Council.

Businesses are invited to contact Amanda Leonard amandal@keynsham-tc.gov.uk to begin the sign-up process. Further information is available from the Keynsham Town Council website - <http://www.keynsham-tc.gov.uk>

Choosing the Right Council Service

Bath & North East Somerset Council	KEYNSHAM TOWN COUNCIL
Statutory and Regional Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parking & Travel Blue Badge Holders & Parking Fines. Rubbish & Recycling Rubbish Collections. Planning & Building Control Council Tax & Benefits Library & Information Services Reserve Library Items, Print Services, Room Hire & Exhibition Space. Streets & Highways Maintenance Roadworks, Street Furniture and Lighting, Pavements, Highways Drainage, Litter, Street Care & Cleaning. Housing Finding a Home, Energy Advice & Landlords. Birth, Marriage & Deaths Adult Social Care & Health Substance Abuse, Disability, Mental Health & Available Support. Children, Young People & Families Adoption, Fostering & Help with SEND. Trading Standards Business, Advice Consumer Advice, Health & Safety at Work & Food Standards. Public Health & Environment Asbestos, Flooding, Pest Control, Climate Emergency, Pollution, Trees & Woodlands Ecology & Biodiversity & Green Infrastructure. 	Local Community Services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keynsham Cemetery Durley Hill, Keynsham. Allotments Park Road. Some Bus Stops Including K1 bus service management. Play Areas & Open Spaces Upper & Lower Memorial Park, including Skate Park, Park Road, Downfield, Kelston Road including basketball facilities, Teviot Road including basketball facilities, Holmoak Road, Manor Road playing fields including booking football pitches & pavilion. Some Footpaths Annual £30K Grant Awards Awarded to Local Organisations £20K for General Grants & £10K for Environmental Projects. Consultation on Neighbourhood Planning Events Keynsham Winter Festival, Bandstand Concerts, Keynsham Business Forum, Spring Show & Remembrance Parade. Time Out Youth Club Service

Bath & North East Somerset Council
01225 394041 Council Connect
01225 477000 main switchboard
councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk
One Stop Shop, Keynsham Library

Keynsham Town Council
01179 868683
admin@keynsham-tc.gov.uk
15-17 Temple Street, Keynsham, BS31 1HF

DO you know which Council service to contact? Keynsham is served by TWO local authorities and quite often the question is raised: "Who do I speak to?"

Keynsham Town Council is the first tier of Local Government; its focus is on local community services such as community events, community grants and youth services, Keynsham Cemetery and Play Areas. The Town Council are independent of B&NES Council and made up of 15 Councillors, all of whom are volunteers and live locally.

Bath & North East Somerset Council (B&NES Council) is the Unitary Authority for the Keynsham area and provides statutory and regional services including planning, housing, roadworks, health and social care, waste management, recycling and much more.

Here is a guide to help you understand the different services delivered between Keynsham Town Council and B&NES Council. You can also find the information on the Keynsham Town Council website



Keynsham Town Council is responsible for some bus stops, such as those serving the K1

<http://www.keynsham-tc.gov.uk>. Next time you need support and you're not sure who to contact, please refer to this visual where you should find the right Council service to help; alternatively, pop into the Keynsham Town Council offices, 15-17 Temple Street, for information you can take away and keep.

■ NEWS

Meet your councillors

LABOUR councillors representing Keynsham South on both Bath & North East Somerset Council and Keynsham Town Council will be holding a drop-in session for local residents this month.

It will take place at Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, on Saturday February 21 from 10am to 11am.

Residents are invited to come along and raise any local issues, concerns, or ideas directly with their councillors.

Martin Burton, town councillor for Keynsham South, said: "We want to make sure that everyone in Keynsham South feels heard. This drop-in is an opportunity for residents to speak with us face-to-face about the issues that matter most to them and their community."

All residents are welcome – no appointment is necessary.

■ THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH



Revd Josette Crane

● Any one of us can be a friend or a peacemaker. All of us can respond with compassion to those who are needy around us.

ON the first of February we passed the midway point between the winter solstice and the spring equinox. It's a time when we can really look forward to the start of spring, whatever the weather may be like when you are reading this.

The first of February is the date when we celebrate one of Ireland's best-known saints, St Brigid, a figure very much associated with the coming of spring.

Born around 453 BCE in a time of transition from paganism to Christianity in Ireland, her father was a local chieftain, and there are many tales of her driving her parents to distraction with her charitable giving to those in need around her. One legend tells that she gave away her father's sword to provide food for a hungry family.

Through much persistence she persuaded her family to allow her to become a nun, and she established a double monastery for women and men on the low hills of Kildare around 480 CE.

This monastery and its church became a centre of worship, learning and hospitality for more than 1,000 years, a place of pilgrimage for many Christians. There is a beautiful 13th century cathedral still standing on the monastic site today.

St Brigid is a patron saint of healers and midwives, bringing both renewed life and brand-new life, so we can see how she is linked to the start of springtime.

A bridge between the Celtic goddess Brigid and the new Christianity, she is an expression of transformation in our spiritual lives. She gave spiritual guidance and soul friendship to many and worked to bring reconciliation between rival clans. St Brigid was a beacon of compassion and peacemaking.

Brigid was an ordinary person who became extraordinary through her close walk with Jesus. Any one of us can be a friend or a peacemaker. All of us can respond with compassion to those who are needy around us. You can be the source of light and the beginning of spring to someone in a dark place at this time.

● Revd Josette Crane is a retired Methodist minister living in Keynsham, serving as chaplain in the oldest Methodist building in the world - John Wesley's New Room in Broadmead Bristol.

Find out more about visiting the original chapel and award-winning cafe and museum at www.newroombristol.org.uk

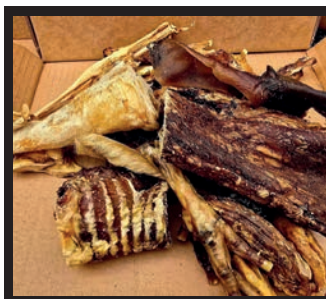


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NEWS

Council tax precept for parish up by 25%

SALTFRD Parish Council has decided to increase its council tax precept for 2026/27 by 25%.

This means the cost for an average Band D property will be £40.20 per year, a rise of £7.76 per year, compared with 2025/26. Because of changes to Saltford's tax base, the increase will be shown as 23.9% on B&NES Council's council tax letters.

The parish council said it recognises that any increase is of concern to residents, particularly in the current economic climate, but it cites three main factors for the rise.

The first is the fact that B&NES Council is to start charging parish and town councils for the cost of running elections. The indicative cost to Saltford is £4,700 for scheduled elections (from May 2027) and £6,600 for any by-elections from April 2026.

The second reason is the cost of essential maintenance at St Mary's churchyard.



During the current financial year, a partial wall collapse and associated repairs, plus routine maintenance such as tree works, is set to have cost the parish council about £9,750, well over the original budget of £2,500.

In view of this, the churchyard maintenance budget has been increased to £6,000 for planned repairs in 2026/27, with an additional £2,000 earmarked for emergency repairs if required.

Saltford Parish Council has decided to increase its maintenance budget for St Mary's churchyard, where walls have needed repairs

development in the context of the B&NES Council Local Plan and from any speculative planning applications that may threaten the green belt.

The parish council said that any spending from this budget would be discussed and formally resolved at future council meetings, ensuring transparency and that, as always, members of the public are welcome to participate during 'public time' before any expenditure decisions are made.

The council said that, despite the 25% increase, its average Band D precept is expected to remain one of the lowest in the B&NES area, "reflecting careful financial management while meeting essential responsibilities."

The total figure for a Band D property in Saltford – including parish, police and fire precept – was set at £2,239.13 for 2025/26. B&NES Council will decide on its element of the council tax for 2026/27 in due course.



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Keynsham & District




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visit www.keynshammencap.org.uk

NEWS



Right, an image showing how Tintagel Close is set to be transformed



Old homes make way for new as demolition at Tintagel Close starts

DEMOLITION work has begun on the derelict Tintagel Close estate in Keynsham.

A total of 44 three-bed maisonettes that were built in the 1960s are being knocked down to make way for 45 energy-efficient homes.

They will range from one to four bedrooms, with several adapted for wheelchair use. Each home will have its own private entrance, designated parking and electric vehicle charging point.

Most of the homes will be "affordable" and available for subsidised social rent, typically 40% below the market rate.

**Bath & North East
Somerset Council**

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NEWS



Bath & North East Somerset Council granted housing association Curo planning permission for the scheme last year.

As demolition started on January 20, Sarah Maylor,

Curo's director of development, said: "We're so excited this day has finally arrived – it's the start of a journey that will completely transform this site."

"And as we say goodbye to Tintagel Close, we look forward

to amazing new affordable homes set in beautiful green space.

"We're a not-for-profit, which means we're led by our values. That's why we're investing £16 million here - we care about

this community and want it to be a great place to live."

Construction of the replacement homes is due to start in March and the whole project is scheduled to be completed by January 2028.



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■ NEWS

Ballot on pay strike looms as morale of

CHILDREN'S social care workers at Bath and North East Somerset Council are balloting for strike action after controversial pay changes left morale "shot to bits."

Over 40 people, including UNISON staff from across the council, attended a "practice picket" outside Keynsham Civic Centre on January 14.

Team managers and deputy team managers in children's social care are being asked to vote on whether to take industrial action, after they were put on the same pay grade as some of the staff they manage.

An earlier "indicative" ballot, to measure support for industrial action ahead of an official ballot, came back 100% in favour on a 100% turnout.

UNISON branch chair Amy Rushton said: "B&NES is underpaying its managers in children's social care compared to other local authorities and it is the only local authority that has a bottleneck where front-line staff are managed by workers on



Social workers and team managers David Wells and Claire Luxton at the UNISON practice picket

the same grade. They have got this wrong but are refusing to put it right. The longer this goes on, the more staff we are going to lose."

UNISON branch secretary Toni Mayo warned: "People are leaving in droves and workloads are unsafe. It's utter chaos, and members are angry both about what the council are doing and how it's being done."

The ballot was due to close on February 4, with the result expected to be made public



Labour councillors Martin Burton, Dave Biddleston, Chris Davis, Deb Cooper

within days. A host of roles across the council were regraded in 2025 as part of the council's "being out best" programme (BOB).

Ms Mayo said: "BOB itself was imposed unilaterally despite being rejected by members in a consultative ballot, and without any worker input into role profiles."

"Communications have been incredibly poor - it's not unusual for people to wait weeks for a response from this 'ask BOB'

email address. Three-quarters of appeals about role profiles and grades were at least partially upheld, with two-thirds fully upheld."

She added: "Morale is shot to bits. In children's social care we've been told we have to wait almost an extra year for a resolution."

A spokesperson for Bath and North East Somerset Council said: "Changes to pay structures are complex, and there are many factors to consider. We worked

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NEWS

children's social workers is 'shot to bits'



with unions and staff over long period of time to look at a wider set of changes to pay and role profiles across the council which were implemented last year.

"All our staff are valued and we are listening to children's services and have been working hard with Unison and Acas to resolve this."

Among those attending the "practice picket" in Keynsham Civic Centre was social worker

and team manager Claire Luxton, who has worked for the council for 15 years.

She said: "In this job we go above and beyond. We do it because we love the job and the council isn't supporting us."

Colleague David Wells added: "I feel really sad that the council can't support its social work managers."

"For a workforce that operates almost solely on

goodwill, it has quickly run out."

Labour Keynsham town councillors Martin Burton, Chris Davis, and Deb Cooper also attend the practice picket, along with Dave Biddleston (also Labour), who represents Keynsham South on Bath and North East Somerset Council.

Mr Biddleston said: "Social work is a highly skilled profession, and we should be paying people fairly for their

expertise, experience and responsibility.

"When pay structures fail to reflect real-world roles and accountability, it damages morale, retention and ultimately the safety and quality of services. Councils cannot afford to get this wrong."

BOB was met with protests when it was introduced in 2025. Although it resulted in a pay increase for most council staff, pay for 106 roles at the council was reduced.

Under the council's pay protection policy, the people in those roles had their pay frozen for three years, after the national pay award is applied, to avoid people suffering a pay cut - but concerns remained about real-terms losses and that some people could end up with less money on their payslip when the pay freeze expires.

The BOB acronym was also criticised as "demeaning."

John Wimperis, Local Democracy Reporting Service

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14 February – 21 June 2026



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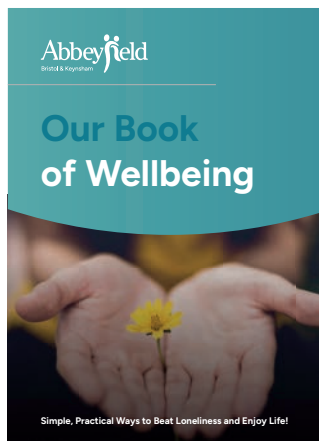
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Photo by Stephen Pitkin / Pitkin Studio, courtesy Souls Grown Deep

Why Wellbeing Matters as You Get Older

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

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

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



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



1. Connect

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

2. Be Active

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

3. Keep Learning

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

4. Give

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

5. Take Notice

Pause and appreciate the little

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



Ready to embrace a lifestyle that supports your wellbeing?

Discover our supported living homes today and start your journey to a happier, healthier future.

Contact us:

Phone: **0117 973 6997**

e-mail: abbeyfield-bristol.co.uk

Website: abbeyfield-bristol.co.uk



Our Local Houses: Abbeyfield Bristol & Keynsham

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

NEWS

Wombles' riverside clean-up success



KEYNSHAM Wombles helped to keep their town tidy by picking litter from around the riverside Lock Keeper pub.

The bags of rubbish they collected from around the pub on Keynsham Road was later collected by Bath & North East Somerset Council.

The Wombles' next group pick will be on the area around St Francis Church on Saturday March 21. Volunteers will meet at

9.30am outside the church, and hot drinks and refreshments will be available in the church after the pick finishes at 11.30am.

Anyone able to help is ask to contact coordinators@keynshamwombles.org, as having an idea of numbers will help organisers plan the event.

The Wombles will then take part in a Keynsham-wide pick on Saturday May 30. Volunteers will start by picking from

home and then radiate towards Keynsham Memorial Park, where they will meet up from around 11.30am for cake, hot drinks, and a catch-up. More details will follow closer to the time.

More information about Keynsham Wombles is available from keynshamwombles.org, their Facebook page, and by emailing enquiries@keynshamwombles.org

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Bristol & Keynsham

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WHAT'S ON

Friday February 6

■ Keynsham RUHX Fundraising Group meets at Keynsham Library (ground floor by Pam's Pantry) on the first Friday of the month, 10am-2pm. Free refreshments, chat and a chance to discuss future events and plans. Please drop in, everyone is welcome. All help gratefully received. No financial or time obligations/commitments necessary.

Monday February 9

■ Messy Church at Keynsham Methodist Church, Queens Road, BS31 2NN, 3.15pm-5.30pm, with our usual mix of craft activities, Bible story, songs, food and fun. All are welcome, book your place with the church office on 0117 9149408 or email bookings@keynshammethodistchurch.co.uk. Looking forward to seeing you.

Friday February 13

■ Wildlife talk, "A Buzz in the Garden - growing spaces bees will love", Keynsham Baptist Church, BS31 1DS, starting at 7.30pm. Entrance: Avon Wildlife Trust members £3.50, non-members £5, to include refreshments served at 7.15pm. All welcome, no booking required.

Sunday February 15

■ Saltford Community Association flea market, Saltford Hall, 10am-1pm. Over 40 stalls selling goods including household items, garage and attic clearance, toys and crafts etc. Café will be open, selling its popular bacon butties. For more information or to reserve a table, phone Angela on 01179 831 314.

Tuesday February 24

■ Open auditions, Oldland Village Club, 92 West St, Oldland Common, 8pm. The Oldland Players invite anyone interested to a read-through/auditions for our June play, an Agatha Christie drama. Contact us for more info - oldlandplayers@hotmail.co.uk, 0117 932 5882.

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

... on the FIRST Friday of every MONTH (NO dance in August or January) It's the ideal night out for the 30-60 age range. Come dance and socialise amongst a friendly, lively crowd. Dancing Thru' the Decades includes Motown, Soul, Club Classics... Music you can relate to. Club times are 9 'til 1. Last entry 11pm - very smart casual. No t-shirts or trainers and gents required to wear collared shirts. Entry: £8. www.mingles.co.uk. Facebook: @Luv2mingle

We would love to publicise your event

Send details of your events and activities in the following format:

WHAT IT IS WHERE IT IS WHEN IT IS

Email us at:
news@keynshamvoice.co.uk
or call us on 0117 908 2121/
07715 770448

Tuesday February 24

■ Saltford and Keynsham Flower Club's first demonstration of the year isn't Kathryn Delve at 2pm in Saltford Hall. It's entitled She Came For Tea - intriguing eh? Visitors welcome, entrance £10.

REGULAR EVENTS

Mondays

■ The Royal British Legion Women's Section Keynsham Branch meets on the first Monday of each month upstairs at the RBL Club, Charlton Road, Keynsham, BS31 2JA, 7.30pm. Occasional speakers, social events and outings.

■ Keynsham Bridge Club can now welcome new experienced players to our Monday evening sessions. Contact Pat 07442 160553 or Diane 0117 9861267.

■ Keynsham Brass Band, Broadlands School, St Francis Road, Keynsham, 7.30pm to 9.30pm term time. Trombonists particularly needed for traditional brass band. Friendly, relaxed group who play at summer fetes in Keynsham Memorial Park and a few concerts. Call Sarah Medley on 0117 4625626 or email sarah.medley1@btinternet.com, or see the Facebook page or webpage (Keynsham Brass Band).

■ Key Voices Community Choir meets Mondays at 7.30pm at St. Dunstan's Church Hall, BS31 2BQ (or third Monday of month at Royal British Legion). We sing a wide range of music, with occasional performances and social events. Friendly non-auditioned choir, all are welcome. First session free.

■ Key Ring, second Monday of the month, Key Centre, Charlton Road, Keynsham, 2.30pm to 4pm.

■ Saltford Whist Club, Saltford Hall. Monday afternoons 1.30pm-4pm. Contact Malcolm 01225 872555.

■ Children's Code Club (Years 4-6), Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road. Create games and animations, 4.30pm-5.30pm.

■ Foodbank, Key Centre, Charlton Road, Keynsham, 10am-12pm (not bank holidays).

Mondays/Tuesdays

■ Seated Pilates Class

Mondays and Tuesdays 11-11.30 am, Saltford Hall (Avon Room), Wedmore Road, Saltford. Seated Pilates includes all the benefits of a general class but the exercises are adapted for a seated or standing position. Ideal for those with a long-term health condition (e.g. arthritis or Parkinson's), loss of confidence, or those wanting to get fitter but have difficulty attending a floor-based session. 6-week block of classes £54. You are welcome to do a trial class first, £10. Please book your place by contacting Kate 07454 047536 www.corerehab-physio.co.uk

■ Beginners Pilates

Keynsham High Street. Friendly classes, helping to improve balance, strength and increasing flexibility. Mondays 5.45pm, Tuesday 9.30am (older adults). Call or message Sandhya 07565 976 129.

Mondays/Weds/Thursdays

■ The Victoria Centre of the Methodist Church in Keynsham High Street is open from 10am to 12 noon for coffee, biscuits and a chat. A great place to meet people. We have a children's area for play, and a book and card sale table. Come and join us, all are welcome.

Mondays/Fridays

■ Butterflies Haven, charity for families of children with autism, sessions Monday 6.30pm-8.30pm for our older 11-18 year olds and Friday 5.30pm-7.30pm for our 4-11 year olds. Sessions are held at St Francis Church, Keynsham. A safe space for children to be themselves supported by

volunteers. To join Butterflies Haven and get two taster sessions, complete the application form on www.butterflies-haven.com

Mondays/Thursdays

■ Yoga For Men

Monday 7-8pm and Thursday 7.30-8.30pm. Mixed ability. Two Rivers School, Hygge Park, BS31 1GE. Free 1st class, £9 thereafter. Loyalty card. Book online. Pay on the night - cash or contactless. See www.yogadad.co.uk for further details.

Tuesdays

■ Keynsham Mencap Football Team has spaces more people to join. They meet 7pm- 8.30pm on Tuesdays at Broadlands School. Open to people aged 16 and over with a learning disability and autism. Contact us by emailing Laura@keynshammencap.org.uk.

■ Welsh conversation group, The Old Manor House, Bristol Road, Keynsham, 7pm-8.30pm, third Tuesday of the month - February 17, March 17, April 21, May 19, June 16, July 21, (August no meeting), September 15, October 20, November 17, December 15. Free to attend. Organiser Catherine Dhanjal. Call Catherine on 07941669925 or follow <https://www.facebook.com/CymraegBrysteCaerfaddon>.

■ Scrabble Club, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, 2pm-4pm.

■ Badminton - friendly, beginners and improvers, mixed, adult (18 - 80) group play every Tuesday 10am-12 noon at Keynsham Leisure Centre. Ring Clive 0117 9866793 or just turn up.

■ Keynsham Orchestra rehearsals, Queen's Road Methodist Church Hall, 7.30pm-9.30pm. For more information, visit www.keynshamorchestra.org.uk/

■ Keynsham Girls' Brigade for girls aged 4 to 15 meet during term time, 6pm-7pm, at the Key Centre, Charlton Road, Keynsham. For more details, contact Linda on lindachrisp@hotmail.com.

■ Keynsham Sequence Dance Club, 7.30pm-10pm, Fear Hall, Keynsham, every Tuesday. Contact Brian and Jo, Keynsham Sequence Dance Club, on 0117 9868540, or just turn up. Everyone welcome.

WHAT'S ON

■ Salford Village Choir is preparing for its next concert on Tuesdays in the Wansdyke Room behind the main hall at Saltford Hall. Come along at 7.30pm and give it a try!

■ St Keyna Townswomen's Guild meets at the Fear Hall, Keynsham, from 10am to 12pm on the second Tuesday of each month. Contact Jill on 07446915414.

■ Public Living Room, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road. An open space to relax, keep warm, have a lunch, and meet other people. 12.30pm-4pm.

■ Ladies group meets on the first and third Tuesday of the month at Keynsham Methodist Church, Queens Road, BS31 2N, 2.30pm-4pm.

■ Craft group meets on the second and fourth Tuesday of the month in the Fellowship Room, Key Centre, Charlton Road, Keynsham, 2pm-4pm. All welcome.

Tuesdays/Weds/Saturdays

■ The Somerdale Shed and Community Garden is open Tuesday 6.30pm-9pm, Wednesday 9.30am to midday, and Saturday 9.30am to midday.

Tuesdays/Thursday

■ Play & Shine - new stay & play for children with SEN (with or without a diagnosis) 9.30am-11.30am, Queen's Road Methodist Church, Keynsham, BS31 2NN, Tuesday and Thursdays (term time only) for children aged 0-5 years. Free entry. Children can enjoy activities including sensory play, messy play, construction play, outdoor activities, music, role play, and a quiet area when they need calm time. Parents and carers stay during the session, with friendly volunteers on hand to support activities - giving you the chance to relax with a tea or coffee while your child plays. To register your interest, please email molly@keynshammencap.org.uk.

Tuesdays/Sundays

■ Indoor rowing classes Tues 7pm & Sun 10.15am, Saltford Rowing Centre, Bath Road, Saltford, BS31 3JS. Go Row Indoor exercise class caters for people of all ages and levels of fitness. Classes last 45-60 minutes using rowing machines. First class free, then £5 (or £18 pm). Email gorowindoor@avoncountyrrowingclub.org to book. More details <http://avoncountyrrowingclub.org.uk/>

Wednesdays

■ German conversation group, Old Manor House Hotel, Keynsham, 7pm-9pm, second Wednesday of the month - February 11, March 11, April 8, May 13, June 10, July 8, (August no meeting), September 9, October 14, November 11, December 9. Free to attend. Organiser Steve James. Join Keynsham Stammtisch on Facebook.

■ French conversation group, Old Manor House Hotel, Keynsham, 7pm-8.30pm, fourth Wednesday of the month - February 25, March 25, April 22, May 27, June 24, 22nd July 22, (August no meeting), September 23, October 28, November 25, December 23 (TBC). Free to attend. Organisers Steve James and Catherine Dhanjal. Call Catherine on 0794 1669925 or join L'Amicale Francaise de Keynsham on Facebook.

■ Hanham Bridge Club meets every Wednesday 7pm-10pm at Hanham Community Centre. New members and visitors welcome. See www.hanhambridgeclub.co.uk or call Graham 07790 491564.

■ Coffee and Craft, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, 10am-12 noon. For anyone who enjoys crafting with like-minded people.

■ Buggy walk, meet outside Keynsham Library 10.30am, then to Keynsham Methodist Church for coffee and play.

■ Keynsham's popular Good Afternoon Community Choir from 2pm-4pm at Keynsham Methodist Church / Victoria Centre. NO auditions and NO charge to attend your first 'meet us' rehearsal. Everyone welcome www.goodafternoonchoir.org

■ Oldland Ukulele Club is a mixed-ability group who meet every Wednesday at 1.30pm at Oldland Common United Reformed Church (the blue church), High Street, Oldland Common, BS30 9QN. Call/text 'Ukulele' Ben on 07910 668258.

■ Discipleship group meets on the first and third Wednesday of the month at Keynsham Methodist Church, Victoria Centre, High Street, 10.30am-11.30am.

■ Hanham Bridge Club meets each Wednesday 7-10pm at Hanham Community Centre, new members welcome. See www.hanhambridgeclub.co.uk or call Graham 07790 491564.

Wednesdays/Thurs/Friday

■ TimeOut Youth Centre, 16 Bath Hill, Keynsham, holds open drop-in sessions on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. The free sessions include cooking, baking, music studio recording, pool, table tennis, computers for internet use, gaming, arts & crafts, and other activities during half term and summer holidays. Wednesdays 6-8pm 14-19 years Thursdays 6-8pm 14-19 years Fridays 4-6pm 11-14 years For more information or queries, phone 0117 9868683 or email youthleader@keynsham-tc.gov.uk. Spaces available.

Thursdays

■ Keynsham & Saltford Dementia Action Alliance runs Music for the Mind sessions for people living with dementia and their carers. St Dunstan's Church Hall, Keynsham, 2nd and 4th Thursdays of each month, 10.30am-12.15pm. Singing and gentle exercises from 11am. No charge. www.keynshamdaa.co.uk, ksdaa22@gmail.com or 07392442966.

■ Pilates Classes

Taught by Chartered Physiotherapist Kate
Thurs 7-7.55pm (Intermediate)
Thurs 8-8.55pm (Beginners)
St Francis Church, Warwick Rd, Keynsham.
6-week block of classes £60.
You are welcome to do a trial class first, £10
1:1 sessions also available at my studio in Saltford
Book online or by contacting Kate 07454 047536
www.corerehab-physio.co.uk

■ ASP Poetry Circle, free entry, every third Thursday of each month, 11am-12pm, Keynsham Library, upstairs balcony, diagonally across from table in corner, by the window. Bring two or three poems, own or another poet's, to share. <https://asppoetrycircle.wordpress.com/>

■ Spanish class, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, 7pm-8.30pm.

■ Longwell Green Orchestra meet each Thursday at Longwell Green Community Centre, 7.30pm to 9.40pm. We have players of all abilities. Email Contact@longwellgreenorchestra.org or uk beforehand to tell us what instrument and what level.

■ Midweek worship at the Keynsham Methodist Church coffee morning (Victoria Centre, BS31 2JA). Join us for a relaxed short service at 11am. All welcome.

■ Art class, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, 10am-12 noon (term time only). Run by Bath City College. Learn and develop your artistic skills.

■ Dorothy House Coffee Connection, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, 10am-12 noon. A social group for anyone affected by cancer or life-limiting illness.

■ Get fit in 2026! Try social badminton for fun and fitness - only £3.20. No experience? No racket? No problem! Play at your own pace. Join friendly, mixed adult group (18-80+) drop-in session in Keynsham, Thursdays 10am-12noon. Ring Clive 01179866793.

■ Keynsham Town walking football for the over-50s, 7.15pm-8.30pm. Play football at a slower pace for fun and fitness. New members welcome. Contact keynshamtownwff@gmail.com.

Fridays

■ Pilates Classes

Taught by Chartered Physiotherapist Kate
Fri 10.30 - 11.25 am (mixed ability level), St Francis Church, Warwick Rd, Keynsham.
6-week block of classes £60.
You are welcome to do a trial class first, £10.
1:1 sessions also available at my studio in Saltford
Book online or by contacting Kate 07454 047536
www.corerehab-physio.co.uk

■ Baby Comes Too toddler group meet every Friday in term time at Keynsham Methodist Church, Victoria Centre, High Street, 10am-12pm. All welcome. For more information email bookings@keynshammethodistchurch.co.uk

■ Babies and Breakfast, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, 10am-12 noon. For all mums with babies (up to 6 months). Meet other mums and share experiences.

■ CAMEO, Keynsham Methodist Church group for people living alone, coffee morning at the Key Centre, Charlton Road, Keynsham, 2pm-3pm, first Friday of the month. All welcome.

WHAT'S ON

■ Golden Oldies singing group, Key Centre, Charlton Road, Keynsham, 2pm-3pm, with Sue Crick, on the last Friday of the month. All welcome. For more information, visit . <https://www.golden-oldies.org.uk>

Saturday

■ Keynsham Sequence Dance Club Monthly Dance, 7.30pm to 10.30pm, Fear Hall, Keynsham, third Saturday of the month. Contact Brian and Jo, Keynsham Sequence Dance Club, on 01179868540 or just turn up. Refreshments (coffee/tea and biscuits), £5 each.

■ Volunteers at Keynsham Repair Cafe – a free monthly event, with a café, at Keynsham Baptist Church, High Street – fix everyday household items like toasters and lamps, sew a button onto a jacket, glue a handle back onto a mug, as well as more unusual items. Every second Saturday (same as Keynsham Farmers Market), 10am–12pm. keynshamrepaircafe.wixsite.com/home.

■ Bible group, Keynsham Community Hub, 67 Queens Road, 12.30am-4pm, alternate Saturdays.

■ Cllr George Leach and Cllr Alex Beaumont surgery at Keynsham Library, 10.30am-11.30am, on Market Saturday (second Saturday of the month) to help residents with issues or advice. No appointment necessary.

Sundays

■ Keynsham Kings Flag American Football. Do you fancy trying out a new sport? Do you love the NFL? Flag American football is taking the UK by storm as a fast-paced, non-contact version of American football. Training: Sundays 10.30am-1pm, Manor Road Playing Fields. Mixed sport – anyone 16 years-plus welcome. No previous experience needed. Contact us for more info on the Keynsham Kings Facebook or Instagram pages.

NEWS

Gift from sleigh team



THE Saltford Santa Sleigh team have handed over the proceeds from their festive tour of the village to Children's Hospice South West.

Each year the sleigh team from Saltford Community Association select a local charity such as the hospice, where their donation can make a difference.

They raised £1,150 for the charity and thanked all

the volunteers and everyone who contributed.

Children's Hospice South West run the only three children's hospices in the South West - Little Bridge House in North Devon, Charlton Farm near Bristol, and Little Harbour in Cornwall.

Pictured from left to right are Carole and Steve Seeley, Chris Essex, Owen McDermott, Heidi Roberts (CHSW) and Christine McDermott.

New role for former pre-school

THE former Queens Road Methodist Church Pre-School is to become the new base for Keynsham and District Mencap Society.

The pre-school closed at the end of term in July last year because falling numbers meant it was no longer viable.

Keynsham Methodist Church trustees made the decision with much reluctance as the pre-school had served the local community for over 50 years, with three generations of some families having passed through its doors.

The closure left most of the premises unused during the day, and the membership were determined to ensure they continued to serve the community.

So the trustees are delighted to announce a new partnership with Mencap to use the premises.

The church and Mencap have had an ongoing history for a number of years, with Mencap's Music Man Sessions taking place there on a Saturday.

As this project grew, it acquired more instruments that needed storage space which, with the pre-school on site, the church did not have.

Now the pre-school's closure will enable Mencap to base its Keynsham office at the former pre-school, as well as storing their equipment and developing their community projects.

Laura Jefferies, operations manager at Keynsham and District Mencap Society, said: "We are delighted to be working with Keynsham Methodist Church to create a new space for Mencap at Queens Road.

"Firstly, it means that all of our members are



able to visit the office independently, as previously we were on the second floor.

"We are also delighted to be able to move some of our clubs and activities to a new central space.

"We run 10 groups in total across various church halls and community spaces, which include youth club, adult social groups, sports and music sessions.

"Having some of these in one space under one roof means we are able to share resources, which will help us to keep our costs down.

"We are thankful to everyone at the Methodist church for all they have done to get this space ready for us and for being so welcoming".

Methodist minister the Revd John Hayes said: "This opportunity to work closely with Mencap is a special moment for both our organisations as we share so many similar values, not least in our desire to support our local community.

"We are looking forward to a developing relationship where we can both learn and grow together."

NEWS

'Heritage vs homes' spotlight on city

LABOUR councillors have urged Bath and North East Somerset Council to "fully assess" the economic benefits of Bath's UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

The government has told the council it needs to find room for 27,000 new homes by 2043. In its draft local plan, which sets out where new developments should go, the council has proposed putting most of the homes in other areas of the district – such as Keynsham and Saltford – away from Bath, to avoid risking the historic city's UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

Now, in a statement, the Labour group is calling on the council to "fully assess the economic benefits and disbenefits of UNESCO inscriptions across B&NES."

It has also called for the council to promise Bath "the homes and affordable homes that its residents need."

Westfield councillor Robin Moss, who leads the council's opposition Labour group, said: "This Lib Dem local plan suggests that, because B&NES wants to hold onto its UNESCO status, we can't build the homes that Bath people need. But our economy needs homes and jobs."

There have been previous calls from local politicians outside of Bath for the city to give up its UNESCO status to shoulder more of the housing instead.

Saltford parish councillor Phil Harding

suggested the idea in June but that was dismissed as a "non-starter" by the council cabinet member responsible for housing, Matt McCabe (Bathavon South, Liberal Democrat), at a council committee meeting in October.

Then, as reported in our December issue, Keynsham councillor Andy Wait (Lib Dem) described the situation as "very unfair", pointing out that the proposed local plan earmarks just 7,000 of the new homes for the city of Bath, whereas the government had suggested the city should take double that figure.

The Labour group has now warned that the council's approach to the local plan – and its new movement strategy, which Cllr Moss said needed to include more of a "major public transport system" – could "turn Bath into a city that's mainly for wealthy out-commuters, students, and tourists."

Mr Moss said there needed to be more affordable housing built in Bath, instead of other areas of the district from where people would have to commute to Bath.

He added that there were 23,000 students in Bath "taking up private rentals," while a growth in the student population of 7,300 is predicted in the local plan documents.

He said: "There is a real risk of community harm, rather than cohesion, as a result of these strategies."

"We urge the administration to 'be bold' as their motto says. We press them to focus on ordinary residents' need for a home that's close to work – not on UNESCO badges, student housing and small-scale transport interventions."

B&NES Council has proposed a ban on turning three-bedroom houses which could be "family homes" into shared houses (officially called houses in multiple occupation, or HMOs) to reduce the impact of student numbers on the city's housing supply.

It has also, in recent years, begun building its first new council homes in more than 20 years, by converting unused council buildings into new social housing in its £12 million B&NES Homes programme.

Most affordable housing, however, comes from housing developers, who are required to build some affordable properties on large developments.

Speaking in October, Mr McCabe said the government's housing targets were based on a "clunky calculator without any sense of finesse."

He said: "We have argued our case with government that Bath is unique and you need to take a different approach rather than applying this calculator."

*John Wimperis,
Local Democracy Reporting Service*

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■ PEN TO PAPER

My Quaintly Occasional Chair

I have an occasional chair,
it's a thing to be cherished and treated with care,
but I never sit in it
for more than a minute,
so, I don't really know why it's there.

It's a quaintly occasional chair,
with no signs of erosion, corrosion or wear,
it's upholstered with satin,
so, only gets sat-in,
by me, and my own derriere!

With its flourish, flamboyance and flair,
I am driven to guess and obsessively dare
to ask, why it's so brazenly,
a chair... just occasionally...
and what is it, when it's not a chair?

And now, everything's up in the air,
I survive every day on a wing and a prayer,
and a chair that's not sure
what it's meant to be for,
feels more than a little unfair.

I could sell my occasional chair,
I'm assured that it's priceless, just one of a pair –
but it's sometimes a bedstead...
a bookcase... a bike shed...
as a chair, it's increasingly rare!

So, I stand at the gates of despair,
with its gift for shape-shifting, I'm getting nowhere...
but, because it's more stable
than my... periodic table...
I embrace my occasional chair.

Vyv Nugent

Keynsham Creative Writers welcome new members – call George Liddell on 0117 914 8454

■ POETRY CORNER

Love

This month we celebrate Valentine's Day,
Expressing love in a special way.
A genuine smile, a soft gentle touch.
Showing affection doesn't take much.

Valentine cards sent through the post
Declare deepest feelings to ones loved the most.
Reassuring a partner they never will part
For love is the key to a happy heart.

So let's pray for love, pray for hatred be gone.
The Dear Lord wants peace for everyone.
And all round the world, there's hope for us all,
If only man would hear His call.

Sylvia Kirby

■ NEWS

Cricket club gets a life-saver

KEYNSHAM Cricket Club has installed a defibrillator at its ground.

The device will be available for use by players, supporters and the wider community, helping to keep people safe in the event of a cardiac emergency.

The club is grateful to its sponsors, Elise Projects and Simply Carpets, for funding the defibrillator.

Adam Ford of Elise Projects said: "For us, this isn't just a piece of equipment. It's a symbol of what can happen when local businesses and local people look after one another.

"A defibrillator is something we all hope will never be needed, but if the moment ever comes, it can be the difference between life and death. Knowing that this club and community now has immediate access to one is something we feel genuinely honoured to have funded.

"At a time when so many challenges face small and medium-sized businesses



and local clubs and organisations, we believe more than ever in the importance of standing together."

● Pictured left to right are Sarah Jane Bungay of BBC Points West, Derek Joyce, Keynsham Cricket Club chairman, Cherry Ford of Simply Carpets, and Adam Ford of Elise Projects.

■ CHANGE FOR THE BETTER

We must heed storm's warning

IN early January, Storm Goretti unleashed high winds, heavy snow and flooding that disrupted lives from the UK to the Balkans.

Thousands were without power in the UK and France, and schools closed and travel was disrupted across Northern Europe.

Beyond the headlines, Goretti serves as a stark reminder of how climate change is intensifying extreme weather events.

Far from being your average winter storm, it was a 'weather bomb,' a phenomenon made more intense by warming oceans.

As climate change intensifies, weather bombs are becoming more common, turning ordinary weather into deadly threats.

Climate change will bring more volatile winters with intense rain, sudden cold snaps and destructive winds to Northern Europe. Summers are likely to be hotter and drier, coupled with more intense summer storms that cause flash floods and crop damage.

These disruptions hit our economy. They disrupt our food security, health, transport and education systems; in short, our everyday lives.

So, the question is – how will our

government and our communities protect ourselves?

Reactions to Storm Goretti gives us some answers. Communities swung into action with emergency responses, the government issued a timely (and rare) red alert, saving lives. The Met Office's new AI tool forecasts events like Goretti further in advance. Renewable energy sources are less vulnerable to disruption during storms. Urban planners are incorporating green infrastructure from permeable pavements to wetland buffers to absorb excess water.

These strategies are crucial to adapting to the impacts of storms like Goretti, and they drive economic growth too. It's predicted that the global adaptation market could reach \$2 trillion by 2030.

The fundamental message of Goretti is that the future isn't set. If we achieve net zero by 2050 alongside investing in adaptation and resilience, we can reduce the risks of extreme weather. But time is running out, and we must all play our part in building a sustainable future.

Elizabeth Willitts

NEWS



Keynsham residents (left to right) Caroleve Seaman, Barbara Baxter, Fay Wright and Margaret Thompson, who has just sent another 30 twiddle muffs to Age Concern *photos: Ros Anstey*

COMPTON Dando is coming to the end of its winter craft workshops.

The last one was due to be held on Tuesday February 3 from 10am to 4pm at the village hall.

Organiser Harriette Dottridge, who started these craft days, said: "We had 30 people on my list and we raised £77 profit, which was excellent, and I can only thank everyone for their help in clearing up, washing up, tidying up, and moving tables at lunch time.

"This profit will be donated to the Compton Dando Community Association at the end of the season. It helps to provide insurance for our activities and helps publicise and support the days."

The group had a number of different activities on the go at

Village winter craft season nears its end

its most recent workshop, from making buttons, knitting and crocheting to felting.

Harriette, who is unable to attend the last workshop, said: "We had several visitors who were interested in what we were doing and would like to come in the future - thank you all for making them so welcome."

Those interested in future dates can find out more by contacting Harriette on 07791 832592 or email her at hdottridge@hotmail.com



Crafters (left to right) Steph Butler, Angela Luckham, Harriette Dottridge (standing), Rose Fear and Elaine Holmes



A group from Newton St Loe, Corston and the surrounding area who enjoyed visiting the workshop (left to right) Mary Chaplin, Valerie Belstem, Joan Crew, Jean Tadman and Jan Glossop

Positive relationships flourish at school

SOMERDALE Educate Together in Keynsham has been recognised for its work in fostering good relationships.

The Healthy Relationship Champion School Award marks a significant milestone in its commitment to promoting positive, respectful and equal relationships across the school community.

Over the past 12 months, children, parents and staff have taken part in the RE:SET project, led by Tender, a charity that delivers creative programmes enabling schools to explore healthy relationships education.

RE:SET is a toolkit designed to help primary schools, secondary schools and alternative provisions review, adapt and strengthen their relationships education.

Through this work, schools are supported in fostering healthy relationship cultures and can be formally recognised as Healthy Relationship Champion Settings.

As part of the project, Tender practitioners delivered drama workshops with pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. These pupils became Healthy Relationship Ambassadors,



learning to recognise both healthy and unhealthy relationship behaviours.

Through role-play and scripted scenarios, the children explored how to respond to challenges and navigate difficult situations with confidence and empathy. They also examined the key qualities of healthy friendships and discussed trusted sources of support, including organisations such as Childline.

The project extended beyond the

classroom, with well-attended training sessions for parents focusing on online harm and coercive relationships.

These sessions provided thoughtful discussion and provided families with practical guidance and reassurance in an increasingly complex digital world.

Looking ahead, Somerdale Educate Together is committed to embedding the learning from the RE:SET project over the next three years.

The Healthy Relationship Ambassadors will play a central role in sharing their work with the wider school community, including rolling out resources they helped create. Among these are child-friendly scripts designed to support pupils when tricky conversations arise with friends.

A Somerdale Educate Together spokesperson said: "This award recognises not only the school's hard work but also the shared effort of pupils, staff and families in creating a safe, supportive and respectful environment where healthy relationships can flourish."

■ KEYNSHAM WALKERS ARE WELCOME

We're taking a step back in time

Walkers gather at Bath Hill East for their first outdoor adventure of 2026



THE first Keynsham Walkers are Welcome outing of the year took place on Sunday January 18.

A group of 19 led by Richard Dyson started from Bath Hill East on a thoroughly grey morning. After walking through the park and along Pool Barton, we crossed the meadow to the Bristol Road and followed the road to Stockwood Vale.

When we turned left on to Engine House Lane, we left the tarmac behind. This is an ancient by-way that was never upgraded to a modern road or lane and is a very stony track.

After crossing the stream, we began

the climb up towards Queen Charlton. We stopped after a short way to look at the site of the Charlton Bottom coalworks, a mine that operated at about the end of the 18th century.

From there, the path was very rough and has become something of a stream itself. After about half a mile, it levelled off, and we continued until meeting the lane west of the village. By then we were just below the base of the cloud, and it was raining lightly.

After a short stop in the centre of the village for refreshments, our route took us across the valley and up a steep and muddy slope to emerge on Charlton Road.

We found our way through the modern housing and down to Parkhouse Lane. This is another very old route and was once the principal road from Keynsham to Queen Charlton. It also formed the eastern boundary of the Abbot's deer park for hundreds of years.

Again, the surface was wet and very stony, and some of our group found it rather a challenge. Emerging by the allotments, we then walked down St Clement's Road and down to the foot of Dapps Hill, arriving just after 1pm.

We covered a total of 5.5 miles and the walk was very varied – it's one to repeat with a little less rain and some sunshine!

■ NEWS FROM THE METRO MAYOR

A positive start to the year

THE year is off to a positive start already in the West of England, with good news for families and young people from the festive period.

Our Kids Go Free scheme returned over Christmas, giving under-16s free travel on buses across Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Despite bank holidays and reduced services, children took 182,351 free journeys – a huge 50% increase on the number paying to travel during the same period the previous year.

This is even better than the 32% increase we saw during last summer's school holidays, compared to the same time in 2024.

Families have already saved around £1.1 million through Kids Go Free, and for some children, this scheme has opened the door to our region's attractions for the very first time.

It's fantastic to see how free travel can make a real difference – helping young people get to sports clubs, libraries, cultural events, or just explore their local area.

It also supports local businesses and visitor attractions, boosting our economy and giving more people a chance to experience what the West has to offer.

With child fares already among the cheapest in the country, we are making bus travel as easy and accessible as possible for families.

In the past few weeks, the West has celebrated another milestone: the UK's first Citizens' Assembly dedicated to culture publishing its report, setting out a vision for "a West of England where culture is for everyone as part of everyday life."

The assembly recommended opening up parks, libraries, schools, and heritage sites; embedding creative learning in schools; developing creative and accessible solutions to transport and creating opportunities for people to shape cultural priorities at a local level.

I'm delighted that the Citizens' Assembly will continue its work as the Citizens for Culture panel, with £100,000 from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to try out their ideas.

On top of this, the West of England has been chosen as one of just six regions to receive £25 million from the Creative Places Growth Fund – a huge vote of confidence in our creative sector.

Together, these investments will help our cultural scene and put people back at the heart of things. Working together with our



Metro Mayor Helen Godwin
writes for the Voice

local councils, creative organisations, and residents, we can make culture accessible for all – and build a West of England we can all be proud of.

Both Kids Go Free and Citizens for Culture show what's possible when we remove barriers.

From giving children the freedom to travel and explore, to empowering communities with a role in shaping cultural priorities, together we are opening doors and creating opportunities for everyone in our region – and helping more people shape the West of England's future.

PROPERTY

KEYNSHAM

£375,000

OIRO

Nestled in the tranquil cul-de-sac of Hygge Park, Keynsham, this charming two-bedroom mid-terrace house offers a perfect blend of modern living and convenience.

Built in 2019, this property spans an impressive 872 square feet and is presented to a high standard throughout, making it an ideal choice for first-time buyers or those seeking a low-maintenance home.

Upon entering, you are greeted by an inviting open-plan living area that combines comfort and functionality, and the ground floor is designed to maximise space and light. The property also benefits from gas-fired central heating and uPVC double glazing.

The two well-proportioned bedrooms provide ample space, while the modern bathroom is equipped with contemporary fixtures. One of the standout features of this home is the south-facing enclosed rear garden, perfect for enjoying sunny afternoons or hosting gatherings with friends and family.



The property offers convenient parking for two cars. Additionally, the location is superb, with easy access to local amenities and transport links.

This delightful terraced house is not just a home; it is a lifestyle choice, offering comfort, convenience, and a sense of community in a peaceful setting. Do not miss the opportunity to make this lovely property your own.

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■ KEYNSHAM BOWLING CLUB

Music and merriment at the clubhouse

AS it is closed season for bowling, Keynsham Bowling Club is centring its activity on the clubhouse.

In December we held the Christmas edition of our monthly coffee morning, which was attended by over 50 members.

In the week before Christmas, two events were held. The first was a morning of carol-singing and mince pies with hot toddy, as well as our Christmas draw which, thanks to members donating prizes, raised a substantial amount for club funds.

The second event was our Christmas party, when we welcomed back our old friends, musical duo The Two of Clubs. They always produce an evening of music and songs from the era our members relate to, and they are already booked for Christmas 2026 and 2027.

On New Year's Eve, members gathered to welcome in the new year with a quiz, music and bring-and-share supper, ending with the singing of *Auld Lang Syne*.

We started 2026 with our January coffee morning, which included the presentation of the captains' charity cheque to their chosen charity.

Our picture shows Louise Gash, local fund-raising manager for Cancer

Research UK, receiving the cheque for £1,500 from ladies captain Lynne Pearce and gents captain Paul Matthews.

Our 2026 captains, Lynne plus new gents captain Bob Edge, have chosen the Great Western Air Ambulance Charity as their beneficiary for the new season.

When outdoor bowling ceases for the winter months, many of our members bowl indoors. Most play at the indoor centre at Ashton in Bristol whilst some venture further afield to Chippenham or Paulton.

At Bristol we have a team called the Chocolate Quarter that is currently top of the Tuesday open 4s and Thursday open triples leagues. A second team from Keynsham called the Redbacks is top of the Wednesday Australian pairs plus the Friday open pairs. At the time of writing, between they have lost only four matches out of over 50 played – a superb achievement.

During the month, Chippenham indoor centre held its annual triples competition for 24 teams. From Keynsham, Jane Coles, Jason Potgieter and Paul Matthews came third, losing in the semi-final to the eventual winners, and they each won £40.

Mike Barrow



The Two of Clubs at Keynsham Bowling Club's Christmas party

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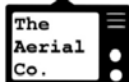
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