

# Messenger

Scouts Community Hall is open! See page 5

BS9 Arts Trail: see pages 6-7



## St Mary Magdalene, Stoke Bishop

Mariners Drive, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, BS9 1QJ  
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### Vicar

The Reverend Jema Ball [vicar@stmarysb.org.uk](mailto:vicar@stmarysb.org.uk)

### Associate Vicar

The Reverend Simon Potter [assocvicar@stmarysb.org.uk](mailto:assocvicar@stmarysb.org.uk)

### Associate Minister

The Reverend Julie Summers [julie@stmarysb.org.uk](mailto:julie@stmarysb.org.uk)

### Lay Ministers

Canon Peter Robottom [p.robottom3@btinternet.com](mailto:p.robottom3@btinternet.com)  
Brian Richardson [bkrichardson@hotmail.com](mailto:bkrichardson@hotmail.com)

### School and Community Chaplain

Appointment made—starting this summer!

### Church Wardens

Kate Pinfold [kate@stmarysb.org.uk](mailto:kate@stmarysb.org.uk)  
Jonathan Rees [jonathan@stmarysb.org.uk](mailto:jonathan@stmarysb.org.uk)

## The Messenger

*St Mary's Messenger is published quarterly and distributed to 3,000 homes in the parish. Contact us by email: [messenger@stmarysb.org.uk](mailto:messenger@stmarysb.org.uk) or through the church office.*

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*Ideas for the next issue to the editorial team in time for the meeting on Friday 5 June.  
Copy date for next issue: Sunday 12 July*

**The Messenger is printed by Doveton Press Ltd**  
15 Willway Street Bristol BS3 4BG  
[www.dovetonpress.co.uk](http://www.dovetonpress.co.uk)

## Uniformed Organisations

|                              |                 |               |
|------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Group Scout Leader           | Nicky Woodfield | 07932 638 507 |
| Community Relations Officer: | Andy Judd       | 9682592       |
| Scouts                       | Steve Brown     | 07980 416 345 |
| Cubs                         | Nicky Woodfield | 07932 638 507 |
| Beavers                      | Jacque Carn     | 7840 823 934  |
| 9th Guides                   | Lara Kirby      | 07961 013 097 |
| 9th Brownies                 | Wendy Hughes    | 962 4580      |

## Sundays at St Mary's

10 am Holy Communion

Week A: with band-led worship

Week B: with organ and choir-led hymns

*SHINEon Sundays groups for children aged 0-14 yrs take place during the service on week A*

### Explore@4

*An informal service open to all and planned for families with pre/primary school children. It takes place at 4pm during term time on week B.*

Audio recordings of the Sunday sermons can be accessed at any time via the church website.

*For full details of services visit the church website and do check before coming as there are occasional variations to this usual pattern.*

## Weekdays at St Mary's

Contact the church office for more information

### Bright Sparks

*Baby and Toddler Group  
Resuming in September*

### Fuel

*Fridays during term time 6-7.30 pm  
for young people in school years 6-9*

### Bulb

*Alternate Sundays 5.30-7 pm  
for young people in school years 7 and up*

### Connect on Tuesdays

*Conversation, coffee, craft in church  
10-11.15 am with Communion service to end*

### Thursday Lunch Club

*A hot lunch in the church hall  
Please book in advance*

### St Mary's Singers

*Choir at week B Sunday services  
Rehearsals alternate Tuesday evenings - see our website What's On calendar*

### Bellringing

*Contact the church office  
for more information*

### Small Groups

*Bible study and informal support  
Daytime and evening groups*

### Alpha

*An opportunity to explore the Christian faith  
in a small group or 1 to 1*

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**@StMarySB**

## Councillor Henry Michallat, The Right Hon. The Lord Mayor of Bristol, 2025-26

In Conversation with Judith Sheather



Rush Sunday service—see below

commemorating the rush-strewn floors of 500 years ago, and laying a wreath at the Cenotaph on behalf of the people of Bristol. I have also enjoyed welcoming many guests from our twin cities, which has highlighted the importance of the shared connection between our city and our twinned cities. (*Bristol has seven twinned cities: Hannover, Bordeaux, Beira, Porto, Guangzhou, Puerto Morazan, Tbilisi.*)

The aspect I have found most challenging is juggling the role with being a councillor and having a full time job. (I'm an auctioneer.) I'm fortunate that my employers are very supportive of me carrying out my many duties. The Lord Mayor carries out 500-800 engagements a year, so I can be very busy!

The role rotates between the political parties every year. I was nominated by my Conservative leader and sworn into office at the council's AGM in May. My ward colleague, Councillor John Goulandris, spoke in support of my nomination. After the ceremonial aye/nay vote, I made my acceptance speech and got straight to work chairing the rest of the council meeting. As tradition dictates, I now become the Deputy Lord Mayor until May 2027, to support the new Green Party Lord Mayor in his duties, and stand in when needed.

*Being Lord Mayor has shown me how great our city is. I have had the pleasure of meeting so many great people, especially within our volunteer sector who work tirelessly to make their local communities a better place for all.*

I have also learnt what it means for people to meet the Lord Mayor due to its historic significance; for many people it is very special to meet a Lord Mayor. (I must stress not me as an individual!)

I confess that there have been a few surprises. I went to a world food and craft festival at Sparks Bristol in Broadmead and was asked to talk about how important being an international city is and then to tour round speaking to all the stall holders. Before that, there was some traditional South African dancing which was a lot of fun; they asked me to get up on stage and dance, which was a little restricting in the Lord Mayor's ceremonial robe and tricorne hat!

I have really enjoyed the civic side of the role and taking part in some of our city's most important events, such as the annual Rush Sunday service at St Mary Redcliffe Church (pictured) an ancient tradition

## Welcome to the summer issue of *The Messenger*!

*In this issue we are celebrating with the Scouts as they move into their new Community Hall (see cover and page 5) and with the Stoke Bishop Primary School who have had a successful Ofsted Inspection (see page 4). We are also updating you on the progress of the church rooms development and continuing our appeal for funds to complete the work (pages 10 -11.)*

*Our theme is arts and crafts; on pages 7 - 8 you'll find details of the BS9 Arts Trail coming up very soon, and can read about two of the exhibiting artists. Then on page 9 you can meet two members of our congregation who make beautiful artefacts.*

*It was wonderful to celebrate on Easter Day with the church completely full for the 10 am service - every seat taken! Just a reminder that we are continuing with the 10 am service (instead of 9 and 10.30) for the rest of the year whilst the building work is ongoing. Everyone is welcome!*



Gillian Baxter, Editor

## Congratulations to Stoke Bishop C.E. Primary School!

By Jema Ball

*Sometimes inspections are like buses, two arrive in quick succession!*

*In the last issue of The Messenger we shared the positive feedback from the SIAMS inspection that Stoke Bishop C.E. Primary School went through in October. Hot on its heels, the school leaders got "the call" at the end of January to say that a team of Ofsted Inspectors were on their way the following day.*

Although unusual, we weren't unduly surprised; when a school goes through a change in leadership, as ours has done recently, inspections take place to ensure that the school is navigating the time of transition well. The feedback from the Ofsted team was overwhelmingly positive with the inspectors concluding that children and adults in the school are thriving.

*The school has created an environment that is calm and purposeful. In lessons, pupils of all ages eagerly talk about their learning with adults. Staff and pupils understand the importance of following the school rules 'be safe, be ready, be respectful'. Pupils treat one another with kindness. They know that discriminatory behaviour is not tolerated.*  
OFSTED Report 2026

A new OFSTED framework has come into force this year, with schools no longer being given a single overall judgement (such as 'Good' or 'Requires improvement'). There is now a five-point grading scale for six different aspects of school life. The intention is to give more nuance and to show where the school is excelling while also identifying areas to develop. Achieving the 'Expected standard' means that a school is doing everything that is required by the Government, and that children are thriving. Given the high standards that schools are held to, this in itself is an excellent result!

Stoke Bishop C.E. Primary School's vision is 'Believing it's Possible' and this has created an aspirational culture where adults and children give of their best. This is reflected in the OFSTED grading, with the school achieving 'Strong standard' in three areas and 'Expected standard' in four areas.

The school fared especially well in relation to the



*The whole school gathered in St Mary's for their Easter service.*

well-being of both children and staff, and the inclusion of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged children and children from a wide range of backgrounds.

*Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's work. Leaders and staff share a clear commitment to removing any challenges that the most vulnerable pupils face. They work closely with parents and carers and, where necessary, use advice and guidance from external agencies to provide the support that pupils need. As a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, access the curriculum alongside their peers and achieve well.*  
OFSTED Report 2026

The Head and Deputy Headteachers, Darren Hunt and Vickie Melton offered their reflections on the inspection process:

*It was an intense couple of days, but the inspectors were really affirming and supportive throughout the whole process. At one point one of the inspectors 'went missing' and was located in the role play area in the Reception classroom being bandaged up by a group of enthusiastic children! Receiving the report feedback has been very encouraging, validating all the good things we do in school, and has helped us refine what our next steps should be.*

*You can read the OFSTED report in full on the school website.*

# 43rd Bristol Scout Community Hall Initial Opening

By Caroline Jenkins

***We now have building control sign-off for our new Scout Community Hall and held our first cafe at Easter to welcome everyone back. It is such a contrast to our old wooden hut and we are so pleased to have got this far!***

A huge thank you to everyone who has supported this project to date; we really could not have done it without you. Special thanks to Trinity College and Avon Riding School where we have held our Scouting sessions over the past year.

There is still much to do in terms of kitting out the hall and as we move on to the landscaping, so the need for funds and the work of our trustees and "hut build" team is far from over. We are growing on some tree cuttings with thanks to the Bristol Tree Forum, but need to develop our garden, a key part of our community facility, before we can plant them.

We are now setting up a management group for the use and maintenance of our new hall and are keen to have wider community involvement in this as part of ensuring the Scout Community Hall becomes a real hub for Stoke Bishop. If you would like to be involved in this volunteering opportunity we would love to hear from you, please contact us at [enquiries@43rdbristolscouts.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@43rdbristolscouts.org.uk).



***Pictures clockwise from the top:***

- ***From left, Charles Elderton, Nicky Woodfield and guests at the opening.***
- ***Enjoying the fabulous cakes!***
- ***Smart exterior with landscaping to be done—funds still needed!***

***Our cover picture, taken by Keith Sheather, also shows 'Cubbacino's Community Cafe' the first event to be held in the new community hall, on 4 April. Shown in the picture from left to right: Sarah Elderton, Isaac Sorrell, Nicky Woodfield, William Sorrell.***

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### Nancy Chambers will exhibit at Trinity College, Venue 4

For Nancy Chambers, pictured above, art was an early passion. Although she did her art A Level at 15, she read geography and philosophy at university. However, that didn't stop her creative bent, turning her hand to making and selling hats while there, and on the strength of that, she was awarded a place on Mrs Thatcher's Business Enterprise Programme. Her hat business thrived.

After post-grad teacher training she realised school life was not for her, and for the next thirty plus years she worked (and still does occasionally) in the charity sector, most latterly, with a focus on fundraising. Three Bristol charities she has supported are SS Great Britain, RWA and St Peter's Hospice.

Throughout her working life she has continued to draw and paint, as well as bringing up two daughters. The two women artists she's been particularly influenced by are Mary Fedden and Winifred Nicholson, both exponents of still life (not exclusively) which Nancy is drawn to.

Her friends who exhibited on Bristol art trails persuaded Nancy to try the BS9 Arts Trail for herself

in 2019. Since then, she has sold countless paintings in her very recognisable style, had work selected for prestigious exhibitions in London, Bristol and Bath, had stands at art fairs from Aberdeen to London, grown a following on Instagram and is represented by galleries across the UK and Ireland.

Her website is an important part of her online presence. She loves flowers and fruits and last year sold 130 paintings and prints. She explains, 'Earning my living from painting wasn't in my plan (if I actually had one), and no-one is more surprised than me, but I absolutely love it!'

Nancy is an invaluable part of the BS9 Arts Trail committee, organising all our marketing and publicity.

[nancy@nancychambers.org.uk](mailto:nancy@nancychambers.org.uk)

[www.nancychambersart.co.uk](http://www.nancychambersart.co.uk)

[@nancychambersart](https://www.instagram.com/nancychambersart)

6 and Sunday 7 June 2026

ne Krish

### Venues and Artists in Stoke Bishop

This year 38 artists will exhibit in five venues in Stoke Bishop, over half of all BS9 Arts Trail artists.

**Stoke Lodge Centre, Venue 1:** 10 artists working in a variety of media, including felting and stitch, glass, ceramics, textiles and painting. Student work will also be on display.

**18 Old Sneed Road, BS9 1ET, Venue 2:** Committee Chairman, Chris Dye (Messenger profile Summer 2022), is at home with stylish watercolours, plus two other artists' specialising in jewellery and glass.

**Stoke Bishop Village Hall, Venue 3:** 8 artists offer a range of media: painting, etching, linocuts and furniture.

**Trinity College, Venue 4,** will be home to 16 artists whose work includes found metal, earrings, glass, ceramics, textiles, painting in various media and sculpture.

**6, Stoke Park Road South, Venue 5:** Lisa Sacks will be exhibiting her sculpture in her studio.

Do check [www.bs9arts.co.uk](http://www.bs9arts.co.uk) for full details of venue locations, access and refreshments. Brochures will be available around the BS9 area and in libraries.



## Lisa Sacks

will exhibit in her studio, venue 5

Growing up in South Africa, Lisa Sacks discovered in her early teens that she had a gift for sculpting the human form, a passion she's pursued for over fifty years. Stepping into her home and studio, it's hard to imagine she has time for anything else. Yet when she arrived in the UK in the mid-1990s, she was already a Consultant Plastic Surgeon.

At Frenchay Hospital she worked as a hand and microsurgeon, and since leaving the NHS has focused on functional plastic surgery. Her two careers dovetail perfectly, grounded in a deep understanding and respect for the human body. She's also a certified Lifestyle Medicine Physician, noting that around 80% of GP visits relate to chronic diseases driven by lifestyle choices. Pause for thought...

More recently, although she has focused on operating on women, she sculpts both male and female forms, and is justifiably proud of her portrait busts of three distinguished Dames, now on public display in London and Washington DC. An iconic photograph of Dr Jane Goodall on the cover of *Time* inspired her sculpture, completed largely from online references before she was able to meet Dr Goodall for final approval. This led to signed editions raising funds for the Jane Goodall Institute. The other inspiring Dames, Averil Mansfield and Clare Marx, are also surgeons who have shattered their glass ceilings.

Exhibiting for the first time in her own studio, Lisa's is the only solo venue on the BS9 Art Trail in Stoke Bishop and well worth a visit. You won't find small gifts for presents, but you will gain a real sense of the time, skill, artistry and energy behind each piece. Expect work in clay, resin and bronze, along with a warm welcome and engaging conversation. As she puts it, "I can't wait to share my sculpting passion with my visitors."

[lisasackssculptures@gmail.com](mailto:lisasackssculptures@gmail.com)  
<https://lisasackssculptures.com/>  
 @lisa\_sacks\_sculptures



Lisa Sacks (left) with Jane Goodall and the bust Lisa made of her.

## Meet Jonathan and Sue Rees

By Sarah Harris

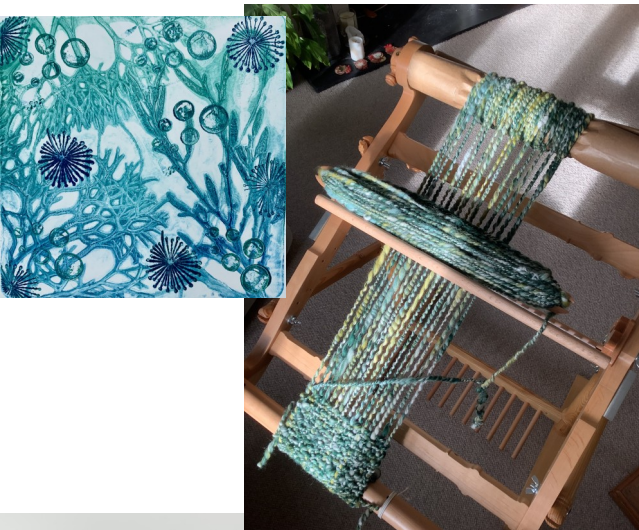
*I recently spent a happy time getting to know Jonathan and Sue Rees, members of our congregation. Jonathan is one of our churchwardens and often leads our musical worship from the guitar. They both have an artistic bent. Sue is a spinner, weaver and jeweller; Jonathan is a woodturner and trauma counsellor.*

### Sue's Story

Sue grew up in a family of craftspeople. Her grandmother was a seamstress and mother an embroiderer. Sue studied silversmithing and now works mainly in silver and anodised aluminium. More recently she extended her skills into spinning yarn, knitting, weaving and printing. She works with her own yarn and creates prints using natural materials such as shells and seaweed. Always on the lookout for new directions, she has recently been exploring tapestry weaving and various Scandinavian techniques. Her inspirations are drawn from nature – trees, the ocean, rain patterns – and she enjoys colour, texture and organic forms. She values process over perfection and says creativity is essential to her identity. She finds the rhythms and repetition of spinning and weaving calming and meaningful.

Sue balances creative work with selling jewellery, and works consistently so that she does something creative almost every day.

Sue's website is: [www.suereesjewellery.co.uk](http://www.suereesjewellery.co.uk).



### Jonathan's Story

Jonathan loved woodworking and model-making as a child and first learned woodturning at boarding school. He worked in several companies including Hewlett Packard, before creating a training company specialising in personal resilience for UK police forces, and then trained as a trauma counsellor. As a woodturner in later life he is mostly self-taught and specialises in functional pieces such as bowls and boxes, which combine precision engineering with creative finishes of colour and texture. He enjoys precision and structure but also embraces the unpredictability of the wood itself. Jonathan finds that creativity provides stress release and a mental reset through a sense of flow, body movement and physical engagement in the making process. There are constraints – woodworking is time-consuming and messy and requires dedicated space. It's more difficult to maintain daily practice and is not very portable!

Jonathan's website is [www.woodspinner.co.uk](http://www.woodspinner.co.uk)



Sue and Jonathan admire each other's contrasting skills: Sue is strong in 2D and fine detail and Jonathan's fortes are 3D thinking and form. Both find inspiration and beauty in God's rich and varied creation, such as wood grain and ripples of rain on water. Sue loves the connection with historic traditional crafts and Jonathan laments the decline of woodturning in favour of mass-production. I found their work stunning.

*You can see - and buy - Sue and Jonathan's work at the North Bristol Arts Trail in the last weekend of November. You can follow their creative journeys on Instagram @suereesdesign ...and...@jonathanreesbristol*

## Welcome Izzy!

Izzy Collinson joined our office team on 11 May. She grew up in Amsterdam where her dad was the vicar of the Anglican church. She moved to Bristol in 2020 and loves living in a small community house. She is a big lover of animals and being outdoors in a hammock or swimming in any body of water available to her. In her previous jobs she has worked with people from disadvantaged backgrounds and she is passionate about church life blessing the local community.



## St Mary's APCM

*The Parish Annual Meeting was held on Sunday 19 April after the morning service.*

*There was much to celebrate over the past year, not least the starting of the building works. There were a lot of thanks given to everyone who contributes in any way to the church and its work, and in particular to the buildings committee.*

*We are grateful that our churchwardens Kate Pinfold and Jonathan Rees, were willing to serve for another year and they were re-elected unopposed.*

*Four new members were elected to the PCC: Jason Smith, Chris Jones, Nicky Woodfield and Rachel Sandford.*

*Our worshipping community has now grown to 240 regular adult attenders and 40 young people and children. 171 are on the Church Electoral Roll*

*We learned that the Triennial Review by the Archdeacon, which looks into the running of the parish and the upkeep of the buildings had resulted in a glowing report.*

*We were pleased to hear that the vacancy in the office has been filled from 1 May and that interviews for the School and Community Chaplain will be held shortly.*

*All told, a very positive meeting. Thanks Jema!*

*Gillian Baxter*



## Julie is Licensed!

*Julie Summers writes...* I can hardly believe it's been 5½ years since I started training for ordained ministry. I was signed off my training by Bishop Neil in November 2025 and then I had to wait for a date to be licensed by Archdeacon Becky Waring. At last it took place at St Mary's on Sunday 8 March.

The wonderful service, which was shared with family and friends, had many precious moments. When Archdeacon Becky announced at the end of the ceremony 'I now present to you your new Associate Minister,' everyone cheered and I let off a party popper.

God has been faithful to me throughout this time of preparation and working part time as a senior nurse at the Bristol Eye Hospital, which I continue to do alongside my part time ministry role. I take encouragement from this verse in the Bible as I step out into ministry and see how God uses me to bless and encourage the church and wider community.

*For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.  
Philippians 2: 15*

## From the CHURCH REGISTERS

### February – April 2026

#### Baptisms

1 February Noah and Samuel Hancock  
12 April Otto and Willa Theodoreson

#### Funerals

4 February Dorothy Blyth  
17 February Vincent Watts  
28 April Tri Smithson

#### Memorial service

27 February Jill Jenkins



## Please help us reach our target!

Life sometimes feels like one step forward, two steps back...

We really need your help right now, so that the additional works can be approved, and the project can be completed during 2026, leaving us ready to fling wide the doors once again to the Stoke Bishop community and beyond.

St Mary's Church is a charity, and the Trustees may not agree to spending money that we don't currently have, but in order to get all the work finished during 2026, we need to be authorising these additional works now.

Our funding stream has been complex since the last time we wrote. Church members have given more, and we have applied for a couple more grants, but some grants have been turned down. We are very grateful to those 30 local households who have already responded to the Community Appeal. However, we do still need £35k to reach our new target of £50k.



## Building Works and Fun

If you are part of the 1,970 households in the parish who haven't yet responded, **please consider making a donation via our GoFundMe page.** The QR code to donate is on the opposite page.

Anyone who has ever embarked on a home improvement project, or watched programmes such as Grand Designs, will know that building works are never entirely straightforward.

It's been really exciting to closely watch the changes being made to the Church Rooms by our brilliant builders from K P Wilton. There have been a couple of setbacks, not helped by all the rain in the early part of the year, but broadly things are on track for the initial work to be completed soon.

However, the plans for the additional works needed to ensure that all the rooms are modernised, fully accessible and smartened up are in the balance due to lack of available funds.

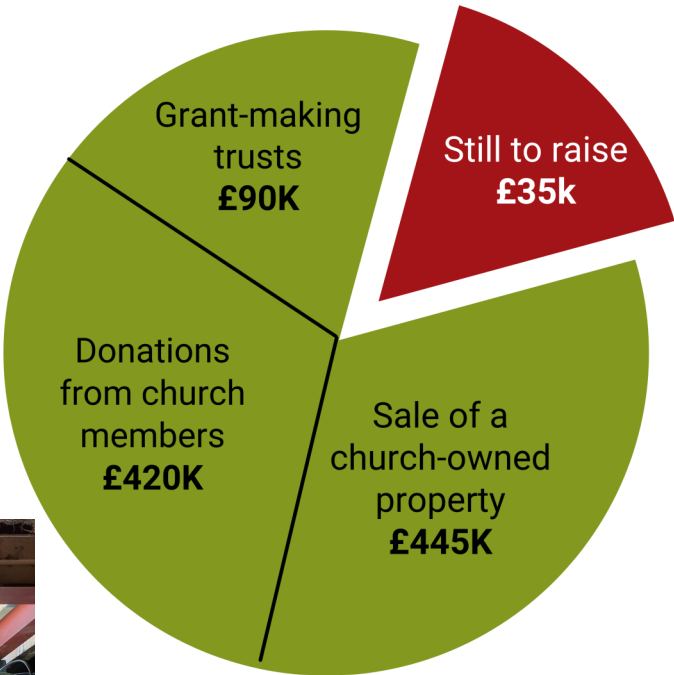


**If we complete the additional work, we will have:**

- ⇒ **An enlarged kitchen, perfect for on-site mass catering, with high quality appliances and fittings.**
- ⇒ **Completely redecorated internal spaces, with new flooring, doors and blinds.**
- ⇒ **Refurbished toilets and servery in the lower lobby, including an accessible WC, which will enable groups to hire the smaller rooms separately from the hall.**
- ⇒ **New AV equipment in the hall and rooms making it easier for groups who need access to screens and sound equipment.**
- ⇒ **Landscaping outside the hall, ensuring that the surrounding area looks as smart as the newly rendered building!**

# Raising Appeal Update

When I watch Grand Designs, it's always sad when families have to live in an unfinished space for months or years before their dream home is completed. Given that the Church Rooms are a community space, and we need to ensure we are fully compliant, we can't leave certain aspects of this project unfinished until such a time as the money is available.



If you would prefer to donate via BACS transfer you can do so using the details below, or you could send a cheque to the church office if you prefer. If you are able to Gift Aid your donation please complete the form on the 'Donate' page of the church website.

**St Mary Mag PCC Acc No: 92604889**  
**Sortcode: 60-23-23 Ref: Building Project**

**That's why we really need your help right now,** so we can share our buildings with others. The church is open every day, and available to hire, along with the Church Rooms, by a wide variety of people. The newly improved space will be a fantastic, versatile venue for everyone to enjoy.

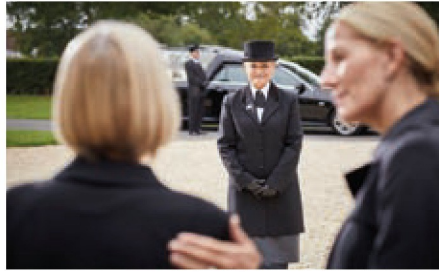
**Please help us with the final push to make this vision a reality. Thank you!**

**Revd Jema Ball**  
**Vicar of St Mary's**



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## Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve's Anniversary Celebration

Join us as we celebrate more than 30 years of the 'Friends' with an afternoon of expert guided walks and talks, exploring the beauty and diversity of the reserve

### Sunday 7th June 2026

1pm to 4.30pm



**1-2pm Mini-beast hunt**  
with Ray Barnett

Discover the variety of insect species which live on the nature reserve, what they are called, how they live and their significance.  
*Suitable for children over 5 years and adults*



**2.15-3.15pm The wonder of trees**  
with Sue & Alister Rankine

An introduction to the variety, benefits and wonder of trees within the reserve.  
*Suitable for children over 7 years and adults*



**3.30-4.30pm The plants of Old Sneed Park**  
with Rupert Higgins & Dawn Lawrence

Discover the everyday and the special plants on the reserve, especially those within the meadows. This talk will include plant identification, plant ecology, history and folklore.  
*Suitable for all*

**Booking details** There is no charge for the above talks, however places are limited, so please email [outreach.ospnr@gmail.com](mailto:outreach.ospnr@gmail.com) to reserve your place!  
Further details, including meeting points, will be provided after booking.

**Please note:**  
There are no toilets or refreshments on site. All children must be accompanied by an adult.  
[www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org](http://www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org) - registered charity number 1080376

## Bristol Cabot Choir Summer Events

**Saturday 20 June, 10 am:**  
**'Come and Sing'**

Vaughan Williams' The Lark Ascending  
(Choral version)  
In Shirehampton Village Hall  
where 'The Lark' was first performed in 1920)

**Saturday 4 July 7.30: Summer Concert**

Clifton Cathedral  
The Lark Ascending—choral version  
A Season to Sing—a choral reimagining of  
Vivaldi's Four Seasons by Joanna Forbes  
L'Estrange

**Full details and tickets via our website**  
[www.bristolcabotchoir.org](http://www.bristolcabotchoir.org)



If you would like to contribute to the production costs of The Messenger, or to the work of St Mary's, please use this QR code.

We are grateful for all donations.

## Community Diary Summer 2026

### Friends of Old Sneed Park Nature Reserve

**Sun 7 June: 30th Anniversary Celebration**  
See poster left

For further details please see our website  
[www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org](http://www.oldsneedparknaturereserve.org)  
To register for a working party, join the Friends, or contact the committee, email [fospnr@gmail.com](mailto:fospnr@gmail.com)

### Stoke Bishop & Sneyd Park Local History Group

No talks during the summer.

### University Botanic Garden

**Open every day 10 am - 4.30 pm**

To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Bristol University, every weekday is DAISY Day this summer! ('Donate As It Suits You' ) Standard ticket pricing £9 adults £5 alumni applies at weekends.

Chandos Deli refreshments daily 11 am - 4 pm

See website for up-to-date information on events  
[www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/botanic-garden)

### Avon Gorge and Downs Wildlife Project

**Sun 21 June, 8.30 am – 1.30 pm:** Tweet talk, birdsong workshop. £35.00 Adults

**Tues 23 June, 6 – 7.30 pm:** Top Gun of the sky, peregrine falcon discovery talk.  
£12.00. Age 12–Adults

**Sun 19 July, 10 am – 12 noon:** Life in the long grass – invertebrate discovery session.  
£12.00. Age 12 - adult

**Sat 8 August, 7 - 9 am:** Drawn to the light, moth discovery session. £15.00 Adults

For further information and full programme, contact the Project on 0117 903 0609 or e-mail [avongorgewildlife@bzsociety.org.uk](mailto:avongorgewildlife@bzsociety.org.uk).  
[www.avongorge.org.uk/whatson](http://www.avongorge.org.uk/whatson)

### Stoke Bishop and Sea Mills Ward Forum

Public meeting with Local Councillors tba.

To receive notice of meeting, join the mailing list: email [stokebishopforum@aol.com](mailto:stokebishopforum@aol.com)

### Stoke Bishop Townswomen's Guild

**1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month 2.15 pm**  
in St Mary's Church

Friendly tea, chat and social outings.

For details, contact Sheila 914 7159  
or Angela 968 6473

### Cubbaccinos

**1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of month 10am -12.30 pm**

Coffee, cakes etc in aid of the new Scout Community Hall, Kewstoke Road



# Spear Bristol: Transforming Young Lives

By Caroline Jowett-Ive, Chair of the Board of Trustees, Spear Bristol

*Spear Bristol Trust is a dynamic local charity, and one of St Mary's mission partners, dedicated to helping young people aged 16–24 overcome barriers to employment and education. As part of the national Spear Programme developed by the Resurgo Trust, the initiative provides practical training, personal coaching, and ongoing support to young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET).*

Many of the young people supported by Spear Bristol face significant challenges, including low self-confidence, limited qualifications, mental health struggles, or difficult home circumstances. The programme is designed not only to equip them with the skills needed to secure employment but also to foster long-term personal transformation. By building confidence, resilience, and a sense of purpose, Spear helps participants realise their potential and move towards a more positive future.



At the heart of Spear Bristol is a 12-month coaching programme. It begins with an intensive six-week coaching phase, during which participants attend regular sessions focused on employability skills such as CV writing, job searching, interview preparation, and workplace communication. This is followed by ongoing mentoring for up to a year, ensuring that participants are supported as they secure and sustain employment or further training.

Spear Bristol was established in 2022 through a partnership with Christ Church Clifton, reflecting a strong commitment to community-based transformation. An exciting new chapter begins in Autumn 2026 with the opening of a second Spear Bristol centre, hosted by St Andrew's Avonmouth. This expansion will enable the charity to reach more young people, particularly in the north and west of Bristol, and to deepen its impact across the city.

Community involvement is central to the success of Spear Bristol, and there are several meaningful ways for individuals to get involved.



Volunteers are warmly invited to:

- Take part in mock interviews, helping trainees practise and build confidence.
- Join career panels, sharing professional experiences and insights into different industries.
- Attend celebration events, where each cohort's achievements are recognised and supporters can witness the transformative impact of the programme.

Local employers can also support Spear Bristol by offering workplace visits, internships, or employment opportunities, helping to bridge the gap between young people and the world of work.

Spear Bristol is a powerful example of how communities can work together to bring hope and opportunity to the next generation. Through its holistic approach and strong partnerships, the charity is enabling young people not just to find jobs, but to build sustainable and fulfilling futures.



Over 200 young people have completed the programme so far, and the statistics speak volumes: 80% of those who complete the programme are in work or education 12 months later.

*If you would like to learn more or explore volunteering opportunities, please consider connecting with Spear Bristol and supporting this life-changing work. The Spear website gives more information, testimonies and videos.*  
[www.spear.org.uk](http://www.spear.org.uk)



## Trinity Opens its Doors...

By Peter Weeks

*Dating from 1669 and probably the oldest building in Stoke Bishop, Stoke House on Stoke Hill has been a place of theological training since 1932. It became Trinity College about fifty years ago following a merger with two other local colleges, and today it is one of the main centres for training men and women for ordination in the Church of England.*

*As well as courses for ordination, Trinity offers a number of opportunities for study and research. Options range from informal, discussion-based courses with no essays or pre-reading, right up to degree-level qualifications and beyond. I went along to meet one of the Vice-Principals of Trinity, Helen Johnson, to find out more.*

Helen was a nurse for fifteen years before being ordained. She joined the staff of Trinity a few years ago after working as curate and vicar in several Bristol parishes, most recently Shirehampton in the Avonside Mission Area. We talked about a new course offered by Trinity called "Discovering Theology" which runs for 30 evening sessions spread over a year in three modules: "Talking Theology", "Practising Theology" and "Reading the Bible".

I asked who might be interested in this course. Helen's reply was "Anyone! Anyone who is curious and wants to think about and investigate the big questions of faith". On the current course there are people from many walks of life. Discovering Theology is an informal, discussion-based opportunity for those who want to explore questions of religious belief and its significance in everyday life without the pressure of writing essays or undertaking a lot of pre-reading. The course looks at topical issues such as violence in the Bible, sex and gender, artificial intelligence, being human, suffering, the church, politics and

race. There are no entry qualifications, and students can take one or more of the modules as they wish.

Helen also told me about their new retreat centre on the Trinity campus. This is designed to offer a choice of teaching, guided reflection, shared prayer or rest for individuals and groups who want to step away from the busyness of everyday life and spend time in reflection and prayer. A retreat offers a temporary break from daily routines, work and stress to contemplate and recharge. Guests learn, worship and eat together, staying in comfortable accommodation with newly appointed study-bedrooms and chaplaincy support available if required. Trinity is set in nine acres of woodland giving plenty of space to wander in beautiful natural surroundings.

The two properties used for retreats are available for hire. Yew Tree House and Beech Tree House each have 5 bedrooms and accommodate up to 11 people. Both houses boast large, open plan living areas which make them ideal for family gatherings or groups of friends. They are a great base to explore the city and beyond. The houses can be booked through *airbnb* or directly by getting in touch with Trinity College Reception.



We are very fortunate to have this centre of learning on our doorstep. Trinity College is part of the life of Stoke Bishop and its staff and students make a huge contribution to the life and worship of St Mary's.

[www.trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk](http://www.trinitycollegebristol.ac.uk)

*Above, Trinity College today, and left as Stoke House, painted by JMW Turner whilst staying in Bristol in 1791. The watercolour depicts Turner himself and three friends on the front lawn.*

## The Chosen

Reviewed by Keith Sheather



**What is your favourite box set? 'Bridgerton' perhaps – or 'Stranger Things'? Why not try 'The Chosen', a new box set that tells the story of Jesus through the eyes of his disciples over seven seasons, with around eight hour-long episodes per season. That is some binge!**



**Jesus played by Jonathan Roumie, with his disciples**

'The Chosen' is the brainchild of Dallas Jenkins, an American film maker with a deep Christian faith. He felt called to put the ministry of Jesus on the screen in an immersive way. The first seasons were crowd-funded, season 1 being supported by more than 16,000 people contributing \$11 million. Later, money came from more traditional industry sources. The great coup was its arrival on the streaming platform Amazon Prime Video although from the start Dallas Jenkins has been determined the project should be free to view.

With such a long run time, 'The Chosen' allows the viewer the opportunity to share the day to day lives of the disciples, to delve into their back stories and to see the gradual unfolding of their relationship with Jesus. In the first episode we meet Simon Peter, a likeable, brawling rogue, fishing on the Sabbath to make up the arrears on his taxes,

Matthew going about his business as a taxman for the Romans, albeit reluctantly and Mary of Magdala stricken with uncontrollable torments. Mary has reached rock bottom, when in the last seconds of the first episode a hand reaches into frame and takes hers. The camera cuts back and Jesus is revealed. It is a simple and touching moment.

Jonathan Roumie plays Jesus as an engaging, down-to-earth figure. He shares the everyday practicalities of living on the road. There is much humour. After he has healed the blind man, he calls for a robe. It is bright green. 'Green suits you,' he says as he puts it around the man's shoulders. Equally there are many powerful scenes such as the one where Jesus overturns the traders' stalls in the Temple. The disciples are seen afterwards in a state of shock and incomprehension that so gentle a man could become so angry.

In order to flesh out what is merely hinted at in the Gospels, the film makers create imaginative scenes to support the text. How, for instance, did Jesus make himself heard while delivering the Sermon on the Mount? The answer: place the disciples around the crowd and get them to relay the words to each other. Fanciful perhaps, but thought provoking.

### How can I view 'The Chosen'?

- **'Watch The Chosen' is the production's official site where all seasons are free to view (<https://watch.thechosen.tv>)**
- **Amazon Prime Video has the first 5 seasons (but there are adverts.)**
- **Seasons 1-5 are available on DVD.**
- **Season 6 will air in the autumn 2026 and season 7 is in production.**

## Advertising

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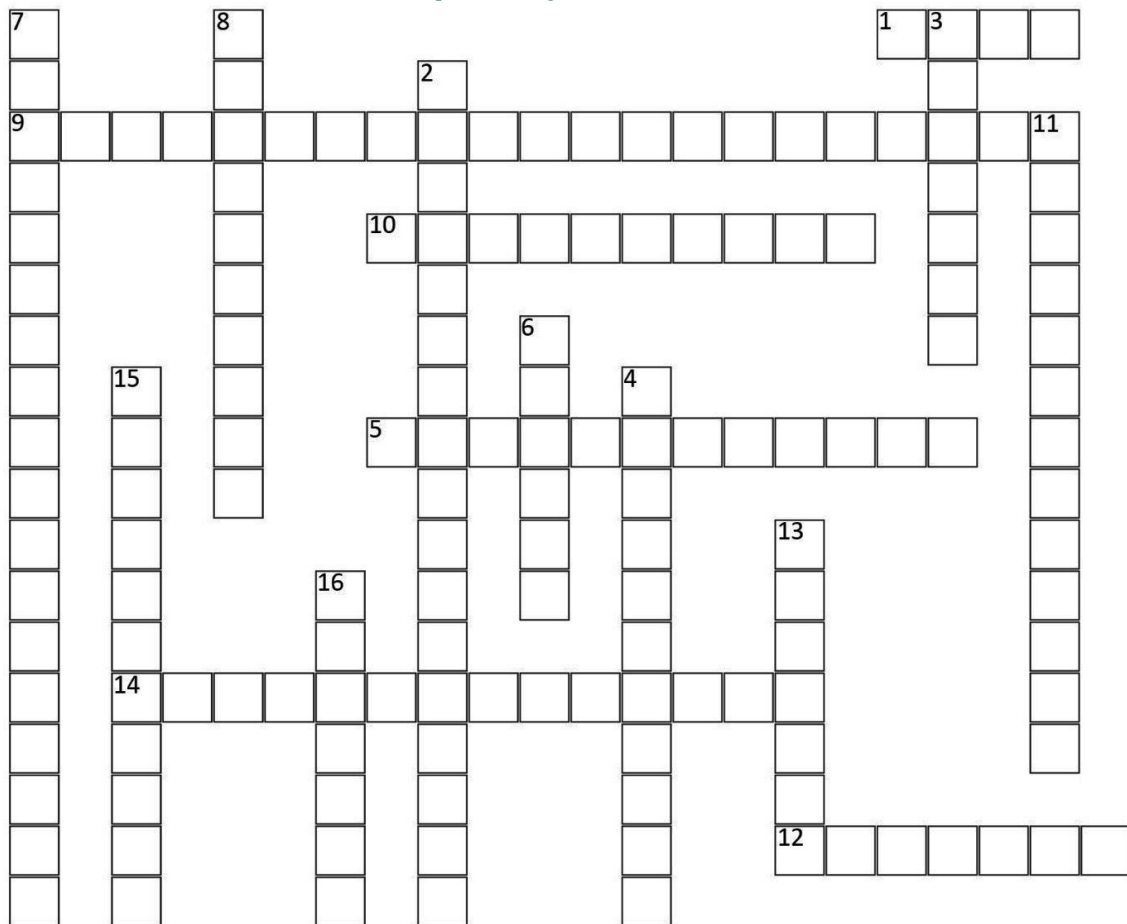
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[www.gordanotreecare.co.uk](http://www.gordanotreecare.co.uk)

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# Crossword: Jesus' Miracles as Recorded in St John's Gospel

Compiled by Sarah Harris



Have your Bible to hand. I used the New International Version (NIV) which is the version we use in church and can also be looked up easily on the internet.

Some answers are phrases: the number of letters in each word is given in brackets at the end of the clue.

1. Where was the wedding where Jesus turned water into wine? *John 2 v.1* (4)
2. What was the water, which Jesus turned into wine, normally used for? *John 2 v.6* (10,7)
3. Early in his ministry Jesus healed the son of a royal official at Capernaum in Galilee. What time of day did he do this? *John 4 v.43-54* (2,3,2)
4. Jesus also healed a man who was waiting by the pool at the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem. For how many years had this man been disabled? *John 5 v.5* (6,5)
5. The people were hungry and a boy gave his five small loaves and two fish to Jesus to be shared among them and there was enough to eat for everyone. How many people were there? *John 6 v.10* (4,8)
6. After they had eaten, how many baskets were filled with crumbs and leftover bits? *John 6 v.13* (6)
7. How did Jesus approach the disciples' boat? *John 6 v.16-19* (2,6,2,3,5)
8. With what did Jesus heal a man who had been born blind? *John 9 v. 6* (4,3,3)
9. What did Jesus tell the blind man to do next? *John 9 v.7* (4,2,3,4,2,6)
10. What happened after the blind man washed himself? *John 9 v.7* (2,5,3)
11. Lazarus had two sisters. What were their names? *John 11 v.1* (4,3,6)
12. Where did they live? About two miles outside Jerusalem on the slopes of the Mount of Olives at a place called..... *John 11 v.1* (7)
13. Where was Lazarus when Jesus came there to find him? *John 11 v. 17* (2,1,4)
14. Jesus asked them to remove the stone from the tomb entrance and then he shouted "....." *John 11v 43* (7,4,3)
15. Then what happened? Lazarus came out wrapped in..... *John11 v.44* (5,6)
16. What did Mary pour on Jesus' feet? *John12 v.3* (7)

I hope you won't need me to tell you the answers, but if you get stuck, email [messenger@stmarysb.org.uk](mailto:messenger@stmarysb.org.uk)



## Care *starts* at home

At Home Instead Bristol North, we offer all the care you or a loved one need to remain living safely and independently at home. Whether you are looking for support for one hour a day or full-time live-in care, we are here to help.

We understand the concerns that come with setting up care and how difficult it can be to encourage a loved one to accept help at home.

All the support we provide is built on consistent, relationship-based care, where clients and Care Professionals are matched to suit individual needs and given time for a trusted bond to develop.



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### Our hourly support includes:

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- Personal Care
- Dementia Care
- Special Care
- Medication Support

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Claire Kemp and Sarah Parsons  
Home Instead Live-in Care Managers

Claire and Sarah, our Live-in Care Managers, have over 25 years of experience between them. Together, they will support and guide you through the process of setting up live-in care.

They will be with you every step of the way, and that support doesn't end once a package is set up. They are always on hand to help with any questions or concerns you may have, to make sure that your needs, or those of a loved one are fully met.

## What's next?

If you would like to have a chat about hourly or live-in care, please do get in touch. You can call us on **0117 435 0066** (live-in care) or **0117 435 0068** (hourly care) or visit [www.homeinstead.co.uk/bristolnorth](http://www.homeinstead.co.uk/bristolnorth).

Home Instead Bristol North is locally owned and run, and has been serving the community of North Bristol since 2015. Also, now under the same ownership, are Home Instead Bristol East and West.

# A River Doesn't Just Carry Water – It Carries Life!

By Nicky Woodfield



*Have you ever taken nature for granted? The fresh air we breathe, sand between our toes or a beautiful summer sunrise? We might take very much for granted the fact that we have one of the most ecologically-important river stretches in the UK close by. You may well enjoy walking along the River Avon locally and wonder at the diversity of life dependent on the ebb and flow of the wide, meandering, tidal river. Or perhaps you enjoy a walk along one of its smaller tributaries, such as the River Frome or Trym.*



Our (Bristol) Avon, one of nine so called across the UK, starts life near Acton Turville in Gloucestershire. Flowing for 75 miles through Wiltshire and Somerset, it moves through the cities of Bristol and Bath and numerous towns such as Malmesbury, Melksham and Keysham as well as much smaller villages like Salford, Avoncliffe and Claverton before meeting the Severn Estuary at Avonmouth.

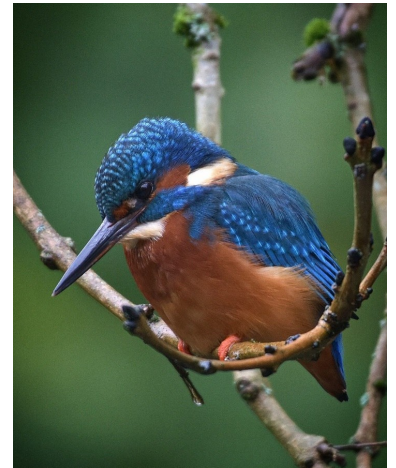


Along its route it features several designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), such as Horseshoe Bend in Shirehampton and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), such as the Avon Gorge SAC. The river corridor is a priority area for nature recovery and is in fact a vital habitat for spawning European eels, Atlantic salmon, otters and even European beavers!

Various trusts and charities help to maintain the health of the river. Bristol Avon Rivers Trust (BART) works tirelessly to conserve and enhance its status, with practical rivers restoration delivered throughout the catchment area via numerous projects.

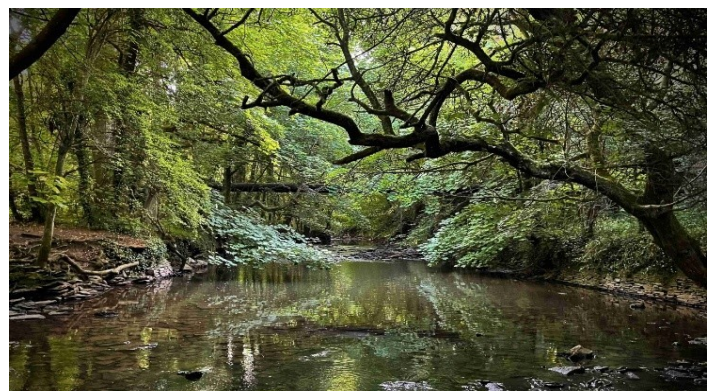
The community group *We Are Avon – Restoring Our River Valley Together* is a place-based movement for change, aiming to protect the river and regenerate the Avon Valley through community-led action.

If you've ever walked any of the designated 25-mile River Avon Trail, which starts from the Pultney Bridge in Bath, finishing in Pill, you will be familiar with the diverse mammal, bird and insect life it supports. The trail is over twenty years old and serves as a reminder that the beautiful stretch of the river was also a crucial link with Bristol's commercial history, as the confluence of the river meets the historic floating harbour at the city's Cumberland Basin.



Over recent years I've accompanied groups of young people to experience the trail and reflect on the ecological, historical and cultural significance of the Avon. Spending time near a river can help improve our overall well-being, as well as teaching us a valuable lesson about patience.

When we look at a river, we see how it flows steadily without rushing – reminding us that we, too, have our own path to follow at our own pace. We might sometimes feel impatient, but just like a river, everything has its own time. As A.A. Milne (playwright, poet and writer, best known for his Winnie-the-Pooh books) said *"rivers know this: There is no hurry. We shall get there someday!"*



So, the next time you walk or amble alongside the river, give a thought to all the life sustained by it – and those who give of their time to sustain it!

*Jema notes: Stoke Bishop Primary School has a deeply rooted understanding of the way that our local rivers contribute to a healthy community, through the biblical vision: 'Wherever the river flows, life will flourish'.*

*Ezekiel 47:9*

# Helping Hand

## HEALTH

### Doctors

Sea Mills Surgery 968 1182

W-o-T Primary Care Ctr 962 3406

### NHS Direct - 111

For Dentists, Opticians and other medical services: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

### Chemists

Buxton & Grant 973 5025  
(Blackboy Hill)

Nexus Pharmacy 962 3415  
(Westbury-on-Trym)

Westbury Pharmacy 962 8986  
(Stoke Lane)

North View Pharmacy 973 3140

Well Pharmacy 968 1272  
(Sea Mills Surgery, 2 Riverleaze)

### Hospitals

BRI 923 0000

St Michael's 921 5414

Children's Hospital 927 6998

Southmead 950 5050

Bristol Eye Hospital 342 6888

Spire 980 4000

Chesterfield/Nuffield 911 6919

## AGE AND CARER SERVICES

Age UK 922 5353

Care Direct 922 2700  
adult social care

We Care 0300 323 0700  
help for over 60s and young disabled  
[www.wecr.org.uk](http://www.wecr.org.uk)

Carers Support Centre 965 2200  
free advice and training  
[www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk](http://www.carerssupportcentre.org.uk)

Dementia Wellbeing Service 90451515  
[www.bristoldementiawellbeing.org.uk](http://www.bristoldementiawellbeing.org.uk)

Action for the Blind 934 1719  
Advice on support

Holidays for Carers: 0800 999 3365  
[www.carersolidays.org.uk](http://www.carersolidays.org.uk)

Growing Support 07419 825261  
<http://growingupport.co.uk/get-involved>

Bristol After Stroke 964 7657  
Support for those recovering from Stroke  
[www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk](http://www.bristolafterstroke.org.uk)

## POST OFFICE

Welcome 968 1961  
Druid Hill

## EDUCATION

### Pre-School

W-o-T Baptist Church Pre-School  
Church Office 962 9990

Muddy Boots Nursery  
Trinity College 968 4493

White Tree Pre-School 07804 269289

### Primary Schools

Stoke Bishop 377 2173  
Head Teacher: Darren Hunt

Elmlea 377 2266  
Head Teacher: Mrs L Wright

### Libraries

Westbury-on-Trym 903 8552

Sea Mills 903 8555

Henleaze 903 8541

Central 903 7200

### At Home Library Service

for people who have difficulty visiting their local library. 07714 898 558

### Darren Jones

is MP for Bristol North-West.  
[darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk)

phone: 0207 219 2302

House of Commons  
London SW1A 0AA

### Bristol City Council [www.bristol-city.gov.uk](http://www.bristol-city.gov.uk)

Switchboard 922 2000  
(inc. refuse, streets, litter etc.)  
Emergency 922 2050

Stoke Bishop Councillors  
John Goulandris 922 2227  
Henry Michallat 922 2227

### Police

Emergencies only 999  
Non-emergencies 101

Lost valuables:  
Report your loss at  
[www.reportmyloss.com](http://www.reportmyloss.com)

### Power Cut Call Line

Phone 105 to check for or report a local area problem.

### Save money on phone calls:

For alternatives to 0844 etc go to [www.saynoto0870.com](http://www.saynoto0870.com)

### Helping Hand

is compiled by Paul Lewis-Smith.  
If you have changes, additions or updates to suggest please contact him on 968 4221 or e-mail: [plewissmith@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:plewissmith@blueyonder.co.uk)

## CINEMAS

Scott Cinemas,  
Henleaze 0300 124 0275  
<http://bristol.scottcinemas.co.uk>

Vue Cribbs Causeway 0345 308 4620  
[w.myvue.com](http://w.myvue.com)

## TRAVEL

### Dial-a-ride

For those unable to use conventional public transport.  
Free (after small joining fee) to BCC Travelcard holders.

Tel: 0117 244 7337  
[http://bristolcommunitytransport/transport\\_for\\_individuals/bristol\\_dial\\_a\\_ride](http://bristolcommunitytransport/transport_for_individuals/bristol_dial_a_ride)

### Buses

3 and 4 link Broadmead to the Mall via stops in Stoke Bishop

11/11A to Southmead Hospital via stops in Coombe Dingle/Canford and Westbury village.

### Portway Park & Ride

9 to Centre, stops at Roman Way  
<http://www.travelwest.info/parkandride>

For information about bus and coach travel in UK contact Traveline  
[www.traveline.info](http://www.traveline.info)

### Trains

Severn Beach Railway  
Temple Meads to Severn Beach via Sea Mills (No official parking)

National Rail Enquiries 0345 748 4950  
[www.nationalrail.co.uk](http://www.nationalrail.co.uk)

Bristol Airport 0871 334 4444  
[www.bristolairport.co.uk](http://www.bristolairport.co.uk)

Cover picture:  
coffee and cake at the new  
Scouts Community Hall.  
See p5

Picture by Keith Sheather

