

Shire

Your local community newspaper
with news and views from the
Shirehampton area

No. 651 - April 2026 www.shire.org.uk 5,000 copies monthly

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“Community is Everything” Shirehampton ComUnity Festival

Originally created by combining remarks from two young *Avonmouth Rugby Club* players, when asked what they liked about their club (“*Community*” and “*Everything*”), our adopted motto aptly describes what the small group of organisers were aiming to achieve in the make-up of the festival line up. We wanted it to truly reflect and celebrate the breadth of the glorious spectrum that is the life of the four villages. At *February’s event on Saturday 21st*, we had music, dancing, drama, art workshops, well-being activities, storytelling, great food and we heard from some of the people who are busy at the heart of the community.

We want to broaden our horizons even further when we open the doors on the **third edition of the festival on Saturday, September 12th, 2026**. To this end, we plan to invite our **Sports and Activity clubs and organisations** to be part of it and we will be reaching out to you very soon.



However, there’s no need to wait until you are “invited” to offer your support. We would be delighted to hear from you with your ideas, if you would like to

participate with the community in showcasing what it means to live, work, play and grow up in the sister

Continues on page 9.

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Official address: The Library, Public Hall, Station Road, Shirehampton, Bristol BS11 9TU.

Please contact Shire on: chairperson@shire.org.uk

'SHIRE' Contact Details

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N.B. To meet the deadline with our designer, all written copy should be submitted by email or to the Library by the 10th of the month before it appears in print, or it may not be included in the next edition. While advertisements in this paper are accepted in good faith, readers are advised to make their own enquiries and assessment. We request that all adverts are supplied in the correct format and size or there may be a charge should you require artwork to be created. Price on application. Unless otherwise stated, all material appearing in SHIRE is the copyright of SHIRE Publications. Please ensure photographs submitted with articles are cleared for use and permission sought especially when featuring individuals including children. The Shire cannot accept responsibility if photos are published in error where permission for use has been not sought. The views and opinions expressed in these articles are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Shire. All information correct at time of going to press to the best of Shire's knowledge.

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We welcome contributions for publication in 'SHIRE' but reserve the right to edit any copy received. Articles should not exceed 450 words. Any material published is at the editor's discretion and may also be included on our website www.shire.org.uk unless the copy is clearly marked 'not to be included on the world wide web'.

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REGULAR EVENTS IN SHIREHAMPTON

SHIREHAMPTON PUBLIC HALL REGULAR WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

MONDAY	Twyford Art Club (Except August) Yoga	10am-12noon 6.30-7.30pm	Main Hall Main Hall
TUESDAY	Jolly Melodies (Term Time) Line Dancing Community Living Room Bereavement Support (1st Tues) Puppy Training	10am-12noon 2-3pm 3-5pm 5.30-7pm 6-8pm	Main Hall Main Hall Library Library Main Hall
WEDNESDAY	Healing Rooms (2nd Weds) Over 75s Exercise Extraordinary Links (Term Time) Women's Fellowship (2nd and 4th Weds) Shire Stitches (3rd Weds)	10.30am-1.30pm 2-3pm 3.30-5.30pm 7-9pm 7.30-9.30pm	Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall
THURSDAY	Shire Social Group Healing Rooms Tai Chi Pregnancy Pilates Pilates Family History Group (2nd Thurs) Model Railway Club	10am-12noon 10am-1.30pm 2-3pm 6-7pm 7-8pm 6-8pm 7-10pm	Bradley Room Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall Main Hall Library Club Room
FRIDAY	Shire Stitches (1st Friday) Yoga for All (Chair-Based Mobility & Strength) Yoga for All (For a Lunchtime Stretch)	10am-12noon 11-11.45am 12noon-1pm	Bradley Room Main Hall Main Hall
SATURDAY	(Private and Public Functions)		
SUNDAY	Church of Grace	11am-4pm	Main Hall & Springfield

The Hall is also home to Shirehampton Action (formerly SCAF) and Tandem Arts CIC

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Shire

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WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU:
A FEW HOURS COMMITMENT EACH MONTH, IDEAS, ENTHUSIASM

CONTACT US: editor@shire.org.uk or 07742 804 737

Cotswold Community Association
Dursley Road, Shirehampton,
Bristol, BS11 9XH
Registered charity no. 1101427
Website: cotswoldcommunity.org
Email: cotswoldca@gmail.com
Phone: 07943-401575

Regular Events at the Cotswold Community Centre

MONDAY	Pilates 9.30-10.30am Kettlebells 2pm-3pm 5:15-6:15pm 6:30-7:30pm
TUESDAY	Over 70s Exercise Class 2pm-3pm Community Choir 3:05pm - 3:50pm (Alternate weeks) Film Night 7:30pm (1st & 3rd of month)
WEDNESDAY	Keep Fit 10:30-11:30am Kettlebells 5:15-6:15pm Pilates 6:30-7:30pm
THURSDAY	Welcome Space 10am-Noon Bingo 2pm Kettlebells 5:15-6:15pm 6:30-7:30pm
FRIDAY	Happy Space 2pm-4pm (3rd of month)
SATURDAY	Coffee Morning 10am-11:30am (2nd of month) Bingo 7:30pm
SUNDAY	Cotswold Christian Community Service Songs of Praise Café 4:45-6pm (2nd of month)

Come along and join in the fun
For more details and regular updates, join our mail list by emailing cotswoldca@gmail.com

SHIRE ADVICE SERVICE

Free Advice Sessions

Shirehampton Health Centre, Pembroke Road,

Shirehampton

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To make an appointment call 0117 9515751

Avonmouth Ladies Club

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Julie on: 07814 183976

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The *Shire* Community Pages

It's Nearly May!

Sea Mills Flower and Craft Show, Saturday 9th May 2026, St Edyth's Church, Sea Mills

So, last month I told you all about why we'd moved the Show from September to May. It seemed rather daunting to organise everything 3½ months earlier than usual, but we got off to a good start and it's all coming together to make for a fantastic afternoon.



The Lord Mayor and local councillor Henry Michallat at the 2025 show.

The first news is that **Henry Michallat**, Councillor for Stoke Bishop and current Lord Mayor, has agreed to open the Show for a second time! And that's only possible because of the earlier date. So if you'd like to see him in all his finery, do come along.

And then, local Social Media Influencer **@The Food Guy66** will not only be attending, but will judge the Sausage Roll category! You can find him on YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and no doubt in other places.

Which brings me on to the Schedule of Classes: if you haven't seen a paper copy, you can download one from bit.ly/SMFCSSchedule, or email us on seamillsflowershow@gmail.com – we'll be happy to make sure you get one.

There's a whole new section this year for 'Made in my Shed' – and any 'shed' will do, so it might be your garage, the kitchen table or your spare room, wherever you tinker or fiddle. Naturally there are still the regular handicrafts, photos and edibles. We've added 'Trauma Teddies' to the Handicraft section, hoping to have some donations to the local Fire Service. We still don't know how well the flowers, fruit and veg classes will come out, but anything which likes a lot of water – rhubarb? – should be doing well. Some children's groups are using the Classes as ideas for craft activities, so we hope to see a good range of entries there.

Stall-holders are signing up, and as well as a wide range of beautiful crafts we will also have some 'information' stalls from local organisations. And our entertainers

include **Sarah Jane Warren** (a regular at St Mary's Church); **Bristol Ukulele Club**; the **Shynee Ladies Belly Dancers**; and **Rich** on guitar.

If you've ever been involved in anything like this yourself, you'll know there's always a need for volunteers – and this is no different! Do get in touch if



Aniket Sardana's prize marrow gained most points of all 2025 entrants.



you can offer an hour or so on Friday evening, Saturday morning, or Saturday afternoon.

And remember, it would be lovely to see our friends in Shire represented in the Show classes. We know how talented you are from your own events, and we've always welcomed entrants from across Bristol.

We'd love to hear from you if you want to know more, or think you could help.

Sue Hazelden, on behalf of the Sea Mills Flower and Craft Show Committee. Photos © Bob Guscott.

seamillsflowershow@gmail.com

Facebook: Sea Mills Flower & Craft Show

Instagram: seamillsflowershow

Shirehampton Markets

HIGH STREET MARKET
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Charity Bake-Off At The Public Hall

Great Charity Bake Off Bake-A-Wish (all proceeds to the Make-a-Wish charity)

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For more info and to enter please text 07554 642440.



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Curious? Message our co-chair Ludo on
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Hello there! **Would you like to improve your well-being?**

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Linda x x

Weekly classes - just come along - no need to book:

- **Kettlebells** are Monday 5.15 - 6.15pm and 6.30 - 7.30pm, Wednesday from 5.15 - 6.15pm and Thursday from 6.30 - 7.30pm at the Cotswold Community Centre. Message for 1:1 technique session.
- **Bootcamps:** Monday and Wednesday 6.15-7.00am. Please message for details.



For a free initial consultation in your own home or mine. Telephone: **07875 054 292**

Email: t.linda1206@gmail.com

www.shirestrong.co.uk



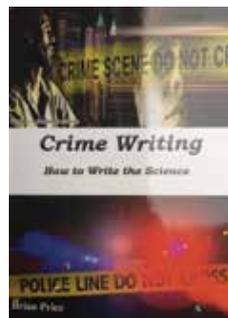
**FREE talk at Shirehampton Library
Thursday 16th April at 7pm**

Crime Science: Getting the Facts Right

Crime writer and scientist *Brian Price* will be talking about common mistakes authors make with scientific topics. Come along and find out how hard it is to knock someone out, what cyanide really does, how difficult it is to dispose of a body and what DNA at a crime scene actually means.



Brian is the author of the *DC Mel Cotton* detective series as well as *Crime Writing: How to Write the Science*, a guide for authors. He regularly advises other writers on scientific topics.



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We especially enjoy spreading community news and we love to hear from all our readers.

Please, send in your letters and stories to editor@shire.org.uk or deliver to The Library at The Public Hall.

If requested, we will not print the name of a letter written to the Editor, but we cannot accept an anonymous letter.

Many thanks.

A Handshake from Edinburgh to Shire

Here's a heart-warming message sent by another local publication, *C&B News*, published in *Edinburgh*, to our very own *Shire* newspaper on reaching our **650th** edition of *Shire* last month:

“Well done to every member of the team on reaching an uninterrupted run of 650 monthly issues of *Shire*! ... Although based in *Edinburgh*, I've been keeping an eye on *Shire* ... since I first took on the editorship of *C&B News* back in March 2020. Of course, we're a little behind you in some respects: because we take some months off, we only reached our **500th** issue back in October 2024 and we are currently celebrating our **50th** anniversary year. However, despite our differences, I do think there are similarities in terms of contents and goals: we both serve communities, located on the edge of larger cities, which retain a strong sense of their own identities.

I'm sure that you're already beginning to think of what's going into April's 651st edition – the monthly treadmill never stops! – but I hope you do at least pause briefly to recognise the excellent work you are all doing, helping make *Shirehampton* the cohesive and evolving community it is today.

Paul Fisher Cockburn

Editor, C&B News

Thank you, Paul! Congratulations to yourself and your team on reaching over 500 issues, passing your 50th year and all you contribute to your community. Enjoy the treadmill!!! And thanks of course to all our loyal readers over these 650 editions of Shire!

Personal Announcements

Do you wish to announce a personal or family celebration, marriage or death?

To book contact: adverts@shire.org.uk
Prices Start from £7.95

PLEASE NOTE:

Any submitted Personal Announcements or other Notices to the paper may incur a charge and must be accompanied with the submitters contact details or their submission will not be able to be published.

Dog Owners Beware – It's Tick Season!

Dog owners are advised to check their pets carefully after walks, as, with the coming of spring, *tick season* has arrived. In fact, it seems to be starting earlier every year, with the warmer winters and early spring temperatures making ticks active sooner.

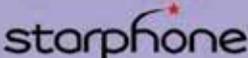
People often associate ticks with the countryside, but dogs can easily pick them up in **city parks, woodlands, river paths** – in fact any area with **long grass** where wildlife such as foxes, birds or deer pass through. Even urban gardens are not immune.

Ticks attach to a dog's skin to feed on blood and are often small enough to go unnoticed if owners are not actively checking. They tend to gravitate towards warm, hidden areas of the body where they are less likely to be disturbed. A quick check after walks can help owners spot them before they become a problem.

Experts recommend checking around the ears, under the collar, between the toes, around the eyes and eyelids, under the front legs and around the tail and groin area.

Ticks are easier to deal with when they're spotted early. If you're uncertain, consult your local vet, who may recommend the application of some kind of parasite prevention during peak tick months, depending on lifestyle and location.

Rob Andrews



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THE ARTS IN SHIREHAMPTON

Join The New Yorchestra

Where better to spend a Saturday afternoon listening to music or, in this case joining a number of like-minded people who love music and become part of it?

The New Yorchestra was offering the chance for locals to join them, try out for them and join a rehearsal. Strictly speaking, this is not a professional orchestra—many of its members are amateur musicians who play for their own enjoyment and have joined with other amateurs to perform music together.

Rachel Woolley is the mastermind, instigator and conductor of The New Yorchestra which has been going for over two years. They generally rehearse at the Penny Brohn National Centre, Pill, where Ham Green Hospital originally stood all those years ago.

On Saturday 7th March they were playing at a different venue, Avonmouth Community Centre, recruiting more members to join in rehearsals with the regular musicians. This was open to anyone living in Four Villages and beyond and I did recognise one or two faces and had the chance to speak to some of the possible new recruits.

"It's been good today, I haven't played in an orchestra since I was at school 50 years ago, so it's nice to give it a try. I will be joining," said Stephen.

"I play every week in a band. It's always fun to play with other people, and, you know, play new pieces that I'd not normally play," said Dan.

"My daughter has been in the New Yorchestra for quite a few years now. She's played the flute ever since she was about four or five. I play the piano so I've come along just to have a little play. I might join, but I also want to learn about the violin too, so we'll see." said Elaine.

I have to say it was an enjoyable afternoon all round and, seeing the newbies joining the regular musicians, I was very impressed on how they all came together as one.

The New Yorchestra performs on a regular basis – their latest event was held on 27th March at Shirehampton Public Hall. As well as paid events they also get involved in community fund-raising events in and around Bristol and North Somerset.



If you want to join The New Yorchestra and find out more about them, please go to: www.facebook.com/TheNewYorchestra

Kathryn Courtney & Photos © Kathryn Courtney

CONTACTING YOUR LOCAL COUNCILLOR

Shirehampton is in the Avonmouth and Lawrence Weston Ward

Your Councillors are:

Donald Alexander – Labour: cllr.donald.alexander@bristol.gov.uk

Zoë Peat - Labour: Cllr.Zoe.Peat@bristol.gov.uk

Tom Blenkinsop - Labour: Cllr.Tom.Blenkinsop@bristol.gov.uk

Labour Members' Services Office: 0117 922 3827

CONTACTING YOUR MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT

Shirehampton is in the Bristol North West Constituency

Darren Jones Phone: 0117 959 6545

Email: darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk

Website: www.darren-jones.co.uk

Window Wanderland Unites All

Window Wanderland provided a spectacular, creative and colourful event in Shirehampton from 27th February to 1st March. This weekend extravaganza showcased many creative designs each evening (42 in fact, if you were counting).

Over two nights of exploring I met several families along the way where children were in awe and adults fascinated with what they were seeing. A couple of hours enjoying a bit of a wander round the streets of Shirehampton saw family and friends across the generations come together for a 'night out'.

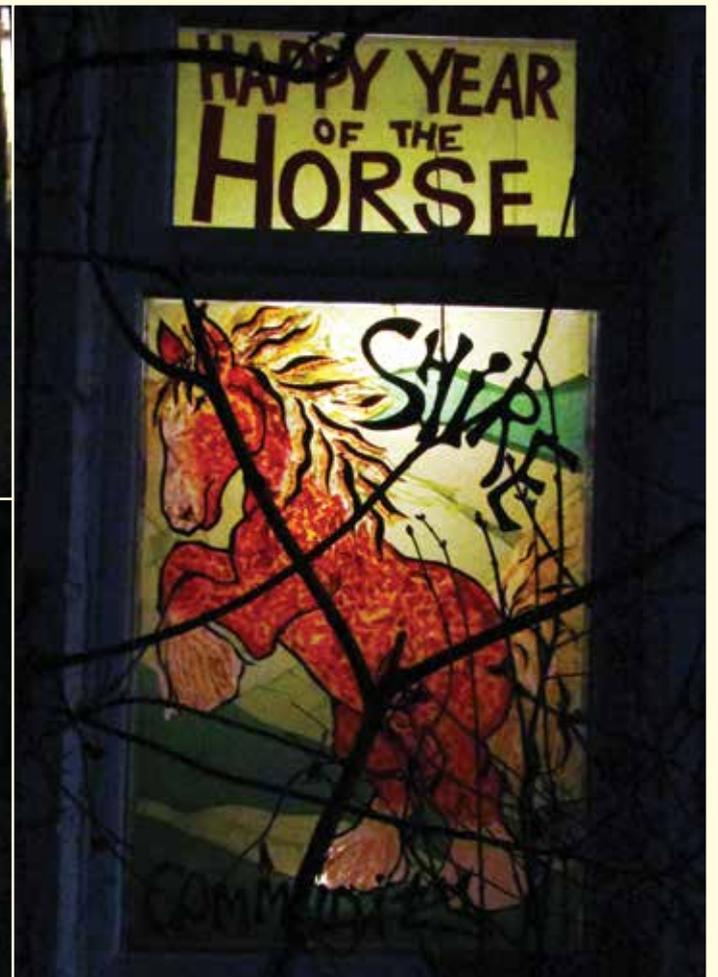
This year's theme was 'Unity'. "At a time when there are forces out to destroy what community cohesion we have left, unity seems a very appropriate theme," said **John Hastings**, Project Co-ordinator. "There are so many varied designs on this theme—togetherness and love hearts and circles of hands were displayed by neighbours, and a fantastic Shire horse to signify the Year of the Horse was also on display".

I found some **stunning windows**, though not all could be displayed in this article. Some of my favourites included the Shire horse (but this was obscured with small trees in the garden), nature, wildlife and Jimi Hendrix(!). Two houses together had four different designs. Just too many to choose from.

The best thing about this event is that you don't have to be artistic to take part (good news for me!) – there are local artists on hand to help with your designs

Let's hope that Window Wanderland will be back in 2027. You can find more information at www.facebook.com/groups/shirehamptonwindowwanderland

Kathryn Courtney & Photos © Kathryn Courtney



Shirehampton ComUnity Festival

Continued from page 1.

villages of Shirehampton, Avonmouth, Lawrence Weston and Sea Mills. If there are any other individuals or groups, not represented so far and who have something to offer, we would love to listen to your ideas too. A contact email address can be found in the "call for feedback" request at the end of this piece.

Thanks to **Bob Pitchford** who took the photographs, which truly capture the joy of being part of this close and vibrant community.

Paul McMillan. All Photos © Bob Pitchford.



Thanks to all Contributors – and a Call For Feedback

Hello Shirehampton,

The organisers, crew and participants of our second festival want to say a big thank you to all of you who came to the festival on February 21st or who helped in any way. We all thoroughly enjoyed it and were delighted with the turnout and atmosphere that you all helped to create.

Tom Bradley, the festival's organiser, also wrote to all the volunteers who helped to make it happen:

I would just like to take a mo to thank all of you for being an integral part of last Saturday's Festival!

All your efforts, love and energy to bring what you could to the event, really had such a beautiful effect on that day and a taste of what is possible when space is created for bringing people together.

*The **Hope** is that the residual feelings, memories and connections made do not become a distant memory, but a reminder of the purpose of these kinds of efforts, and spur anyone who has capacity to bring along a much needed **Unity**. I know that word can be so easily overused, and misused, but the concept if you think enough (but maybe not too much), is where everyone has a place for expression, human connection in an ideal measure... who knows if we can find the exact measure at any given time, but we can learn along the way of trying!*

***Thanks** for all the logistics, consideration, decoration, equipment, food, TIME, smiles, concerns, joy, and all else I've forgotten.*

We want to know what you think too. Do you have any thoughts that you would like to share or any ideas for future festivals? (The next one is scheduled for Saturday September 12th, so we are already in the planning stage. If you do, please email: communityfestivalshire@gmail.com)

We look forward to seeing you at the next fun packed celebration of community life.

Paul McMillan on behalf of the organising committee.

Churches in the Shirehampton Area

Shirehampton Baptist Church News

Contact: www.shirehamptonbaptistchurch.co.uk

Easter weekend arrives early this year but whatever the date it is a time when Christians remember the crucifixion of Christ on *Good Friday* and rejoice in His resurrection on *Easter Sunday*. The Christian identity is found in these two facts.

On April 12th the **Cotswold Christian Community** will meet for their **Songs of Praise Café**. We are a number of Christians who attend various churches but we meet once a month to enjoy an hour of songs, readings, and talks from interesting speakers and of course tea and cakes. We meet in the Cotswold Community Hall on the second Sunday in the month at 4:45-6pm.

Rock Steady is a club for Primary School children. It is held in our church building, Station Road, 3:30-4:30pm. The children enjoy games, singing, drama and art. Parents can stay. If you are interested see our contact details.

Once a month there is **Life Café** held in our lovely church building on Station Road. All are welcome to enjoy a drink and cakes. The next one will be on Thursday April 30th at 10:30am.

We meet every Sunday at 10:30am and all are very welcome. This month there will be a **Good Friday service at 10:30am** and an **Easter celebration on Easter Sunday**.

We believe very much in the power of prayer for each other and also for this very needy world.

Until next month. Love and prayers from all at Shirehampton Baptist Church.

BRISTOL HEALING ROOMS are in Shirehampton every second Wednesday of the month.

Don't miss this opportunity to drop in between **11am and 1pm** at the **Shirehampton Public Hall, Station Road**, to be prayed for in the name of Jesus. AS IT WAS IN THE GOSPELS! We have many stories of healing on a daily basis.

Jesus heals today as He did during His time on earth.



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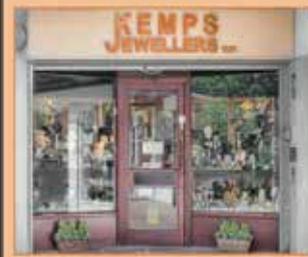
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Greetings from St Mary's!

The daffodils have been glorious around the village and the sunshine has begun to peek through, reminding us of the joy and hope that spring brings. Here at St Mary's, that means we are preparing for *Easter* and all the meaning and celebration that comes with it. The journey toward Easter morning is a very special time for Christians, and if you're wondering about Easter or simply curious about what it all means, we would love you to join us.



We begin with our **Palm Sunday** celebration on **29th March** and then move through Holy Week with daily reflections as we approach Good Friday. Our **Last Hour** service on Good Friday is a powerful moment of stillness as we reflect on Christ on the cross. On Saturday, the **Area Choir** will be with us, filling the church with their wonderful music—do come along and enjoy this special concert.

Easter Day begins with the joy of our **Sunrise Service**, complete with fire, song, and celebration, followed by bacon butties. Later in the morning, our Family Service bursts into life with flowers, bonnets and an Easter egg hunt as we celebrate Jesus' rising. Come and be part of this wonderful season.

Throughout April, all our usual events continue – details are listed below. Please note that **Goldies** has moved this month to make space during Holy Week. And if you haven't yet ventured in on a Friday, you're warmly invited to join the lively crowd as we gather to chat, share food, and enjoy laughter together. Friends old and new are always welcome.

Key Dates

- **29th March – Palm Sunday:** 10:30am Service

- **Holy Week (Mon 30th – Wed 1st):** 11.00am, 30-minute reflections
- **Good Friday:** 2.00pm The Last Hour
- **Saturday:** 2:30pm Area Choir Easter Concert
- **Easter Day:** 6:20am Sunrise Service
10:30am Family Service with Easter Bonnet Competition & Egg Hunt

Goldies will be held on **8th April** this month. Keep an eye on our website, Facebook page, and noticeboards for updates on all our events and services.

A final reminder: if you would like to collect a family kneeler from the church, please pop in and we'll be happy to help. As I write, the floor has been freshly



stripped and varnished, and our new chairs are due to arrive this week – St Mary's is looking lovely.

And for your diary – **Shire Noise** returns on **4th May**, 2-4pm at the church. Expect free fun, food, and friendship for the May bank holiday. As always, a warm welcome awaits you.

Blessings – Rev Alison

www.stmarysshire.org

Sundays	8:30	Rise & Shine on 2nd and 3rd Sunday of the month
Sundays	10:30	Holy Communion Service Worship for All on 4th Sunday (including baptisms)
Monday	10:00-12:00	Coffee Morning
Tuesday	10:00-12:00	Coffee Morning
Wednesday	10:00-12:00 10:30	Coffee Morning Goldies (1st Wednesday of the month)
Thursday	11:00	Holy Communion
Friday	10:00-14:00	Coffee Morning to midday. Welcoming space with hot food from midday to 14:00
Saturday	10:00-12:00	Coffee Morning



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Join The Nature Detectives!

There's a new and exciting community group that is being supported by *Shirehampton Action* called *The Nature Detectives* and I joined them during their gathering at the Daisy Field on 22nd February.

This is a great family adventure for all, with children in particular getting excited with their finds, from worms, bugs and mushrooms living and growing in the **Daisy Field** to flora and fauna. Reference books and pamphlets were on hand as well as sample jars to put specimens in for further investigation.

The wonder on the children's faces with their discoveries was a particular delight to see. **Orla**, five and a half years old, declared: "I found a daffodil and some clover and some little mushrooms and it's been fun." Dad was on hand with a reference booklet to show her the type of mushrooms she'd found.

I also spoke to mum **Mona** who was with her four-year-old son. "It's great that we have something this close to home to explore with the kids," she said. "My four-year-old loves it, he loves bugs and he loves exploring, and I think it's great to be able to do this with him on a Sunday afternoon and learn new things—and also do it as part of the community."

Cee MacDonald runs this monthly event. "Nature Detectives is great at encouraging people to notice what's around them," she said. "You might see a flower and then get out an app to try and see if you can identify it, and then we can check back in the guidebook to see if that identification makes sense. If you tune into the natural world there is awe and wonder to be found, but sometimes it's easy not to notice it if you're focused on other things. This

project gives space to spend an hour really looking. And the lovely thing is that people share their discoveries. If people find an interesting fungus, they might call others over to see it or help identify it, and it becomes something we are doing together."

The Nature Detectives meet between 3-4pm on the last Sunday of the month and rotate between the Daisy Field, the Yellow Brick Road and Kings Weston House. The dates and locations can be found at <https://shirehamptonaction.org.uk/detectives> where you can also join the WhatsApp group.

Kathryn Courtney & Photos © Kathryn Courtney



Allotment Diary: An Introduction to Myrtle Hall C Allotments

Myrtle Hall Allotment sits in a quiet, peaceful spot down by the river in Shire – a haven for wildlife, vegetables, flowers and people. The 34 plots include whole plots and half plots, and draw people of all ages, some to sit and drink tea in their garden chairs, some bringing children to play, but the vast majority to plant and grow a huge variety of fruit, vegetables and flowers. And when they are not working, they can sit and enjoy the sunshine surrounded by a kaleidoscope of colour.

“If you have a garden and a library you have everything you need”

~ Cicero

The Wildlife Pond

On 14th February the sun appeared, and out I went, not wanting to pass up such a beautiful day on the allotment. Imagine my excitement to find evidence of spring whilst exploring my wildlife pond – frogspawn!

Frogspawn can appear from December to April but, for me, the new life meant that Spring was on the way. Fellow allotmenters found equal excitement in the frogspawn and we all stood around marvelling. Now on March 5th, three weeks later, these tiny jelly blobs have moved on to become hundreds of tadpoles competing for space in my little pond. Hopefully a few will survive to become froglets and frogs, and inhabit our little spot of paradise.

Ponds can be home to fantastic wildlife such as frogs, newts, damsel- and dragonflies. Birds, hedgehogs and bats may also feed there, increasing biodiversity. Hopefully future frogs will eat SLUGS, the allotmenters arch enemy!

Things to Plant in April:

- Outdoors:** Seeds: spinach, beetroot, carrot, pea, lettuce, radish, kale and cabbage seeds.
Root crops: potatoes, onion sets, shallots, garlic.
Indoors: Tomatoes, courgettes, aubergines, sweetcorn and pepper seeds.
Overwintering vegetables: Broad Beans, Meteor Peas and Rhubarb.

Broad beans and peas, planted as seeds in the ground at the end of November 2025, can be eaten or used as a cover crop, adding nitrogen to the soil. Now in March, the broad beans have sprouted and are thriving. The meteor peas, still a little fragile, have a long way to go, but continue to brave the frosts! And my beautiful rhubarb crown, passed on by a kindly allotmenteer, is boldly spreading and is now in its second year of growth.



Rhubarb.

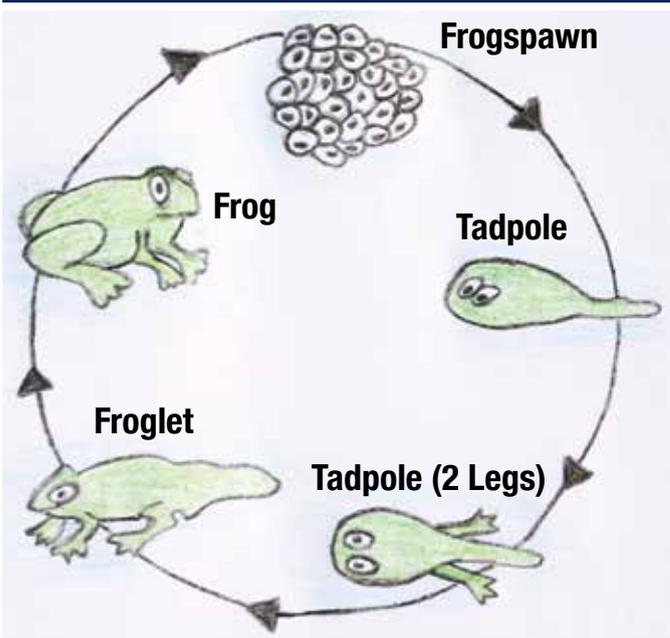


© Bob Pitchford



Meteor Pea.

For Our Younger Readers: The Life Cycle of the Common Frog



Join Us!

Anyone wishing to join the intrepid growers at Myrtle Hall C Allotments can fill out an allotment form online on the **Bristol City Council website**, email allotments@bristol.gov.uk or phone the **Site Rep on 07779 734101**. We look forward to seeing you.

There are also plots immediately available at **Tynings Field allotments in Woodwell Road** (just left of the railway bridge). Please contact **Site Supervisor Malcolm Garrett on 07775 880526** if interested. Thank you. D.

Let's Get Shire Buzzing in 2026!

Bee Happy Shire is 6 years old and we are delighted to introduce our new project for 2026, supported by *Shirehampton Action*; together we plan to make Shirehampton a Pollinator Friendly Village. *Let's Get Shire Buzzing* is designed for everyone to be part of the *Action*.

From a window box to a wildflower meadow, from growing a carrot top to putting in a pond - we can help and support you to take your own **Action to Get Shire Buzzing**. And we will reach out to schools, churches, businesses and sports clubs to join our 2026 campaign.

The centre of operations will be the **Plant for Pollinators Help Desk, 10am to 12pm** at each of **Shirehampton's High Street Markets**, starting on **Thursday 2nd April 2026** at the **Methodist Church JTE Hub** on the High Street. Bee Happy Shire will be there with Hints & Tips and free 'How To' Get

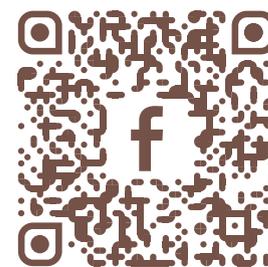
Shire Buzzing leaflets to help you Get Going with Confidence. Come along and talk to us about your ideas and ambitions and share the joy of providing a safe haven for all our pollinators in Shirehampton.

Our sports clubs are particularly significant in advancing our aims; if you have any areas of your fields that could be used for planting seeds and bulbs, we can provide them, along with advice and help. Perhaps you would like to invite some of your members, adults

and/or youngsters to form "Bee Happy Shire" teams to prepare the ground and plant the seeds and bulbs? We are planning on the autumn planting season from **September to November** to get this underway so that you can see the results in the Spring of 2027. **Paul**, who you might know from his sports reporting adventures with *Shire News*, is intending to contact clubs individually to gauge interest, but if you are interested and want to get underway, feel free to email us at: getshirebuzzing@gmx.com

Here's a link and a QR code that will take you to our Facebook page: facebook.com/groups/beehappyshire

Sara Cech-Lucas
Paul McMillan
Bee Happy Shire



Let's Get Shire Buzzing!



Photos © Jean Vernon & Martin Mulchinock
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Community Pollinator Fund 2023-2024



New Flood Defences for River Avon

It was Shirehampton's turn to host the quarterly Four Villages Ward meeting in early March. The main business was a presentation by Avon Riversides.

Avon Riversides 2100 is the former Bristol Avon Flood Strategy, Bristol City Council's long-term project to manage flood risk along the Avon. They are working with the Environment Agency to deliver a long-term project to better protect homes and businesses from flooding. By designing flood defences that improve public spaces, they hope to provide new green spaces with better river access while celebrating heritage features and protecting the railway. We will see changes along Lamplighters Marsh where existing flood banks will be raised and new earth banks erected to meet the expected 1-meter rise in the daily tidal range. Avon Riversides will be consulting riverside communities over the coming months as it develops defences. There

will be plenty of information on their website which goes live soon.

It was sobering to be reminded that sea level rise will mean that within our lifetime our tidal river range will rise enough at high tides to overwhelm our existing tide defences.

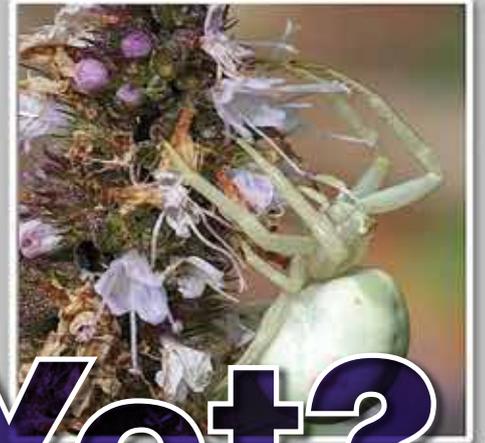
With this future in mind Shirehampton Action organised a Flood-preparedness Workshop in late March. The workshop, free and open to all, gave us the opportunity to think about what we each might need or be able to do to help in the event of flooding or other extreme weather events.

The workshop was too late to make Shire's April deadline but there will be a full write-up in May.

RS

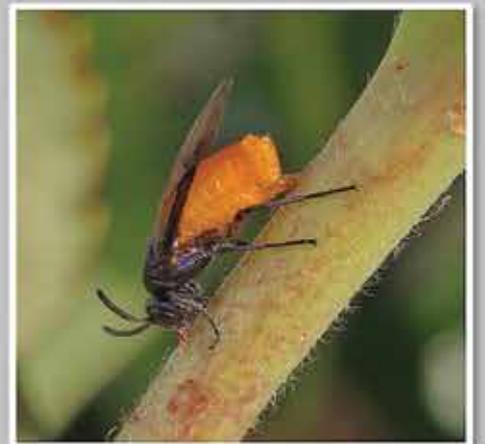


Pill creek at high tide, March 2020.



Is It Spring Yet?

A collage of photos by Bob Pitchford to celebrate the arrival of Spring and nature in all its busy industry!



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Easter!!!

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Find these words in our Easter themed wordsearch, they can be horizontal or vertical. Solution at the bottom of the page (no peeking).

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An Update from Darren Jones MP, Bristol North West

www.darren-jones.co.uk | fb.com/darrenjonesmp | [@darrenpjones](https://twitter.com/darrenpjones)

In February, I met with the Chief Fire Officer of *Avon Fire and Rescue Service* and the Chair of the *National Fire Chiefs Council* at Avonmouth Fire Station – just down the road from where the fire authority's headquarters might be moving to in 2028, on the (aptly named) Smoke Lane.

Hot on the agenda was the government's funding settlement for fire authorities, which was finalised on 9th February.

I'm pleased to share that Avon Fire Authority, and other standalone fire authorities around the country, will get an extra **£15 million boost** over the next three years above what they had expected to receive.

Following 14 years of underfunding and cuts, our **firefighters** and others were sounding the alarm about hollowed out public services. This government has answered their call and is putting out the fire.

Back in June 2025, after only a year in power, we announced an overhaul of the outdated way that local authorities and police and fire authorities are funded. It was a big undertaking, but this government has now delivered on this commitment with our **'Fair Funding Allocations'**, which use a new evidence-based approach – including the latest data on levels of deprivation – that properly recognises local need and the true costs of providing services in deprived areas.

For my constituents, who have seen failing public services in Bristol, it may not come as a big surprise that our local authority has been recognised as one of

the areas of greatest need, receiving the 29th highest Fair Funding Allocation (out of 317 local authorities across England).

Avon Fire Authority gets a separate funding allocation from central government. In the financial year 2024/25, it was given £8.6 million by central government, and Avon Fire Authority had anticipated on a marginal increase for 2026/27. However, for the upcoming financial year this will increase to £12.5 million.

Furthermore, this government has announced the first multi-year funding settlement in over a decade for our councils and police and fire authorities – with £14 million and £15.4 million to be given to Avon Fire Authority for the subsequent two years – giving three years of financial certainty that will allow them to plan ahead, not firefight year to year.

I am happy to report the funding settlement was welcomed by our hardworking firefighters during my visit at Avonmouth Fire Station.

Finally, I recognise that many of my constituents are still feeling the pressure of the **cost-of-living crisis**. This government is working at pace to help put more money back into your pockets, too.



© Darren Jones/Houses of Parliament

From this April, for example, this government is taking £150 off annual household energy bills; boosting the minimum wage for millions of workers; removing the two-child benefit cap, which will benefit 2,420 children across Bristol North West; and launching the second government-funded breakfast club in our constituency, at **Badock's Wood Primary School** in Southmead.

As always, if you need my help or have a question, you can get in touch with me on e-mail at darren.jones.mp@parliament.uk, by calling my office on 0117 959 6545 or by writing to me at the House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

See page 7 for how to contact your Local Councillors or MP.

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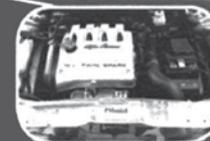
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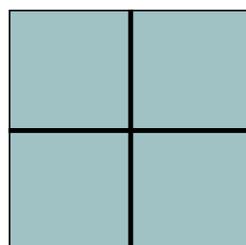
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Sport and Activities IN SHIREHAMPTON

Shirehampton Park Golf Club Charity Golf Days

Our local club is well known for its support for good causes and the local community. In May they are hosting what has become an annual event in support of Parkinson's Awareness and in June a "Texas Scramble" event in support of Jigsaw Thornbury. Here are some details of the events and how you can support them:

Parkinson's Awareness Tournament, Friday 1st May

This tournament, organized by club member **Russell Slee**, is in its third year. The previous tournaments have been hugely successful, but not only in raising funds for research and in raising awareness of the causes and effects of **Parkinson's**. They were enormously enjoyable social events, with players and spectators enjoying the beautiful surroundings, the stunning views over the Avon Valley from the clubhouse and terrace, the excellent food and drink and the atmosphere of camaraderie, friendship and a common purpose.

The playing side of the tournament is now fully booked; what it needs now is local people to turn up in numbers to support the event. If you've been to the golf club before, you will know how beautiful it is. If

you haven't, do yourselves a favour and take the short stroll or a bus up **Park Hill** and spend a bit of time taking in the surroundings, buying some refreshments and maybe putting something into the funds by buying a few raffle tickets.

Russell won't want me to say this because in his own words "It's not about me.", but the courage and positivity that he has shown in battling the disease that afflicts him, whilst thinking more about supporting others who are facing it or who will face it in the future, is truly worthy of our wholehearted support.

Put the date in your diary: May 1st (golf starts around 8am until late evening). Pop up anytime, if even just for an hour or so and show your support.

Paul McMillan



Russell Slee.



Spot the ball! Action from the 2025 tournament.

JIGSAW Thornbury Texas Scramble Golf Day, Friday 12th June 2026

This is a day of friendly competition, prizes, and community spirit, supporting local children and young people with additional needs or disabilities and their families.

Riley, a young person supported by **JIGSAW** recently shared:

"JIGSAW has given me confidence to do what I want to do with the outcome I want. I've met a whole group of friends and **made me feel comfortable to be me.**"

The **Texas Scramble** format makes this an ideal day out for golfers of all abilities. Teams of four select the best shot after each stroke, everyone playing on from there, creating a relaxed, inclusive atmosphere that

balances competition with fun, offering something for everyone – including a special 9-hole option for senior players aged 70+. In addition, players can enjoy great food, spot prizes and competitions.

Business Sponsorship Opportunities

Local businesses and supporters can also get involved by sponsoring elements of the day, providing an excellent opportunity to support a local charity while gaining visibility through event promotion, on-the-day branding, and post-event publicity.

One **JIGSAW** young member **Chelsea** remarked:

"Your support means that **JIGSAW** can hold activities that are **inclusive to everyone, no matter your disability.**"

This is a chance to come together, play golf, and play a part in transforming opportunities for children, young people, and families who need it most.



To book a team or find out more about sponsorship opportunities, visit: www.jigsawthornbury.org.uk/events OR Email: fundraising@jigsawthornbury.org.uk

Press release by Jigsaw, edited by Paul McMillan

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Avon Derby: Avonmouth F.C. v Shirehampton F.C.

Avonmouth went into this game as firm favourites, sitting nicely in 3rd position having won 15 and lost only 3 of 26 games. Shirehampton have been having a patchy season, ravaged by injuries to key players, the season punctuated by some good wins followed by a spate of losses. At kick-off, they were placed 15th with 6 wins and 12 losses from 24 games.

Dave Rowley, President of Avonmouth F.C. sent us this report on the game:

“Avonmouth were disappointed that the **Jewson Western League** didn't again schedule their game against **local rivals** on Boxing Day, as last year; the BS11 derby resulted in attracting a crowd of over 550 spectators to the **King George V Memorial Ground**. Shirehampton, who were very up for the game and took control early on, with Avonmouth only venturing into their penalty area twice in the opening 15 minutes. However, it was Avonmouth who took the lead in the 23rd minute when **Kyle O'Donovan** confidently fired home from 18 yards, following a great attacking move. Their lead lasted just 15 minutes when the impressive **Scott Bamford** equalised for Shirehampton. Avonmouth again took the lead right on half time when mister consistent **Josh Pearce** scored after another great attacking move. In the second half it was that man Bamford again who levelled the scores

in the 57th minute, followed by **Kyle Thomas** scoring the winner in the 70th minute, with the Shirehampton team and supporters really enjoying the bragging rights in BS11. The teams' next encounter will be at **Penpole Lane** right at the end of the season.

“Avonmouth's early season success has seen them climb the Western League table and staying in the top four until the Christmas break. Sadly, Avonmouth then hit a 2026 drop in form and have, only over the past two games, got back to winning ways and now lie in third place with 8 games to go, with manager **Ash Bennett's** aim of ensuring the team finish in the top five; that will result in them reaching the Jewson Western League Division 1 **end of season play-offs.**”

Since this impressive victory, Shirehampton's erratic season has resumed, with a run of 4 defeats, 3 of them at Penpole Lane. By contrast, Avonmouth have won 2 and drawn 1 of 3 consecutive away games, scoring 7 goals and conceding only 2.

Tuesday 17th February 2026



2 - 3



Avonmouth FC

Shirehampton FC



President of Avonmouth F.C. Dave Rowley with blind “epic groundhopper” John Stancombe.

We wish both clubs the very best for the rest of the season. We hope that Shirehampton can find the measure of consistency that they need to start climbing the table. For Avonmouth, we hope that their excellent season continues as they look towards the pinnacle of the Jewson Western League First Division. Many thanks to Dave Rowley for his excellent report.

Paul McMillan



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Avonmouth Bowling Club Prepare for the New Season

The members of your local bowling club have been busy through the late autumn and winter months, getting the facilities ship-shape to welcome existing and new members through the Barrack Lane gates this month. As a self-sufficient community club, almost all the work is done by its talented, willing and hard-working members. Whether it be scarifying, aerating, re-seeding or mowing the green, painting, cleaning or refurbishing around the club or maintaining the memorial garden and hedges, members are there in force and in great spirits to work as a team to keep the club going. I have said before, but it's worth repeating, that the members are a most welcoming, good-natured and entertaining bunch. There's always tea and biscuits on the go for the working parties and often a free lunch.

The season kicks off with the first "roll up" session on **Tuesday 7th April from 5pm**. You are welcome to turn up for a try-out, even if you haven't played before. You will be made welcome, experienced members will help and coach you and before you know it, you'll be wondering why you hadn't taken up bowling years ago.

If you don't fancy the bowling, you are welcome to join as a social member and enjoy the lovely facilities. There's a homely, comfortable clubhouse with a keenly priced bar, including bottled lagers, ales, wine, spirits, soft drinks and snacks. Many of our members have family and friends as social members, who might bring a picnic along to enjoy at the tables outside the clubhouse as they watch a game. There are social

activities to enjoy too, including regular bingo nights. You can enjoy social membership for **£10 a year!**

Membership subscriptions for 2026:

Full playing membership: £80

Playing membership for new bowlers: £40 for the 2026 season.

Social Membership: £10

If you are interested in knowing more about the club, please email: avonmouthbowlsclub@outlook.com OR call: 07804 791855.

Paul McMillan & Photos © Paul McMillan



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Shirehampton Sailing Club

– Dates for Your Diary

At last the sailing season is here! Our first four sailing dates are:

Sat 28 March start 12:45 for High Water at 15:45, finish 6pm.

Sat 11 April start 10:55 for High Water at 13:55, finish 4pm.

Sat 25 April start 12:00 noon for High Water at 15:00, finish 5pm.

Sat 9 May start 09:22 for High Water at 12:22, finish 2.30pm.

As a note of explanation – there are **two high tides** a day, 12½ hours apart. Our slip is only covered with water 1½ hours either side of high water. Outside this 3-hour window the water is below the level of the slip, and to get on and off the water you will get stuck in the very deep and soft mud up to your waist! The **Severn Estuary** has the **second highest tidal range on the planet**, after Newfoundland, hence the small window for river sailing.

If you'd like to **sail with us**, please email us and we will add you to the **sailing WhatsApp** so we can find

you someone to take you in their boat: to start with, this will be a Wayfarer which is a large and stable boat.

If you have **children** who would like to sail, we ask that you are in the boat with them. We will find you buoyancy aids, but please come in footwear that doesn't mind getting wet.

The first session is free, and you will get three sessions with us before we ask you to pay the yearly membership. After the first session, we ask you to pay your share of hiring the boat. Once you become a member, you can keep your own boat in our dinghy compound.

To apply for **membership**, go to the Membership section on our website and fill out the Google form. We will then consider this at the next members' meeting.

You can always come down to the club on a **Saturday morning, between 9am and 3pm**, when we have **Slip Crew** to clean the slip of mud. We can then show you, er, the ropes!

As ever, if you want to launch a **canoe or paddle-board**, please pay £5 per launch. You can pay on our website where there is a **SumUp** link.

If you want to come canoeing with us, we organise **breakfast paddle trips up the Avon Gorge** as far as Clifton Suspension Bridge and back when the tide is too early for sailing.

We also go **gig rowing** regularly – please email us and we will add you to the rowing WhatsApp group.



Launching the Drascombe Scaffie.

Your footwear should be non-slip and waterproof and you should bring warm clothes. The club-house has two toilets and a kitchenette area for hot drinks with a microwave. We have our members' planning meetings on Monday evenings at 8pm once a month.

We look forward to welcoming you to our happy place!

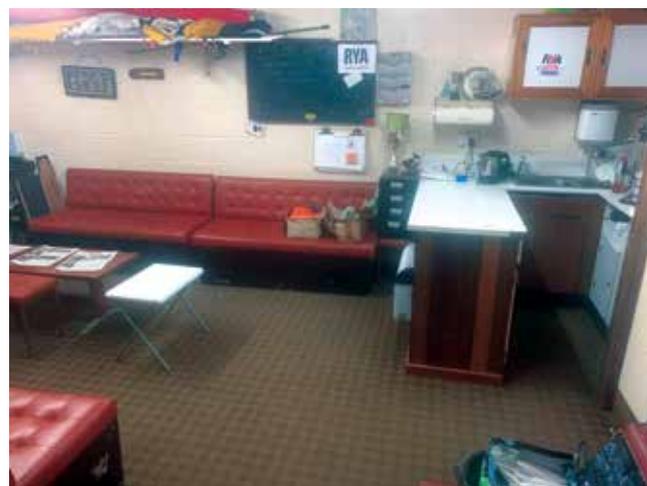
Tina Biggs - Vice-Commodore, Shirehampton Sailing Club.

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Photos © Shirehampton Sailing Club



Evening picnic at the club-house.



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News from ShireStrong

I've always believed that fitness should be accessible, enjoyable, and something that brings people together – and that's exactly what we're building at ShireStrong Kettlebell Club here in Shirehampton.

The ShireStrong Kettlebell Club, a dedicated community of fitness enthusiasts, gathers three times weekly to build strength and endurance through kettlebell training. We also host popular outdoor **Bootcamp sessions** at Lamplighters Marsh playing field, which welcome participants of all ages and abilities. Bootcamp attendees engage in a series of timed bodyweight exercises, sometimes incorporating small handheld weights, for a high-energy 45-minute workout to kickstart their day.

Kettlebells are round with a handle. You can do various exercises with them including swings, squats, presses and deadlifts. The weights available range from 4kg to 32kg. Progression varies for each member depending on age and ability and everyone works at their own pace. They are excellent for building strength, stamina and flexibility and there is a great feeling of accomplishment as you move up the weights.

We have welcomed several new members into our community since Christmas. Sessions are so well attended that I have introduced a new class on Monday at 2pm. The full timetable of classes is now:

- Bootcamp: Monday and Wednesday at 6:15am**
- Kettlebells: Monday 2:00pm, 5:15pm and 6:30pm**
- Wednesday 5:15pm**
- Thursday 5:15pm and 6:30pm**



© Linda Thorne

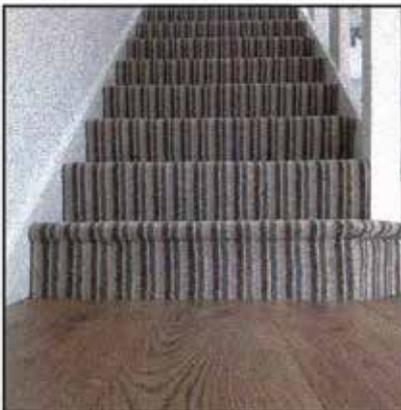
If you are interested in joining us then please get in touch. My details can be found in my advertisement on page 5.

*Linda
Coach and Founder, ShireStrong Kettlebell Club*

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