

# SALTASH AND DISTRICT OBSERVER

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Winter 2025/26 - Issue 400

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## Data Evidence of Positive Impact of Safety Measures on A38

New data from National Highways points to a large decrease on incidents in the Glynn Valley, writes James Millidge, Chair of road safety campaign group, Safe38. The Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) Rate for the section of the A38 between Dobwalls and Bodmin has declined dramatically following implementation of average speed cameras along this busy strategic route in South East Cornwall.

The analysis of collision data from National Highways shows that in the 5-year period from June 2020 to May 2025, deaths and serious injuries were down 45 percent on the section of the A38 through the Glynn Valley, compared with 5 years before the camera scheme implementation.

Just 12 incidents on that stretch of road were classified as

serious or fatal from June 2020 to May 2025, compared to 22 incidents between 2015 and 2019.

This isn't just an anomaly as the year on year peaks have been almost halved between the two data sets, demonstrating that these cameras have been incredibly effective and consistent at reducing deaths and serious injuries on this notorious stretch

of road that had a KSI rate 2.5 times the national average before the average speed cameras went in.

We can't emphasise enough how positive this data is. It demonstrates unequivocally that these safety measures have saved lives and made an improvement to people's livelihoods.

We have often been told (with-

out any evidence) that the cameras have made the road less safe, but nothing can be further from the truth. We know that collisions do still occur, but when they do, a lot of them are less severe than they might otherwise have been due to reduced speeds.

It means that the road has performed better from a reliability perspective, as every serious collision results in long unplanned closures which have a dramatic negative impact on the region's economy.

We have no doubt that we will see similar results in a few years' time for the Trerulefoot to Carkeel section of the A38 that not all that long ago had a KSI rate 3.5 times the national average.

Sadly, people are still involved in serious collisions and Safe38 will continue to work in partnership with Vision Zero, our elected representatives, along with other key stakeholders to lobby National Highways for further safety improvements to known hot spots to bring the KSI rate down even further. The only acceptable KSI rate is zero.

We'd like to take this opportunity of wishing all readers of the Saltash Observer a very happy and safe 2026 and urge everyone driving on the A38 this coming year to be especially vigilant, and to drive with the care and attention we all deserve, and to the speed limit.

## Brunel's Christingle Service Fills St Stephen's Church with the Magic of Christmas



St Stephen's Church was filled to capacity as Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy came together for its annual Christingle Service, a truly special celebration that captured the heart and meaning of Christmas.

The children sang incredibly throughout the service, their voices filling the church with joy and warmth. They also created a beautiful tableau of the nativity story, bringing the Christmas story to life as they told it with reverence and care. Each reading was delivered with confidence and clarity, reflect-

ing the pride the children felt in sharing such an important message.

A particularly moving moment came when the children sang Hope of Heaven. As the church lights were turned off, the glow of the Christingles illuminated the space, creating a moment of true awe and wonder. The entire church could feel the magic of Christmas, united in reflection, hope and celebration.

The service concluded with Headteacher Darren Woolner paying tribute to the incredible children of Brunel, praising their confidence, talent and the way they represented their school so proudly. He also acknowledged

the vital support of the whole school community, recognising the role that families, staff and friends play in making Brunel such a special place.

The occasion ended with a heartfelt standing ovation of thanks for Lorraine Cabello and Bett Hooper, who are retiring after a combined 70 years of dedicated service to Brunel. It was a fitting and emotional end to a beautiful service, celebrating not only the Christmas story but also the people who make Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy such a remarkable community.

(See Page 5 for Fond Farewell to Two True Legends)

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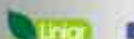
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Working for the People of Saltash

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## From the Mayor of Saltash

### Welcome to my final Mayor's Column for 2025.

I trust you have all had an enjoyable Christmas.

**Saltash Christmas Light Switch On** – 14 November: Growing up in Saltash at Christmas time, the most exciting moment as a child would be the unexpected sound of the Saltash Rotary Santa sleigh in the distance. On hearing the Christmas music, my sister and I would rush out of the house to see the sleigh coming along our road - that magical moment with Santa waving and handing out sweets. This childhood moment was relived on 14 November when I had the pleasure of riding up Fore Street with Santa in the Rotary Sleigh. Forty-odd years on, it was still magical, sitting and watching from the sleigh the faces of children waving with excitement as we processed up Fore Street,



a touching moment I will never forget.

On the morning of the Christmas lights, my husband and I had driven to Landulph School to present a prize for the Summer Reading Challenge. Driving to the school, the weather was horrendous: heavy rain and strong winds. Heading through muddy lanes and deep puddles, I feared that the light switch-on that evening would be cancelled, but we were very lucky. By the evening, the rain had cleared and the winds had eased. Whilst parading up the street that night on the sleigh, I was astonished at how many people had turned up, by far the largest turnout

## Meet Your Councillor

*Cllr Sarah Martin*

In the local elections this May I was elected uncontested to the Town Council, once again representing Tamar Ward. It's been seven years since I joined which have seen the council develop as an organisation taking on so many new projects to revitalise our town and community.

As we sign off the budget for the coming year, I think it's worth remembering where our precious money goes and the great things as a council that we continue to deliver.

We are an outlier among other parish and town councils in Cornwall, in that the council many years ago decided to fund youth provision in the town to fill a deficit when Cornwall Council was no longer able to fund it.

Councillors back then recognised the importance of the work of youth organisations in the town, such as Livewire and The Core, and set money aside to assist them.

The foundations they've



laid have given us a youth service in the town to be proud of. As a council we have continued our commitment to that work which has been so vital, especially since Covid which had a dramatic impact on our children and their mental health and wellbeing.

Giving our young people a safe space to socialise and seek help if needed is so very important, especially at a time when our schools are so stretched and lacking in resources.

We heard recently at our full council meeting how the intake numbers at our primary schools are to be reduced in line with declining birth rates.

During my children's years at primary school at St Stephen's we witnessed that natural cycle of change. As Chair of the Saltash Town Council Team for Youth, I will be watching to see how our schools cope with the undoubted shortfall the changes bring and offer any support we can.

we have ever had for the light switch-on. I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who helped on the evening and to all the school choirs that sang the carols beautifully. Saltash Town Council had invested in new lights this year, and we have had many compliments from residents about how beautiful the lights are. I also want to thank the businesses in the town for staying open late that night, taking part in the "hunt the elf on the shelf", and decorating their windows in time for the light switch-on. The town looked very pretty and festive.

### A busy last month:

In the lead-up to Christmas, my husband and I have been attending lots of events, all of which we have loved: the Ginkgo tree planting at County Hall, Truro; the High Sheriff Legal Service in Truro Cathedral; St Stephens School nativity and play; Saltash Floral Art Club demo; visits to the care homes The Elms and St Anne's; St Petroc's Carol Service in Truro Cathedral; and lantern workshops at all the primary schools. After attending four lantern workshops, my husband has got himself a bit of a reputation as a professional lantern maker amongst the willow-making community.

### The Saltash Christmas Festival:

The 6 of December was the Christmas Festival. Sadly, the stalls had to be cancelled due to the forecast of strong winds - not very gazebo-friendly weather. Despite this, the other events still took place, such as the Santas on Bikes, the best-dressed Christmas dog competition, carol singing with Redeemer Church, and the Santa Fun Run. I had the pleasure as mayor of starting the fun run and then running in it myself! The Santa Fun Run is a great addition to the Christmas Festival and now, in its 4th year, it seems to be more popular than ever with children and adults of all ages. I'd like to thank Colin Bunting and the Tamar Trotters for hosting this magical race.

Despite the windy conditions, many still turned out to support the events and businesses in the town. The Saltash Heritage Museum was open for the day, along with H. Elliot's museum, the Guildhall showing the Saltash Chronicles, and the Christmas Tree Festival in St Nick's. The Saltash Studios also had an indoor Christmas craft market. The day ended with the lantern parade heading down Lower Fore

Street to the Waterside and the finale of fireworks on the town pier, a beautiful scene with the backdrop of the Royal Albert Bridge lit up behind. I'd also like to say a big thank you to the organisers of the Saltash Christmas Festival for once again making this a magical event.

The evening of the 6 continued for us at the China Fleet Club. It was the Sailing Club Christmas dinner and dance, which my husband and I had the pleasure of attending. A Sailing Club awards presentation followed a lovely three-course meal. Following the awards, there was live music and plenty of dancing till late. What a fabulous evening.

By the time this paper is printed, there will have been

many other events that we have attended, such as: Age Concern Christmas lunch, Saltash Studios celebration, the Lord Mayor of Plymouth Carol Service, the Mayor's Christmas Cabaret Show in Falmouth, the Freemasons' Carol Service at the Masonic Lodge and the St Stephens School Carol Service. No

doubt we will have enjoyed them all too.

### How much do you remember about the 1980s?

If you are looking for a fun night out during the January lull, my mayor's charity quiz is on 17 January at Isambard House. Teams can battle it out over who knows the most about the 1980s. Fancy dress is optional, with a prize for the best fancy dress - up to 6 people per team. To reserve your place, go on Eventbrite: £5 entry per person on the night. All proceeds go to the mayor's charities, Saltash Youth Network and Memory Box.

I want to end my column by wishing you all, my fellow Saltash residents, a happy and healthy New Year.

With love from your mayor,  
Rachel x

*Cllr Rachel Bullock  
Mayor of Saltash 25/26*



## STC Sponsors Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy in 2026 St Luke's Hospice Guiding Lights Art Trail

Saltash Town Council is proud to announce its sponsorship of Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy's participation in the 2026 St Luke's Hospice Guiding Lights Art Trail, a major public arts project that will see lighthouse sculptures displayed across the region.

Through this sponsorship, students at the school will design and create a "Little Light" sculpture exploring themes of remembrance and loss. The project is being undertaken in memory of a much-valued former Council employee, whose dedication and service continue to inspire the community.

By supporting the school's involvement, Saltash Town Council reinforces its commitment to community wellbeing, educational opportunities, and the celebration of local arts. The Council looks forward to seeing the students' creativity shine as part of this meaningful regional initiative.

Mayor Cllr Rachel Bullock Says: "We are delighted to support Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy as they take part in

the Guiding Lights Art Trail. This project not only encourages creativity and learning, but also offers a heartfelt way for our community to remember someone who gave so much to Saltash. I am incredibly proud of the students for embracing this opportunity, and I look forward to seeing their artwork shine a light of hope, reflection, and togetherness across our town.

"Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy shared their

thoughts: "Being part of St Luke's Hospice Guiding Light Project is a truly special opportunity for our school community.

As our pupils decorate the lighthouse, they are not only expressing their creativity, but also shining a light of hope, compassion and remembrance. We are proud to support such a meaningful initiative and to stand alongside St Luke's in bringing comfort and inspiration to others.

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## Saltash Shines Bright

Successful Christmas Light Switch-On Event and Exciting Plans for 2026

Saltash Town Council is delighted to celebrate the success of this year's Christmas Light Switch-On event, a Saltash Town Council event working in partnership with Saltash Chamber of Commerce and Saltash Rotary Club.

This year, Saltash Town Council made a significant investment of £26,653.40 in the Christmas lighting display, ensuring that Saltash sparkled brighter than ever.

Following a formal tender process, the Council secured a three-year contract with qualified contractors to provide the lights, including design, supply, installation, maintenance, and removal. The total investment over the three-year period is £79,960.20, ensuring that Saltash continues to enjoy festive and seasonal lighting displays for various events, that are modern, sustainable, and designed to delight residents and visitors alike. The enhanced Christmas display was a highlight for many, and the Council is delighted that its commitment to improving the experience for everyone has paid off.

The Christmas Light Switch On event brought

festive cheer and community spirit to the heart of our town and was met with fantastic feedback from residents and visitors alike, creating a magical atmosphere that truly marked the start of the season. The evening was filled with special moments shared by our community, from Santa, our Town Crier, and the Mayor taking part in the festive parade, to the appearance of the Golden Girl and Ice Queen, and the beautiful carols sung by our local school groups. It was truly a magical night!

The event also included the popular Elf Hunt Trail, which proved to be a fantastic example of collaboration with Fore Street businesses. Local shops embraced the festive spirit by creating eye-catching window displays and hiding a cheeky elf in their premises for families and visitors to find. The trail encouraged people to explore Fore Street, support local businesses, and enjoy a fun, interactive seasonal experience.

Winners of the Elf Hunt were delighted to receive prizes generously donated by Bounce Saltash, Saltash Bookshelf, Foreign Muck, Saltash Studios, and Nicky's Glow Beads. Their kind support helped make the Elf Hunt a memorable highlight of the town's festive programme.

Mayor Cllr Rachel Bullock Says:

"It was wonderful to see so many people come together to enjoy the festivities. The

## Chamber Chairman Peter Ryland Keeping Us Updated

I would like to start by thanking all those who put money in our donation boxes around the town to help pay for the cost of the Christmas Festival.

It was a shame that the event could not take place due to the predicted winds

lights looked spectacular, and the positive response from the community has been fantastic. We're proud to invest in events that bring joy and strengthen our sense of togetherness."

Building on this success, the Council is already looking ahead. A new working group has been established to plan the 2026 Christmas Light Switch-On, with a focus on creating an even bigger and better celebration. This group will work closely with industry professionals, ensuring expert delivery and continued collaboration to make the event truly special.

We are excited about the opportunities this partnership will bring and look forward to sharing more details in the coming months.

What People Said on Social Media

"Congratulations to Saltash town council. The best Christmas lights ever this year. They were beautiful."

"I've only lived here 22 years, and I would say this year's lights were stunning!"

"It was an amazing evening, and a pleasure to be a part of it."

but, I am led to believe, the part of it that took place was a great success. The collection boxes will be out again in 2026 in the hope that the bad weather that has beset the Festival, in 2024 and 2025, does not happen for a third year.

However, at our December meeting on the 1st, one of the items we discussed was the possibility of having more festivals in Fore Street next year perhaps celebrating St. Pirran's Day and Easter etc. It was noted that, despite a few hiccups, the Christmas lights switch-on brought people into the town centre as has, for many years, the Christmas Festival and Mayfair. So, perhaps, festivals were something to consider for 2026.

Something else the members discussed was the idea of the Resident's Card. I had circulated a brief report on how it could operate and the members were in favour of doing more work on the proposal to enable it to be of benefit to businesses and the community. I explained that I had done research on various other locations, e.g. York and Torbay, where similar schemes were in place.

The meeting was kept short to allow members to go for a drink afterwards but the hopes for 2026 were that the markets would continue, there may be more festivals, and we could find a solution to make life easier for businesses throughout the town.

## Pete's Point of View

I've heard it said that the older you get, the quicker the years go by, 2025 being no exception to that. I am sure that for many, this year is one that will be looked back at with little fondness, as a year of even higher taxation and reduction in living standards, coupled with a great deal of uncertainty in both the domestic and international areas.

It has also been a year that might have caused the odd wry smile. We all know the joke that in Russia the election results are known before the election takes place, well here in the UK we have equalled that by knowing what the Budget contains before the Budget Speech is delivered.

It has been suggested I should look forward to 2026 with hope, so I will tongue-in-cheek say that I hope taxes do not go any higher in the coming year. I would also hope for a General Election, but realise that is somewhat unlikely, especially with many planned elections being postponed.

Moving on to a more positive note and at local level, Saltash Town Council have set their precept level (council tax) for the 2026-27 financial year, with a very modest uplift which represents the smallest increase for several years. Through sound financial management and prudent spending commitments, they have also found the money to substantially increase funds available to local youth organisations, to help offset the lack of funding opportunities available elsewhere. Indeed, it seems that Saltash Town Council

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could teach national government a lesson or two in how to balance the books!

Just occasionally, though, this current government does get things right - yes, I did say that! Step forward Communities Secretary Steve

Reed, who has told Cornwall Council leaders that the government is now minded to offer Cornwall a bespoke devolution deal, rather than pursue any amalgamation with neighbouring authorities. If this comes to pass, without any U-turns, then it is absolutely the best Christmas present that Cornwall could wish for. The previously planned combined Devonwall authority would, in my opinion, have been totally disastrous for Cornwall, with the potential for decisions taken that would have been biased against Cornwall and in favour of those from the other side of the Tamar.

It is on this high and hopeful note that I wish you Nadelik Lowen, Onen hag Oll.

Pete Samuels.

*Any views expressed are personal views and not that of any organisation with which Pete is associated.*

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## Saltash Teen Earns Place in Swim England Youth Squad

Sixteen-year-old Saltash swimmer Toby Nakamura-Drew has made waves on the national stage, earning selection to the Swim England Youth Squad — a remarkable honour that crowns an extraordinary year in the pool.

At the Swim England Summer Championships in Sheffield, Toby triumphed when he won the 16 years boys' 100m backstroke final, despite being a year younger than most of his competitors. The victory achieved was made even more special when he smashed the English age group record, a benchmark that had stood unbroken since 2009.

These championships are among the most competitive events in the UK swimming calendar, drawing the country's top young athletes. Toby's record-breaking performance places him firmly among Britain's brightest swimming prospects.

His outstanding form has now earned him a place to represent Swim England at the prestigious Euro Meet, in Luxembourg in January 2026, where he will compete against Europe's elite junior swimmers.

A pupil at Plymouth College, Toby trains several hours each day at the Plymouth Life Centre, combining a demanding academic schedule with his

athletic commitments — a testament to his dedication and discipline.

The Mayor of Saltash, Councillor Rachel Bullock, said that the whole town is proud of Toby's achievements:

"Toby has shown exceptional dedication and talent, and he's a fantastic ambassador for Saltash. Competing for England on the European stage is a tremendous honour — and he deserves every success."

With the costs of international competition, travel, and training increasing, Toby would welcome sponsorship support from local businesses, organisations, and individuals to help him when he represents England in Luxembourg and continues his rapid development at elite level.

Toby's achievements have brought pride to Saltash and the wider South West swimming community, and his story stands as an inspiring reminder of what can be achieved with talent, commitment, and community support. Sue Hooper (Freeman of Saltash)



Toby Pictured Right

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## Essa Voices

### Connections we Carry Forward

As 2025 prepares to take its final bow, I've been thinking about the year we've just travelled through. For me, it began in the usual way, full of routines and familiar rhythms, and then half way through the year the ground shifted. After getting re-elected as a Cornwall Councillor, I was asked to join the Cabinet of Cornwall Council. Stepping into the Cabinet role for Children, Families and Schools meant suddenly being at the heart of decisions that shape everything from children's social care and youthwork to education across Cornwall. As the months have gone by, I've felt the importance of making choices that help children and families stay connected to the support and opportunities that allow them to thrive.

One of our earliest decisions as a new Cabinet was to introduce automatic enrolment for Free School Meals. This grew out of everyday conversations with parents and schools about children who missed out simply because a form never quite made it to the right place. Introducing automatic enrolment feels like removing a small but persistent stone from a child's shoe. The difference might seem modest on paper, but for hundreds of families it's the difference between worrying and breathing a little easier.

More recently, we've decided to run our own children's homes. Cornwall Council already operates homes for children with

disabilities, but we don't have any for children without disabilities. To change that, we approved the purchase of one property and agreed to convert another we already own. Together, these two homes will help free us from the eye-watering weekly charges demanded by some private providers. More importantly, they will mean children can stay in Cornwall, connected to their schools, their friends and the adults they trust. Children should grow up rooted, not uprooted.

Then, just as the year was winding down, came Cabinet's approval to adopt the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. It felt like a decision that belonged under the Christmas tree with a shiny bow. After months filled with practical tasks and day-to-day problem-solving, it was a moment to pause and draw a circle around what we stand for: that children's voices and wellbeing should sit at the heart of our work.

And as if the year were determined to make its point, it brought wider recognition of the connections that shape Cornwall. In a letter to our Council Leader sent at the end of November, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government acknowledged the government's willingness to explore a devolution deal on a Cornwall footprint. No forced tie-up with Devon or



Councillor Hilary Frank  
clic:hilary.frank@cornwall.gov.uk

Plymouth. Instead, a recognition that Cornwall's identity, needs and ambitions stand in their own right. In the very same week, the government confirmed that the Cornish language is set to gain the highest level of protection under the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages, placing it alongside Welsh, Irish and Scottish Gaelic. Both developments reinforce the firm, united stance the Leader and Cabinet have been taking in making the case for Cornwall's distinct voice.

And perhaps that is the story I am taking with me into the new year: that 2025 was shaped by choices which are helping people stay connected, whether that's to a community, a school meal, or Cornwall's own roots and voice. As 2026 arrives, it feels right to keep strengthening those connections, and to brush up my Cornish. So, as they say, Bledhen Nowydh Da.

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## Letter to the Editor

Dear Madam,

I telephoned the Tamar Tag office today and was advised to write to this email address with my concerns.

I have read recently about the decision to increase the Tamar Tag Account fee to £2, which is due to be debated by committee in due course. I struggled to work out if, as I am part of a two car household, whether we would pay this amount twice or once as we only have one account. However, that is not the primary focus of my email today.

Various news reports have taken information regarding the proposed hike in fees from Tamar Crossings and repeated it. This information appears to be provided to make customers feel they will still be getting a good discount in comparison to users of other crossings where tolls are charged. The problem is that the information is limited and somewhat misleading.

I particularly refer to Tamar Crossings website mentioning that account holding users of the Dartford Crossing only receive a 20% reduction. In fact, local residents can set up a Dartford Charge account and pay a fixed fee of £25 which will allow them to cross as many times as they like in a year. Furthermore, crossing between 10pm and 6am is free to all users. This information is available on the Government web pages if you would care to look.

I am sure if this were known, many would ask why the fee for occasional users of the Tamar Crossings cannot be increased further so that a much lower local annual fee can be agreed for residents. It is easy for me to think therefore that Tamar Crossings might not want this information to be widely known.

I attach a screen shot of the misleading information from the relevant web page at [Explaining the Proposal for Tamar Tag Admin Fee Increase - Tamar Crossings](#) and request that it be amended to reflect the true benefits to local residents in the Dartford Crossing area (screenshot of those charges attached also).

I would also like to suggest that if losses from unreturned Tamar Tags is so high whether it would be better for Tamar Crossings to take a deposit for the tags which is only refunded when tags are returned. The funds held could earn quite a lot of interest if invested appropriately.

There may be many reasons why it is not possible to reduce charges to local residents but by providing clear and complete information to all, there is a greater chance that everyone can either accept what is coming or work together to identify more appropriate

## It's the Most Wonderful (busiest) Time of the (Rotary) Year

For Saltash Rotary Club, the weeks leading up to Christmas are a very busy time, when we can be found out and about with Santa and his sleigh, together with boxes of sweets and our collecting tins, into which the good and generous folk of Saltash place their well appreciated coins and notes, enabling Rotary to support a large number of charities and causes. We thank everybody who has so kindly supported our main fund-raising event of the year.

We have also been out supporting events such as the Christmas Lights switch-on in Fore Street, something which was very well attended by families and loved by the children. Again, Santa was there, with his helpers, providing the Mayor,

Councillor Rachel Bullock, with transport up through the Town, whilst Christmas music was played from the sleigh in which she rode.

We also were present at the Pillmere Residents Association Christmas lights switch-on, a by-now established event that we are always delighted to be invited to. Our thanks to the Association for the mince pies and other Christmas fayre provided to Santa and his helpers on arrival.

Santa was invited to the Saltash Library hub, where he put in an appearance one Friday afternoon, meeting with many children who were looking forward to the big day, noting their Christmas wish-lists.

Rotary, however, is not just for Christmas, we work throughout the year and once the Christmas and New Year festivities are over, we will already be making our plans for involvement in the community during the coming year. The causes that we support are too many to list here, but a comprehensive listing can be found on our website, [saltashrotary.org](http://saltashrotary.org)

If you would like to find out more about Saltash Rotary, we would love to hear from you, perhaps by email to [rotaryclubsaltash@gmail.com](mailto:rotaryclubsaltash@gmail.com) and the current Club President Mike Phillips or the Club

Secretary will get in touch.

In the meantime, Nadelick Lowen, Onen hag Oll.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Pete gave his opinion about Saltash Remembrance. May I give mine. I agree about the importance of Remembrance and our community support. If we don't remember - we forget! I might care more than most, as I was born here to a long-standing Saltash family, who lost a loved one, and I have experienced active service on the 'front line'. Unfortunately, I believe our Council doesn't treat our community fairly over the location of the Civic Service of Remembrance. This is upsetting to many of us. I have conducted an evidence based survey for Council which confirms this. As residents of all faiths and denominations were among the 'fallen' it is surely only fair - and right - to allow all put Churches, where practicable, to have the honour of hosting the Civic Service on a rota basis. With the exception of the R.C. Church, all our other four Churches have had the capacity to do so, (St. Stephen's has the largest

## Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy Bids a Fond Farewell to Two True Legends

Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy has said an emotional goodbye to two of its most cherished members of staff, as Bett Hopper and Lorraine Cabello retire after a combined 70 years of dedicated service to the school community.

Bett Hopper has been a teaching assistant at Brunel for an incredible 29 years, during which time she has impacted the lives of thousands of children. Known for her kind and compassionate nature, Bett has been a constant source of comfort and support for pupils who needed a reassuring smile, a listening ear or a steady presence during their school day. Generations of children have benefited from her patience, warmth and unwavering commitment, and her influence will be felt long after her retirement.

Lorraine Cabello retires after an extraordinary 41 years at Brunel and is widely regarded as the epitome of what makes the school such a special place. Her long and highly successful career has shaped the experiences of countless pupils and helped define the values

and standards that Brunel is so proud of today. A recent Facebook post announcing her retirement prompted an outpouring of affection from former pupils, many of whom shared how she had touched their lives and would always be their favourite teacher. One former pupil wrote, "Mrs Cabello believed in me when I didn't believe in myself - I wouldn't be who I am today without her." Another commented, "She made learning magical. Even now, years later, she's still my favourite teacher."

Both women were honoured during a special end-of-year assembly led by Headteacher Darren Woolner. Former pupils returned to the school to



celebrate the occasion, including the Mayor, Rachel Bullock, highlighting the far-reaching impact of Bett and Lorraine's careers. The assembly was a heartfelt celebration of their dedication, passion and love for the Brunel community, and by the end there wasn't a dry eye in the house.

As Bett Hopper and Lorraine Cabello begin their well-earned retirements, the Brunel community reflects with gratitude on everything they have given. Their legacy will leave an enduring impact on Brunel Primary and Nursery Academy forever, and they will be deeply missed by staff, pupils, parents and former students alike.

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charging scenarios.

I am copying this email to Saltash Councillors Keith Johnson and Hilary Frank, Saltash Observer, and the Cornish Times, and hope that everyone will be made aware of alternative options and the true cost of other crossings.

Yours faithfully,  
Dr Rebecca Pearce  
Resident of Saltash and  
Tamar Tag account holder.

Yours sincerely,  
Natalie Horner  
Address supplied

## Sustainable Saltash

*A regular column on changes Saltash residents are making to confront climate and ecological breakdown*

Whilst we are occupied making plans for the new year, similar preparations are underway all around. Nesting birds are very busy in the coming weeks. Under increasing pressure from lost habitat and disease, they can use a little help.

Many of our favourite garden visitors will nest in boxes. These are generally tree nesting species, who until recently sought out fallen or dead trees with suitable hollows. Many of these are now cleared in managed woodland. They are resourceful beings though. They will gladly nest in sheltered outhouses, eaves, or in a box that has been fitted in a useful place.

If you have never had a nest box before, it is a lovely thing. Seen from a window, it is so busy in spring, and is a really tangible connection to the world outside your door. It is like they actually live with you and the sense that you have had a small part in their marvellous achievement is really rewarding.

If this sounds appealing, now is a good time to act. There are wooden boxes available in many shops, or you can make your own. Look around for a good spot first. The best places are sheltered from extremes of weather - especially the heat of the sun. Remember it can be June before the chicks fly the nest. North or east facing is good. They can be on a shaded wall or in a tree, but ideally should have some plants nearby

to provide perches and shelter as the parents come and go. Make sure there is a clear path in front and aim for 2-4m above the ground, so that they are safe from predators.

Maintenance is minimal. Once a year in Autumn/early winter, we remove the old nest. They are incredible to look at. So many hours of detailed work, and it is amazing how clean they are kept. Perfect for school show and tell. The empty box gets a good clean and a rinse with boiling water and back up it goes.

Our bird loving daughter has received a special Christmas present this year. A new nest box with a tiny camera in the top of it. We have had blue tits nesting in the single box on our front wall ever since we moved in, we will now add a second. We can hardly wait to see the new occupants make their preparations, sit on their eggs and then start their new family. If we have success this spring, we will provide an update.

One last tip for overwintering birds. Enjoy the ones that visit you in the cold months, they are little rays of sunlight in a grey part of the year. Clean and restock bird feeders frequently, and leave seed heads over winter for extra food. They will thank you.

**Marc Bramham**

*This column is a conversation starter for our whole community. If you have comments on the subject, ideas of your own or suggestions for future content, please do get in touch at sustainable.saltash@protonmail.com*

## 5 Steps to Break Free from Debt Blues this Winter

As a debt coach with Christians Against Poverty (CAP) in Saltash, I witness the severe toll that financial anxiety takes on many people.

As the weather turns colder and the heating needs cranking up, many face the harsh reality that there's no money left for the meter. Then the credit card bills begin to pile up. If that's the kind of situation you currently face, here are my top tips on how you can start to break free from the debt blues.

### Have a post-Christmas clear-out

Why not have a good clear-out and set aside any unwanted toys, clothes or other items that you could sell to earn a little extra cash? Organise your kitchen cupboards so that you know exactly what food supplies you have.

### Take some time for yourself

Financial worries can take a toll, so it's important to prioritise your wellbeing and take some time out without putting stress on your budget. Search online for free local activities, go for a quiet walk at a local beauty spot or even check out what events are going on at your local church. There are lots of free things you can do that can help keep you positive.

### Plan ahead, don't put off

It might be tempting to ignore the unopened bills piling up, or to avoid checking your bank balance for fear of what it might reveal. However, facing your financial situation head-on is crucial. Why not start by downloading CAP's budgeting guide at [capuk.org/budgeting](http://capuk.org/budgeting) to create your own personal budget?

### Get support from a friend

Addressing our financial worries can be a difficult task to tackle alone, so if you're feeling overwhelmed, consider talking to a trusted friend or family member who can support you. **Seek free help**

Start the year off well by

## Rock Roll and Romance

Saltash's U3A band Last Chance have teamed up with Newquay based Timeless to bring you an evening of Rock, Roll and Romance at Saltash Football Club on St Valentines Day.

The bands will be performing to raise funds for Little Harbour Children's Hospice. This will be an all ticket event with tickets priced at just £5 each and will be available to purchase at Piglets in Fore Street, Saltash and at the Football club. The bands will be giving their time for free and, thanks to the generosity of the football club committee who are allowing us free access to their facility all proceeds will be going directly to the Hospice. Tickets are limited to just 100 so please get yours early to avoid disappointment.

investing in your financial wellbeing. We provide free, expert debt advice and money coaching, all delivered face-to-face, so you'll receive an effective combination of practical and emotional support. If you're struggling with unmanageable debt, call our free helpline on 0800 328 0006 and one of our friendly CAP advisors will arrange for me to visit you in your home. They'll chat through your options and support you through the process until you become debt free.

Alternatively, email me direct - [timsquires@capuk.org](mailto:timsquires@capuk.org). Happy New Year!

Christians Against Poverty (CAP) is a UK charity working with over 800 affiliated churches to deliver debt help, budgeting guidance, support to find work, life skills education and more. Visit [capuk.org](http://capuk.org) to find out more.

## New Year's Greetings in Saltash

Entering the new year provides a time for us to reflect on what has happened over the course of 2025, and look forward to what 2026 will bring. I'm sure we have all had our own personal ups and downs, and I wish everyone the best for the new year. I want to reflect on the work the community has done and what I will continue to do going into 2026. Saltash has an amazing community spirit, with an excellent Town Council, incredible businesses, and inspiring school children, volunteers, and community groups. There's a lot to celebrate, and a lot still to be done.

We all want to see positive change in our area. After years of neglect and a lack of investment in our local services. Healthcare sits high on this list of priorities. Letters from residents and conversations with Saltash Health Action Group and councillors, reaffirmed by the findings of my online services survey, have made it clear that most of us access essential services across the Tamar.

It's vital that we start to see more provision in our own communities. Health services like phlebotomy are a key step in my mission to bring healthcare closer to home. I have written to the Integrated Care Board and spoken with Ministers about this. It is an important moment to fight for the healthcare provision that is so needed in Saltash.

It has been great to meet with Saltash Town Council when I have the opportunity to do so. I really value the work they do for the community. We've seen how disruptive unreliable services have been in Saltash recently and I am working with the Town Council so that local people get straight answers and a clear plan for improvements. Going into next year, I am looking forward to developing solutions to existing issues and working together on behalf of our local communities.

I've visited many local businesses and organisations throughout the year, from Livewire, who do incredible things for young people in our area, to popping into some of the fantastic businesses and organisations we have like the community

cafe and the Bookshelf.

Throughout 2025, I've been engaging with the new Joint Committee and Chair of Tamar Crossings. Recently, alongside the Plymouth Labour MPs, I wrote to the Joint Committee calling on them to reconsider the increase in admin fees from 80p to £2 a month, and I will keep you updated of future meetings.

I've been honoured to represent the amazing community in Saltash over the past year, and I will continue to demand our fair share of services and work on projects that will help to unlock economic growth in our area. *Anna Gelderd MP*

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# Tamar Reflections

**Installment three – Celebrating 80 Years of the Boys’ Club/Livewire A Legacy that Began Eight Decades Ago**

As I wrote in installments one and two within Tamar Reflections Eighty years ago, in 1945 - the Saltash Waterside Boys’ Club was founded as a place of encouragement, friendship, and purpose for local boys during an era marked by wartime upheaval and restricted opportunities. What began as a haven on the Waterside - guided with steadfast commitment by early leaders such as Harry Taylor - has grown and evolved into one of the most remarkable youth projects in the Southwest: LIVEWIRE.

The Boys’ Club has always stood for something deeper than simply activities or outings. It offered young people a sense of belonging, the chance to gain confidence, life skills, discipline, resilience - and, most importantly, the understanding that their potential mattered.

Amid the many hands and hearts who shaped its journey, one more recent name deserves celebration.

**Jean Scoble – A Leader of Quiet Strength and boundless energy**

There have been many leaders and supporters of the old Waterside and Saltash Boys’ Club, but Jean Scoble stands out as one of the most dedicated, capable, and beloved.

As Club Leader, Jean worked tirelessly from the new building, overseeing on average 30 to 35 young people between the ages of 14 and 20, four evenings a week. Her combination of warm encouragement and firm guidance gave the young people structure and confidence during a pivotal stage in their lives.

Jean’s leadership extended well beyond ordinary club evenings. She coordinated the help of parents and volunteers, organised rowing, air-rifle shooting, and a range of specialised activities, and ensured that summers were full of educational trips and outings. Two evenings a week were devoted entirely to visits of interest broadening horizons well beyond Saltash.

Her fund-raising efforts were legendary. Young members rallied beside her at Gig Rowing

competitions and the Saltash Town Regattas, where Jean’s energy was nothing short of indefatigable. She also took the young people to adventure weekends at the Redruth Activity Centre trips fondly remembered for their camaraderie and also arranged memorable canal boat holidays, including a much-talked-about voyage to Leicester.

The young people trusted Jean. They knew she believed in them. Many credit her for giving them a sense of direction, confidence, and belonging.

Today, Jean is still with us and remains deeply interested in the modern day success of Livewire - a testament to her lifelong devotion to young people in Saltash.

**A Transformational Moment – Fund-Raising for a New Vision**

In 1996, I, as long-standing President of the former Saltash Waterside Boys’ Club / Livewire, and supported tirelessly by Chris Marsh, Cornwall Youth Worker at that time, led a major fund-raising initiative. Our ambition was clear: to secure two years of funding for a Youth Project Worker who could help carry the Club into a new era. Our campaign succeeded, securing £80,000 from the National Lottery - and allowing the Management Committee to make a truly inspired appointment of Andy Rance.

Andy arrived with passion, skill, and an unshakeable belief in the potential of young people. The rest, as they say, is history though in Andy’s case, it is an ongoing story of dedication beyond measure.

Supported by Trustees, volunteers, community members, and most importantly the trust and enthusiasm of the young people themselves Andy has guided Livewire with vision and integrity for three decades. His leadership has been consistently outstanding, heartfelt, and astonishing in its impact.

From those humble beginnings emerged a transformation few could have predicted.

**Livewire – A Southwest Cultural Jewel**

Today, Livewire is recognised across the UK as a premier youth music hub, a community anchor, and a place where creativity, confidence, and connection flourish. Its state-of-



the-art recording and performance studios, built and refined over many years, now welcome: world-famous musicians, local emerging talent, young people pursuing composition and production and countless young performers discovering their own voices. Furthermore, a Centre of excellence for health and wellbeing.

Livewire is envied nationwide for its facilities, its ethos, and its results. Alumni have gone on to universities and careers in music, media, helping professions, business and community leadership within Livewire itself.

The resilience and innovation that carried the Club through eight decades continue to shape it in 2025, as Livewire welcomes many hundreds of young people each year.

**Honouring the Pioneers of the past**

The growth of the Boys’ Club and its later evolution into Livewire was shaped by many remarkable individuals whose dedication built the foundations of what exists today. Alongside Harry Taylor, Jean Scoble and more recently, Andy Rance - further tributes should be paid to the following founders, pioneers and early stakeholders:

Alderman J.F. Ashton, Vernon Seccombe, Phil Rundle, Bert Bolt, Reverend Prior, Squire Rashleigh, Mr A. de Barr, George Webber, Gordon Bellingham, Plymouth and Saltash Rotary Clubs, Bill MacDonald, David Scoble, Eric Lewis, Mr A. Knight, Trevor Soloman, Mrs Lucy Knight, and many more whose names remain in our collective gratitude.

Their legacy is kept alive not only in memory but in the continued success of Livewire.

No celebration of 80 years would be complete without acknowledging the current Trustees, volunteers, staff, supporters, funders, musicians, families, and friends. Their

faith, hard work, and belief in Saltash’s young people allow the legacy to grow stronger with each passing year.

**Looking Ahead – The Next Eighty Years**

If the past eight decades has taught us anything, it is that the spirit of the Saltash Boys’ Club is enduring. The values that shaped the old Waterside Club community, creativity, resilience, kindness, and opportunity remain at the heart of Livewire today.

And so, with great confidence, we look ahead to the next eighty years and beyond. Livewire will continue to stand as a beacon for young people: a place where they can develop their gifts, find support, build friendships, and discover the strength to shape their futures.

**Happy 80th Anniversary Thank you, one and all. Sue Hooper MBE**

Former President, Saltash Waterside Boys’ Club & Livewire - and Freeman of Saltash  
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*Ella, Millie, Cruze, Ronnie and Phoebe meet Father Christmas at Oaklands Community Centre.*

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**Wild for The Park Nature & Community Coming Together**

It’s Friends of Tincombe Park 5-year anniversary after taking over management of Tincombe Park, in the heart of Saltash, from Cornwall Council, Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Cormac.

Over the last five years the park has become a haven for wildlife with wonderful green spaces spanning over 6 hectares (15 acres). The park features glades, woods, open meadows, a quarry, newly introduced scrape/pond and a gently flowing stream with wetland areas, a frog pond, giant bug house and

flourishing wildlife habitats. The success of the park and the growth and diversity of its wildlife inhabitants means that TFOTP are planning for ‘GO WILD’ seasonal activities and events in 2026 for the community to enjoy.

Whether a nature lover, dog walker, horse rider, or just looking for a tranquil spot to relax or picnic, Tincombe Park is now a fantastic place for families and children to explore, learn, and play, a true gem for both recreation and education. A continuing environmental success story.



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## Just Thinking Aloud ...

It's laugh out loud time folks. Years ago my beloved found in her morning paper an extract from the Horsham Friday-Ad. She kept it: Parachute for sale, once used, never opened, small stain. I kid you not. It is before me as I bang away at my 'pooper keyboard.

However, at the end of the most frightening year that I can recall, I am supposed to be serious, so let's give it a go, even tho' my overwhelming feeling is that you - like me - would appreciate tongue-in-cheek mischief-making in preference to putting the world to rights. But blow it - the world can wait until 2026, when I shall return to boring you all rigid with my views on politics and democracy and why we need to look again on why they aren't working, at broken social justice and ill-treatment of the poor worldwide and why we need to feel ashamed, and so on, and so forth, ad infinitum. I don't mind if you don't agree with my views, even though the evidence I have is that you do at least glance at them occasionally. I quote from just one of more than a few similar: "Look Bob, instead of your usual guff, I have something to

suggest to you which I am certain your readers would prefer". My replies are always polite but rarely result in positive reactions. Such persons never give up. I usually suggest that they stand in local elections. So far without success, but I persist. The other day I thought of a new wheeze when someone breezed along Fore St to hail me with "something you might be interested in for your column in the Saltash Observer". He's a fascinating chap. I've known him for years. He's led an amazingly interesting life, though much of which (as a modest sort of fellow) he doesn't publicise. Why not, I wonder to myself. I'm certain that his autobiography would sell like hot cakes.

Do you remember Christmas when you were small? Born in 1940, I suspect it was towards the end of the war or even later before I had any inkling of the excitements of late Christmas Eve, when brother and I had to pretend to be asleep, Dad creeping up the stairs with a couple of small pillowcases full of equally small presents, trying not to trip, with Mum behind him, trying (and failing) to suppress her giggles. We slept in an army surplus double bunk. I think I had the one on top, presumably as I was less likely to fall out. Anyway,

## Looking Back to Autumn

# Bounds Were Beaten in Autumn Sunshine

The Countryside around Saltash was glowing in its Autumn colours as fifty walkers set of to beat the bounds of the town in what is becoming a popular annual tradition. A misty start to the day soon turned to warm sunshine, forming ideal walking conditions.

The beating of the bounds is an ancient custom in which townsfolk would walk around the parish boundaries stopping to "bump" young boys on the boundary marker to impress upon them the parish limits.

The walk leader Observer

eventually we did go back to sleep and really did not look inside the pillowcases until Christmas morning when parents came in and gave permission. Church featured next. Just up the road. It took me years to work out why Mum and Dad, after the early years, only came with us at Christmas, Easter and Whitsuntide. I shall leave my conclusion to your imaginations....

correspondent Martin Lister outlined to walkers the history behind the beating. He regaled them along the way with the history of the settlements and countryside which they passed through in particular the once renowned cherry growing parish of Botus Flemming.

Following the tradition of a parish priest leading and blessing the parish boundaries, Reverends Michelle and Tim Parkman led a short prayer and thanksgiving at each stone.

At the final stone walkers were met by town Crier Andy Williams in full fig. He stridently read out an ancient pronouncement before town mayor Rachel Bullock was first to be bumped upon the stone. She was followed by Cornwall's Deputy Lord Lieutenant Daphne Skinnard who had travelled from Truro to share the experience. Third to be bumped was nine year old Kack, the youngest walker.

The route continued to Moditonham Quay, then to Botus Fleming church where there were refreshments, walkers continued to the boundary marker at Hatt where Martin Lister showed how Saltash was almost surrounded by water, with rivers and streams and just a half a mile of 'land' boundary at Hatt between Cock's Lake



and Clark's Lake.

There was a pleasant footpath walking to the next boundary stone, then the wooded lane to the Notter Bridge Inn where there was a break for refreshment. From here the buses took walkers to St Germans station from where the southern parish boundary was travelled by train. At Saltash station all proceeded into Isambard House where a sumptuous cream tea with homemade cakes were awaiting them. Special thanks are due to Rotary Club members for preparing the tea and also for keeping walkers safe marshalling them on the road crossings.



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