

FREE

# ToneNews

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Issue 22

## HAPPY NEW... TOAD!



PHOTO: Ian Lewis 360 South West

One of the giant toads which made up part of the 'Toad Trail' has been kindly donated by The Carpet Warehouse. Find out where on page 3.



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# Welcome to ToneNews

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By the time you read this, you'll probably be bored stiff of people saying 'Happy New Year' to you so, I won't say it! Anyway, welcome to the first issue of Tone News in 2020 and thank you for your continued support because we are now **officially**, 2 years old! If it's your first time reading, I hope you enjoy reading Taunton's fastest growing, truly local, newspaper and I hope you like the family selfie below!



**Darren Daley**  
Editor

Do you have a story you would like to share? We would love to hear from you if have an announcement or perhaps there is a little bit of news from the area that you live that will be of interest to the community.

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# Acorn ward is now the home of a giant toad!

The children's ward at Musgrove is the new home for one of the giant toads which made up part of the incredibly popular 'Toad Trail' and has been kindly donated by local business, The Carpet Warehouse which is based on Priory Bridge Rd.

Brothers, Jason & Paul Thompson paid £3000 for the Toad after it was auctioned off at Hestercombe House last summer. Jason has told Tone News: "We wanted to show our support and give something back to the community in the same way as we did with the 'Deane Dragons' a few years ago, so we bought a Toad!"

The Taunton Toad Trail was launched by the League of Friends of Musgrove Park Hospital to help generate funds for the Bracken Birthing Centre appeal, of which it raised in excess of £15,000 and proved to be a real hit, especially with children. Jason went on to say: "Having seen how the kids responded when they saw the Toads, Paul & I thought that it would bring a big smile to the faces of those who need to spend time in Acorn Ward."

As for the rest of them, tone News can reveal that Killams Toad and Wisdom Toad - have stayed with their sponsors at Killams Green and Great Western Hotel respectively; Daisy Toad and Toad in the Hole were bought as surprise Christmas presents! Lightning McGreen was bought by the family of the schoolgirl who designed it, whilst Quantock Toad has stayed with Viridor and will either be on display in their reception or



PHOTO: Ian Lewis 360 South West

doing a tour to encourage recycling and support wildlife.

LoFToad has been bought by Richard Huish College and will be on display at the College having been redesigned and painted by College students. Elements of Toad has 'hopped' all the way down to Exmouth and has pride of place on the first floor balcony of a flat overlooking the Marina! The original Toads, which were in the Shopping Centre and are now in Victoria Park are being renovated to bring them back to their former glory ready for next summer. Finally, Gregory the Willow Toad, that could be won by buying a £1 raffle ticket, was won by a person from Shapwick who after displaying it in her garden donated it to St Margaret's Hospice where it is proudly on display. Peter Renshaw, Chairman of the League of Friends Musgrove Park Hospital thanked everyone who had been involved with the Toad Trail and helping to raise funds for the 60th Anniversary Appeal to refurbish Bracken Birthing Centre.

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# NEWS

## Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre celebrates its 20th Anniversary



2020 brings the 20th anniversary of the Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre's opening, a milestone for the venue and one that will be thoroughly celebrated. With this in mind, TMAC are launching 20 for 20: a celebration of 20 different events throughout the year that have been chosen to represent all of the different aspects of the work Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre has hosted over the years. As well as celebrating the past, 20 for 20 will look to the future and the plans, hopes and ambitions for the next 20 years.

The first seven events of 20 for 20 have been announced and all fall within Jan-Apr 2020. There is a special exhibition about the arts centre and its history, theatre by nationally acclaimed company Vamos Theatre, ballet by the excellent visiting company Ballet Theatre UK and comedy/magic from returning favourite Pete Firman.

In addition, the annual The Page is Printed writing competition and Valentine's Cream Tea for care home residents are part of the line-up and there's a special Peace Child 2020 concert by Heathfield Community School which celebrates 30 years since the original production which was so important to the arts centre's creation.

Tacchi-Morris Arts Centre's mission to be a centre of excellence in the Performing Arts in education is ongoing and, like other theatres and arts centres, there are challenges that come with age. Therefore the 20 for 20 celebrations will also signal the launch of new fundraising campaigns and sponsorship opportunities, with TMAC aiming to undertake much needed renovations and improvements to the arts centre, as well as developing a more sustainable, environmentally friendly venue.

## RLS opens their Taunton office

By David Richardson

I started my business Richardsons Legal Services in East Devon over 12 years ago, specifically to protect the assets of my clients, such as the family home, so that my clients children can inherit with the minimum amount of stress. We specialise particularly in protecting the assets and family home of the over 60 s, of which I am one. The business progressed steadily over the years and we have helped hundreds of people during that time, and now have branches in Plymouth which is our head office, and Exeter, and our Taunton office opens on 1st February.

We are still a small friendly firm and love helping people. We use a combination of Wills, Trusts and Lasting Powers of Attorney and not forgetting the fourth aspect of Estate Planning which uses Pre-Paid funeral plans to actually leave more money in the estate for your beneficiaries to inherit. We offer free no obligation consultations in our three offices, also drop in clinics. Please see our main ad for clinic dates. We also offer home calls for those people who cannot visit us for a small home call charge.

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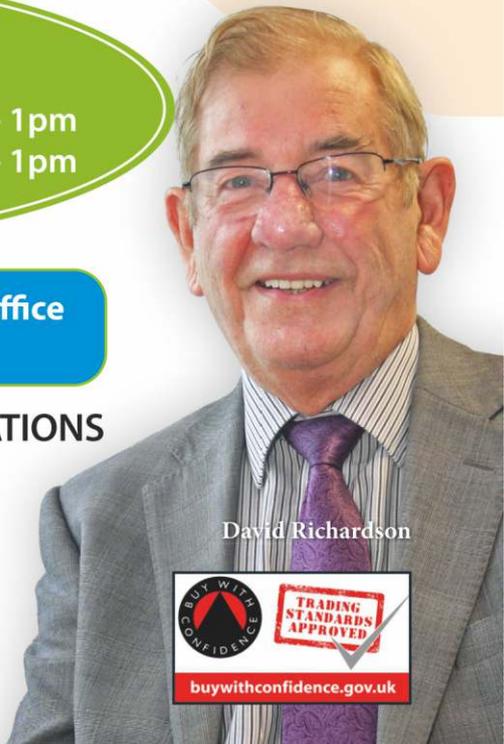
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David Richardson



# Taunton School student delivers campaign speech to Parliament

Taunton School sixth form student Hanna Wittek has recently visited the House of Commons to deliver a campaign speech on behalf of the Youth Parliament.

As Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) for Somerset, Hanna recently received the opportunity to go to the House of Commons to debate the top five issues that over 800,000 young people voted for nationwide in the Make your Mark youth vote this year.

Last year, Hanna was elected to represent the South West as a debate lead. Hanna told Tone News: "I spoke at the dispatch box for three minutes on a campaign that I was most passionate about. This to me was certainly speaking on hate crime. My speech was prepared and I think it went really well!"

The two national campaigns which were democratically elected by the MYPs were "Protect the Environment" and "End Knife Crime" which were also the two topics that were the most voted for in Taunton School. The other issues in the top five were "Mental Health", "Tackle Hate Crime" and "Curriculum for Life".

Hanna, who is studying A Levels at Taunton School has her sights set on being an MP in the future. Hanna said: "I'm really keen on law and politics and initially I wanted to become a family barrister. Having worked with the Youth Parliament has made me realise that I can really make a difference by becoming an MP and having a voice in parliament. I hope to study Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Cambridge when I finish my studies at Taunton School."



Hanna Wittek, Member of Youth Parliament

# Big thanks to Margaret from Moose International

By William Gratton

Moose International is an organisation whose main purpose is raising money for local charities and you can find our lodges all over the country. We meet up in the Moose Lodge on Castle Street each month for skittles nights and table tennis days, along with plenty of other social events. One of our longstanding members of the Ladies Circle is Margaret Wilson who has served for over 30 years but has decided to retire. She will be greatly missed, especially the wonderful meals, which were always delicious and most appreciated so we wanted to take this opportunity to say thank you in Tone

News. The Moose is about celebrating life together, serving those in need within our local community, supporting our children at Mooseheart and standing by our senior members at Moosehaven. To find out more information on how to be a Moose, visit: mooseintl.org.



Margaret receiving a gift from Taunton Lodge Governor, Roger Baker.

# Landlords wanted in Taunton and West Somerset

The Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) was set up in October 2018 to reduce the number of rough sleepers in Taunton and Wellington.

The Council (TDBC prior to the formation of SWT)) was successful in a bid for funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) under the Government strategy to half rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027.

SWT now has a full team working tirelessly to help all the rough sleepers in the Somerset West and Taunton area.

A big part of the RSI Taunton strategy is to find appropriate housing for our rough sleepers. ARC operate a general needs hostel in East Reach (Lindley House) that takes the majority of people and does excellent work in supporting former rough

sleepers back to independent living.

However, not everyone fits into this category and we need additional housing for some of our former rough sleepers. We already have four private lets that are shared housing rented from local landlords. This has been extremely successful and we are now looking for 1 or 2 bed properties to start the move-on process into more independent living.

We are looking for local landlords to work with us to bring the RSI project to a successful conclusion in the next 15 months up to March 2021. If you are interested in renting to SWT please get in touch with Kevin Papps by email - k.papps@somersetwestandtaunton.gov.uk - or Facebook messenger (Taunton Streetwise)



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# WIN a year's free health club membership

How are your New Year fitness resolutions coming along? Did you even manage to get started or are you still procrastinating? Well it's still not too late to get your 2020 health & fitness resolutions off to a great start as Tone News have teamed up with You Fit health club based in the Holiday Inn Taunton to offer our readers the opportunity to win a free one year membership.

It's not too late for the You Fit Taunton health club experts to help you to get started and guide you on your journey. The club team will help you get the best out of their fantastic facilities, including full gym suite, class programme, sauna, steam room, swimming and spa pools to relax and unwind after your workout. Whether you're a gym novice, training for an event, or a fitness fanatic, You Fit health club provide three fitness programmes to get you off to the very best start; QuickStart, & SureStart programmes, each tailored to help you achieve

your goals and get the most from your health club experience. To enter our competition, answer the following question: Where is the You Fit Taunton Health Club based? Send your answer, along with your Name, Email and Phone number to: taunton@youfitclubs.co.uk before the competition deadline of 10am on February 29th 2020.

You Fit Taunton, Holiday Inn, Deane Gate Avenue, Taunton TA1 2UA. Tel: 01823 350999



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# Couch to 5k

Taunton Running Club's final 'Couch to 5K' programme of 2019 saw 18 runners line up for their "graduation 5 Kilometres" around a very wet & muddy Longrun Meadow. There was much excitement in the air and many smiles as they ran through puddles & mud. All runners completed the course to receive their certificates and medals.

Over the past eight weeks, Club Captain Michael Sharpe,

along with group leaders Rob Stenhouse, Joan Ramsay, Lindsey Webber, Laura Davenport and Carley Wright have carefully taken their runners through the programme.

The "All Blacks" free Couch to 5K programme is part of their wellbeing in the community policy and close to two hundred and fifty runners have taken part. The next programme starts in the Spring of 2020.



Group Photo from L to R: Jessica Francis, Mary Combes, Julie Weaver, Helen Hall, Caroline Pearce, Jan Ashcroft, Zoe Greenslade, Rachel Parsons, Cathy Ward, Harry Bridges, Matthew Boucher, Steven Abel, Ginny Spencer, Jo Stocker, Gerry Fagan, Anna Willitt, Katy Monk. Inset: Laura Parsons

# Greenfingers delight at Holiday Inn donation



The Holiday Inn hotel at junction 25 has been running a number of events over the course of last year to raise money for Greenfingers charity.

The charity is Kew Green Hotel Group's (the hotel owners) nominated Charity, which is dedicated to supporting the children who use hospices around the UK, along with their families, by creating beautiful, well-designed outdoor spaces for children to enjoy with family, friends and siblings, whether through play and fun, or therapeutic rest and relaxation. To date, GreenFingers Charity has created 51 inspiring gardens

and outdoor spaces in hospices around the country and has a further waiting list of hospices that need their help now.

A mixture of events in the hotels' health club, You Fit, including rowerathons and bike distance challenges, along with book sales, cake sales, raffles and Christmas party activities saw the hotel smash it's target of £3500 with donations amounting to £5500!

In 2020 it will continue to be the hotel's chosen charity so please visit the hotel and get involved. If you would like more details on the charity, visit: [greenfingerscharity.org.uk](http://greenfingerscharity.org.uk)

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# FREE learn to sing course



After a most successful 2019 the Rivertones Harmony Chorus based in Taunton start the New Year with a Learn to Sing course. The course which is FREE will take place at The Oakwood Church Centre Obridge Road Taunton. It will last for 8 weeks taking place every Thursday from 7 o'clock to 9 30. It will start on February 13th and end on April 2nd.

The workshop is sponsored by the Rivertones Chorus and sponsored by BABS, the British Association of Barbershop Singers. The course is designed to encourage more men to take up singing. It is aimed at both newcomers and those who have not sung for a while.

There are many men who would love to sing but have never had the opportunity, or perhaps are too self conscious. This free course will help you to discover your voice and gain confidence. There is no need to worry about reading music, the simple teaching methods will help you to learn a song quickly.

The Chorus sings a variety of songs which will appeal to all tastes. This course will include songs from Adele and the Beatles.

The Rivertones motto is "Allowing ordinary singers to do extraordinary things". To reserve your FREE place send an email to peter.elliston2@btinternet.com or telephone 01823 256656.



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# Ballsy Festival returns to Taunton

Taunton is to see the return of the very popular music festival The (one and only) Testical Festival on Saturday 20th June 2020 at Taunton Racecourse. The festival is the only one of its kind in the UK (or even the world) and set to be the best yet.

Organised by charity It's in the Bag who support men with testicular cancer in the South West of England a local charity who have changed the mould when raising awareness of the disease. The charity is well known for its quirky, tongue in cheek awareness campaigns and The Testical Festival is no different.

Organisers Sue and Bill Brand say: "We came up with the concept of a music festival as it reflects the gender and age range of those who attend. Testicular Cancer is the most common cancer in young men, especially those between the age of 15 – 45. Our thoughts were, why not have a non-profit music festival to spread the word and also to highlight the good work that the charity does in the South West."

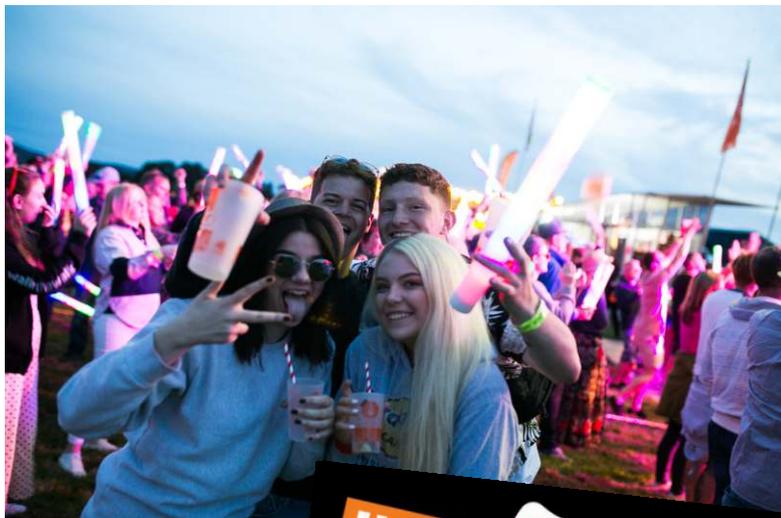
"This year we have decided to support artists and businesses that come from the South West, together with local colleges, like Richard Huish

College whose students opened the festival last year."

The main objective is to save lives, lives like singer and musician Matt Swancott: "I was asked a few years back to help and support this festival, and having had testicular cancer a few years back was happy to help. Don't be put off by the name, this is a wonderful festival for all, with great bands, fantastic atmosphere and an important message. If we can get more men to check themselves, be aware of the symptoms and see their doctor earlier, that has got to be good."

Band Line up to be announced very soon, but we know there will be good food, ice cream, licenced bar, children's entertainment, and lots more.

Camping available for two nights and there will be entertainment on the Friday night too for those who camp. Get your tickets now and take a look at our Facebook page. [www.facebook.com/TestFest](https://www.facebook.com/TestFest). Tickets: <https://its-in-the-bag.myshopify.com/products/testfest2020-day-ticket-adult-15> So why not join us - All in aid of It's in the Bag



## About It's in the Bag...

1. It's in the Bag is a Bristol based charity offering hands on support to men across the South West who have been diagnosed with testicular cancer.
2. It also raises awareness of testicular cancer and the importance of regular self-checking. Visit [www.itsinthebag.org.uk](http://www.itsinthebag.org.uk) to find out more.
3. It's in the Bag have three simple aims:
  - Support: Being diagnosed with testicular cancer and going through treatment is a huge challenge – physically, mentally and emotionally. We provide a range of activities and initiatives to help men through this tough time.
  - Awareness: We teach men the importance of checking their balls regularly and taking any issues straight to their GP. Spreading this knowledge
4. Testicular cancer is the most common cancer of 15 to 49-year-old men (but it also affects younger and older men). Although most cancers get more common as we get older, testicular cancer is different. It's most likely to happen when you're young or middle aged.
5. Testicular cancer has a high survival rate – more than 98% of men who have been diagnosed with Testicular cancer will

promotes earlier diagnosis, which often means simpler, more effective treatment and better chances of a cure.

- Survival: With UK cure rates for testicular cancer running above 98%, we focus on survival – helping guys tackle the emotional and practical impact of cancer, both during treatment and into their lives after.

survive, but early detection is crucial. It's in the Bag encourages men aged 15 and older to self-check every month and to talk to their GP immediately if they discover anything unusual.

### Find us...

- Like us on Facebook /itsinthebag and follow us on Twitter @ItsInTheBag
- April is Testicular Cancer Awareness month
- Men In Pants Appeal – to support men at diagnosis with Information Pack
- The (one and only) Testical Festival – Saturday 20th June, Taunton Racecourse.



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# Taunton Property Market Update

by Jack Battersby of Wilkie May & Tuckwood

As we enter into a new year, and indeed a new decade, we are pleased to report that the property market remains buoyant in Taunton. Now that the election result has been finalised and Christmas is out the way, we will soon start to see more properties enter the market as we approach the busy, Spring period. Stamp duty tax exemption for first time buyers coupled with a shortage in available rental properties resulted in an increased number of first-time buyers purchasing in Taunton throughout 2019.

Land Registry data shows that the average property price in Taunton Deane has risen from £196,069 in January 2010, to £242,188 in October 2019. That's a rise of £46,119 (or 23%) over the course of the last decade. I believe this increase in price can be attributed to a number of factors such as competitive mortgage rates, government initiatives such as the 'Help-To-Buy' scheme and increased employment numbers. Another factor to consider is our city neighbours, Bristol and Exeter. House prices in Exeter

have risen by 36% over the last ten years whilst Bristol has seen an astonishing 73% rise on its average property price since 2010. With Taunton offering a mainline intercity railway station, a new and improved motorway junction currently under construction and easier access to remote working, it is really not surprising to see more people than ever before choosing to buy in the county town.

If you are thinking of buying or selling in Taunton, Jack can be contacted on 01823 332121 or found at Wilkie May & Tuckwood who are located next to the taxi rank, on Corporation Street.

*\*Figures correct as of 1/1/2020 - taken from Land Registry*



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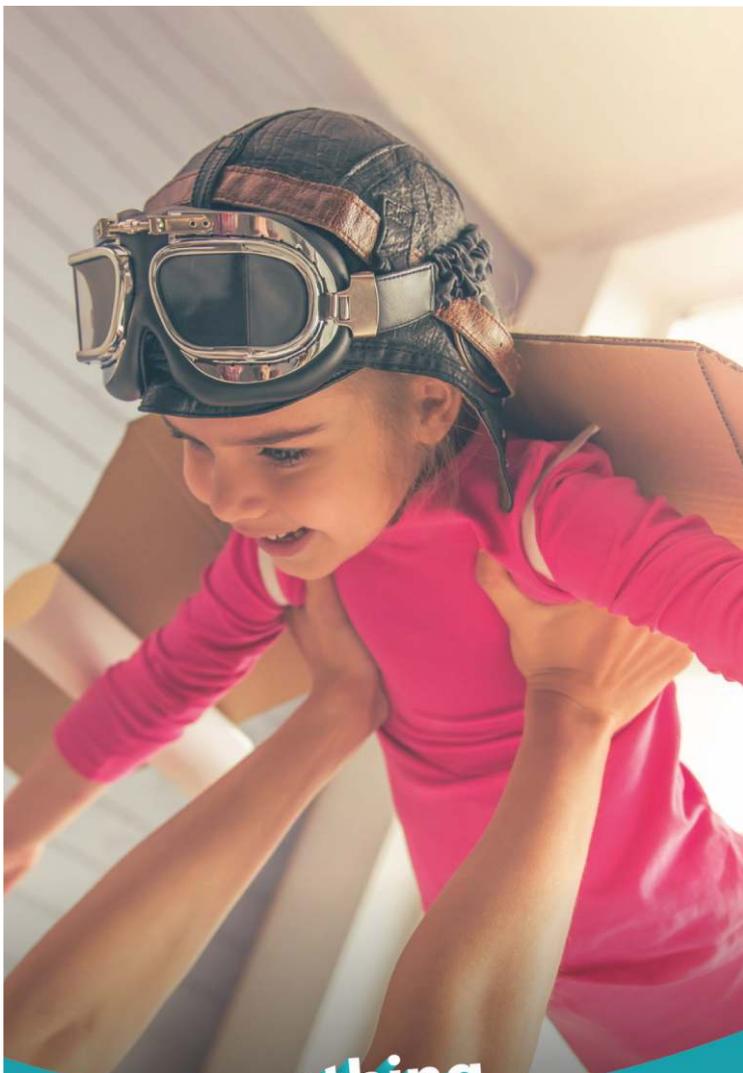




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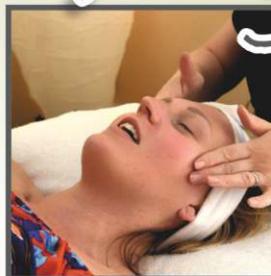
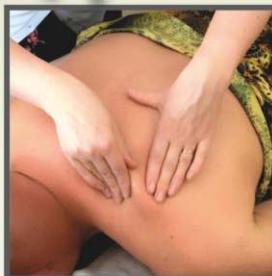
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# The Monthly Alternative with Giles Cosgrove

## Spotlight On:

In the age of the instant and cutting edge there will always be those of us who wish for a simpler time. A time when things weren't flying past at supersonic speeds, when you could sit and take in music, the sounds and the album sleeve, rather than cram it in on the commute to work. If that's you then Ollie Dixon might just be who you've been waiting for.

Having played guitar from a young age Ollie ditched the typical three chord electric Pop Punk in favour of a stripped back acoustic blues sound. A master of his craft, his debut EP "The Ragged Mile" featured expansive jams that knocked on the door of the ten minute mark. His lyrics take universal subjects of longing, homesickness, love and ambition and get them with a passionate throaty vocal that lets you know he's not just a dab hand on the six string. It was the standout single "Home" that brought him to the attention of The Sunday Alternative and the live session version he did for the show was a highlight of 2018.

Returning at the tail end of 2019, Ollie's new EP "Here & Now" brings a bolder and more evolved sound to the blues acoustics that act as the core of his music. Syncopated drumming, electric guitar chords, and moody production provide a sonic aesthetic suitably tinged in emotion with plenty of subtext. The EP cover provided by Abbie Barton is an additional piece to the puzzle, a black & white beachscape, tortured waves crashing against



Image courtesy of Abbie Barton Photography

jagged rocks. The track "No Man is an Island" brings everything together, the expansive new sound, the stoic record cover and potentially what the record means. Stand on a beach in the pouring rain, watch the sea wrap itself around the cliffs and you might be getting close. If that sounds damp and cold, then turn the heating and get this EP on instead.

Selling out small venues across the South West, building an army of followers and creating music that is entirely unique but has flavours of the familiar, Ollie Dixon is one of the most promising young artists in the South West.

**Find him:** Check out the new EP on Spotify and give him a follow on Instagram  
**Sounds like:** The soundtrack of the Earth & human nature given a perfect voice.

## Acts to Watch Out For in this Month:

- **The 1975**  
With "Notes on A Conditional Form" not far off, surely we'll be getting a new single?
- **All Smiles In Wonderland**  
With their gig for Safe Space for Women at the end of January this Bath indie powerhouse are everything DIY music should be.
- **Green Day**  
New album "Father of all..." isn't far away and is set to be their shortest & sharpest blast of punk energy to date.
- **Glastonbury?**  
Not an Act so much as Acts, the wait for the full line-up to the legendary Somerset Festival is excruciating. Anyone got any ideas? Anyone?



You can listen to The Sunday Alternative with Giles Cosgrove every Sunday from 4 – 6 pm on Tone FM featuring great local artists, an Album of the Week, Vinyl Revival, Gig Guide and Music News.



## GAMING with Stuart Coward

### Spirited Away

With the festivities over we now enter the start of the 2020's. This year will bring plenty of big games fighting for your time like Cyberpunk 2077,

Watchdogs 3 and Vampire: The Masquerade Bloodlines 2. Instead of talking about those today I am going to look at a smaller game that might get overlooked.

The game is 'Spiritfarer' by Thunder Lotus Games for Playstation 4, Xbox One, Nintendo Switch and PC. In it you play a ferry master whose job is to take spirits to the afterlife. The game lets you customize your character, ferry and even your pet cat. You upgrade your ferry by exploring, mining, fishing, farming and completing platforming levels. As you meet your different passengers you get to learn their stories and care for them, but don't get too attached as you will have to let them move on. If you have a friend they can join you by playing as Daffodil the cat. To make it even more unique the art and animation are all done in a lovely 2D hand drawn style.



Image: spiritfarer.com



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# Up the Peacocks By Kevin Sturmey



We need to keep building the crowds as the Town is growing and I need to keep foraging deeper into the community to find new ways to get groups of people in our community supporting. As I keep saying I am never satisfied as the work and commitment we all give here needs more support from the local people, local Council and the business community. We have some ideas for next season which will allow me to spend more time "selling" the club in to our community.

I thought a lot of the problems in Non League were caused by the F A and Leagues, in some cases they do but having been in my Chairman's role for 10 years next July my opinion to that is changing! Having hosted the Southern League regional meeting a few weeks ago for 12 clubs I think the biggest issue is the clubs themselves or more to the point the people running them. The common denominator is old white males out of touch as in that meeting we hosted there was one lady out of 24 delegates! Our Board is run by people who are older but the difference is we realize you have to stay in touch with the world we now live in, it's not going to go

back to the 1970's, 80's or even 90's. I'm all for tradition but it has to be modernised to keep up with the very different world we now live in. It will soon be 2020 and it's time to wake up to change.

Boardroom entertaining in my humble opinion is way past it's sell by date and hardly any clubs have 10 Directors let alone 10 coming to a match. This season there seems to be a trend for clubs to make up numbers with anyone who attends the match to make it up to 10. I personally think that this is so old fashioned, out of date and to have to wear a suit and tie to some of the grounds we go to in the winter months makes no sense at all for a winter sport. A cup of tea, biscuit or cake before the game and at half time is fine but before or after match food for Directors, is it really needed? The people who should be fed well after the match are the match officials, players and management team, the players provide the entertainment which fans pay to watch and who deserve to be fed well. We make sure we respect every team that come here and try to provide plenty of food after the match in a comfortable environment.

I think all Directors/ Committee should all pay to get in to grounds like the fans do and if I'm hungry or thirsty I'm happy to buy some food and drink at the clubs we visit. It costs clubs money the old fashioned way so let's get rid of this outdated pomposity and wake up to the year 2020. The world is not going backwards!

Also, on the same subject surely Match Officials should be able to wear a tracksuit to and from a game especially the distances they travel just like the players do instead of the old fashioned collar and tie just to be allowed in the Boardroom. Pompous nonsense, in my humble opinion and needs to be modernised. Plus surely the Match Officials travel wear and kit should be provided and sponsored by an FA Partner.

Let's all keep pushing the boundaries and keep building the Cygnet Health Care Stadium in to our fortress and build our away support to even greater levels than before. #UpThePeacocks

## Taunton Racecourse

The racing action comes thick and fast for Taunton punters over the next few weeks as the season revs up for the Cheltenham Festival in March and the Grand National in early April.

During the shortest month of February the Orchard Portman Course hosts three meetings the first of which is on Sunday 2nd when the first race is due to go to post at 1.35pm.

Following on from that Taunton race again on Tuesday 18th when they host the Half Term Raceday when the action gets underway at 2.15pm.

The third meeting in February takes place on Thursday 27th when they host the Royal Bath and West Raceday starting at 2pm.

Those who have never been to a meeting at Taunton can do so free on March 9th when they host the William Hill Free Raceday -

tickets for which can be obtained without charge on-line- but book early to take advantage of the offer.

Taunton race again on St Patrick's Day March 17th when the first of the action gets going at 2.15pm.

In addition to the action out on the course Taunton will be hosting a Cheltenham Festival Preview Evening on Friday 6th March as well as a Gold Cup Day Lunch on Friday 13th March and a Grand National Lunch on Saturday 4th April.

Up to 40% discount is available on tickets purchased on-line in advance before 12 noon on the day prior to racing.

Further details regarding all of the above events can be obtained by logging onto [www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk](http://www.tauntonracecourse.co.uk)



## BE A MASCOT AT TAUNTON TOWN



All Taunton & District Youth and Mini League teams and School Teams can now take advantage of a great offer to attend a Bet Victor Southern League Premier Division South match at Taunton Town FC for a bargain price during the 2019-20 season and be the Mascots for the day.

Squad members (up to 22 per team) and 4 team officials can obtain entry for a total cost of only £35 to a League match of their choice when booked in advance. The deal includes 6 match day programmes and a chance to meet some of the players and management team at The Cygnet Health Care Stadium after the match and get autographs and photos. The Squad will also walk out with the Taunton Town players and be part of the Respect handshake where there will be an opportunity for family members to take photographs and videos on the pitch. If weather permits we hope that the players can have a small sided 5 minutes each way match on the pitch during the half time interval.

An announcement will be made on the PA before the match and at half time if you can email information about the club and the mascots names a few days before the match to [admin@tauntontown.com](mailto:admin@tauntontown.com) and [dj@tauntontown.com](mailto:dj@tauntontown.com) and [media@tauntontown.com](mailto:media@tauntontown.com) we will use this information.

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# Down at the Club by Spencer Bishop



The fixtures for the 2020 season were revealed recently so we sat down with Somerset CCC Head Coach, Jason Kerr as he cast his eye over them and started off by discussing next year's County Championship:

"To have that first Championship match at home is really important for us," he said. "After a long winter that will certainly be something for our supporters to look forward to. The season is divided into blocks again. The advantage of that is that the guys know what they need to be doing and when. There isn't a huge amount of crossover. The modern-day player is used to adapting to different formats in a short space of time, but ultimately the fixtures look pretty well balanced.

"It's well documented that we get brilliant support down here, but the number of weekend fixtures in the Championship will hopefully mean that we see some bigger crowds at the away grounds that we visit. Ultimately the guys want to be playing in front of as many people as possible and there's no better place to do that than here in Taunton.

"The reality is that with ten teams in the top division we won't be playing every team twice. You can talk about the merits of that but ultimately, it's the same for every team and you have to play the opposition that is in front of you."

Jason is looking forward to local derbies against Gloucestershire in red-ball cricket for the first time since 2007.

"It's been a long time since we last played Gloucestershire in the Championship," he said. "I was here the last time we played them in four-day cricket, and it will definitely have an edge to it. Whatever format we play Gloucestershire in, there will always be that rivalry. They're a very well drilled side. Richard Dawson has done a really good job there and they've deservedly come up from Division Two. Hopefully we'll be able to get the local bragging rights. Playing against them will certainly be a challenge, but it's one we're really looking forward to."



Somerset won the Royal London Cup in 2019 and as Jason explains, the Club will be doing everything possible to win it again.

"To retain that trophy would mean everything," he said. "It would certainly be a testament to the depth of the squad. There are some incredibly exciting and talented players here who haven't played a lot of 50-over cricket who are more than capable of winning that competition. To win it again would mean a huge amount to the Club and to the individuals who will be given that opportunity.

"It's exciting that we are getting to play

some different opposition in the Royal London Cup this year. It will be good for the supporters to see different teams and different players. We've played the same teams for a few years now, so to see the likes of Leicestershire, Derbyshire and Yorkshire coming here in the 50-over competition gives us the opportunity to test ourselves against different sides that we haven't played for a while."

It's a local derby that launches our Vitality Blast campaign in 2020, with Gloucestershire making the short journey down the M5 at the end of May.



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