

ROCKFALL FORCES CLOSURE OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE BEAUTY SPOT

An estimated 20 tonnes of rock fell from the cliff!

A rockfall at a Gloucestershire beauty spot has forced it to be closed. Climbers are asked to avoid Symonds Yat Rock after a rockfall occurred earlier this month in the area known as Hollow Rock.

But Forestry England said it has now had to close the public right of way leading down from Symonds Yat Rock to the River Wye. It will be closed for the “foreseeable future”.

The closures come after an estimated 20 tonnes of rock fell from the cliff face on Tuesday August 8. Forestry England said that “had it not been for the rock capture fence, the damage below could have been significant”.

The size of the rockfall was “large enough to severely damage the fence”, Forestry England added.

In a statement it added: “At present, it appears that only a single area has been affected.

We have been asked why we can’t reopen some of the climbing routes away from the location of the rock fall.

“The reason is that preliminary advice shows there may be further areas of concern across the entire rockface. At the moment, we don’t know whether another rockfall will happen somewhere else along the cliff face – and without a fence in place, we can’t take this risk.

“Our next steps will be to carry out a full survey/assessment of the whole of the cliff face, and to get the fence repaired or replaced. We will also look at further rockface maintenance strategies.

“For the safety of climbers and to avoid any manmade disturbance to the rockface which may cause harm to people and properties below, we cannot allow climbing to take place anywhere in the area until the above has taken place.”

A full survey and assessment of the whole cliff face is now due to be undertaken, along with repairing or replacing the damaged fence.

CALL FOR FAIRER FUEL PRICES IN COUNTRYSIDE

Forest of Dean District Council unanimously backed a motion which calls for rural pricing policies which would ensure rural communities are not discriminated against.

Former council leader Tim Gwilliam (Progressive Independent, Berry Hill), who put forward the proposal, believes that it’s unfair for Foresters to have to pay a premium for diesel and petrol.

He said that, as of May 27, a litre of diesel at a Texaco garage in Coleford was priced at £1.589. While it cost £1.439 per litre at the Texaco petrol station at Westgate Bridge in Gloucester.

He said: “I understand that the dates and the prices of the fuel were just a snapshot in time and I also understand local businesses need to be able to make a living.

“I am well aware some petrol stations try their best to be as cheap as possible but there is still a very large disparity between prices in rural and city areas.”

Cllr Gwilliam said public transport has been cut and rural people rely on the car more than residents in urban areas and it is only fair they should be paying similar prices.

The council voted unanimously to approve the motion at the meeting on July 27.



HISTORIC FOREST FARM COULD BECOME DESTINATION VINEYARD, WINERY & RESTAURANT

Long-held plans for the winery are gathering pace.

A multi-million pound renovation that will turn historic farm buildings in the grounds of an 850-year-old country estate in the Forest of Dean into a winery and restaurant is finally gathering pace. Proposals submitted to district planners would convert listed farm and stable buildings into a destination winery, that overlooks acres of vineyard in the beautiful surrounds of Flaxley Abbey.

Though the abbey itself has been owned by the Watkins family since the 1960s, the farm buildings were bought in 2020 by a Gloucester businessman-cum-winemaker Peter Cooke, of Kingsthorne wines, who has since planted thousands of vines over the currently agricultural land.

He is now seeking formal permission from the district council to convert the formerly equestrian and agricultural buildings to a food and drink venue, that will preserve the site's crumbling historical features.

Each of the farm buildings are being retained due to their heritage value and proximity to the Grade I-listed abbey, but with a new purpose.

The Georgian farmhouse will become an entrance to the winery, opening out through large modern detracting doors into the courtyard, from where visitors would be able to enjoy a classic car collection in the stables to the south, a farm shop in the more dilapidated northern stables, a tasting experience in the grain store, and a 50-seat restaurant in a 200-year-old barn.



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So as not to degrade the historical features of the barn conversion, a secondary building will be constructed next to the barn to house the kitchen and restroom area for diners, who will be seated over two levels in the large spacious barn. A spiral staircase will take diners up to the first floor.

Parts of the Forest, but especially around the Wye Valley, have become a viticulturist centre in recent years, with a plethora of vineyards already established within a five to 10 mile radius of Flaxley. But with a 50-cover restaurant and a £5 million revamp of its medieval surroundings, Kingsthorne is hoping to become a destination vineyard.

However, with it being so close to an ancient historical building, Mr Cook has had to justify the conversion, saying in the application that changes: “allow a sustainable new use to be made of this otherwise unused building, which has had no viable agricultural use for many years. Its sustainable future will always rely on the element of conversion which will involve a change to fabric.

“This scheme causes only minimum impact to provide a very significant future for this building, the site and area.”

In 2020, he said to GloucestershireLive: “It’s all very beautiful but it has been crying out for restoration for years and years,” he said saying his mission was to create a green development with eco-friendly credentials.

“To restore these historic buildings properly takes a lot of time and money, but I’m prepared for that because this is a personal passion of mine. It’s such a lovely spot. You have amazing views over the Severn on one side and the valley on the other.

However, the proposals are likely to require yet more fine-tuning before receiving approval from district planners, with authorities requesting further information about pedestrian access to the site, as well as the impact of an estimated additional 200 road users on nearby routes.



LATEST ACTIVITIES & EVENTS AT SYDENMHAM HOUSE

October 2023

After a rather strange Summer it's Fast-Forward into Autumn and Festival Season has already started in Sydenham House.

So-called Summer turned out to be a bit of a damp squib. After the June heatwave when outings had to be cancelled due to Heat Warnings, July and August felt more like late September with grey skies and drizzly days.

It is guaranteed that the moment the school opens the sun will come out, and sure enough, September has brought the summer we should've had! We've been out for walks in the village almost every day, admiring gardens, meeting old friends and making new ones and just being part of the community.

We've had a Harvest Festival with a lovely display of fruit and vegetables donated by Lyn, Mary and friends and neighbours. Music was provided by Paul (one of our multi-skilled Volunteers) and his wife Sue, and thoroughly enjoyed by everyone. A

beautiful Harvest Loaf baked by a baker in Coleford depicted the Bible story of the five loaves and two fishes – a nod of appreciation towards the village of Awre and our links to the River Severn and its fishing heritage. We didn't forget other types of "Harvest"; a log, a lump of coal and of course, a glass of water enhanced our Harvest table.

All of our residents had productive gardens, some had family farms, and all of us remember the days when Harvest meant much more than a can of baked beans flung in the Food Bank box.

We recited or sang The Farmer's Anthem and remembered the old Farmer's Arms cider mugs, drank cider, ate apples and tasted all sorts of cheese.

As this goes to press we're looking forward to yet more foodie fun with Crisp Tasting competitions, Beer and Bangers, Hot Dogs and Parkin on Firework night and Something (yet to be decided) at the Festival of

Remembrance in November.

A word about Halloween:

A general chat-cum-survey of our residents has revealed Halloween is not a festival they much care for. However, it has become part of our British culture, so we do give a nod towards it, emphasising FUN and making it a celebration of the end of Autumn and the beginning of Winter. Pumpkins, black cats and spiders are IN; ghosts, spooks and gravestones are definitely OUT.

Mary's research indicates the origin of Halloween may date back to Noah and the Hebrew remembrance of the date on which the Flood began, which gives us a rather different reason to mark the day. Whatever – be assured we'll be Enjoying Ourselves as usual in Sydenham House, eating, drinking and being Merry! Please do look at our Displays and Scrapbooks when you visit for insight into what we get up to!



Lyn

About Activities:

There's always plenty to do at Sydenham House



LUCOZADE FANS REFUSE TO BUY DRINK

The drink has been a huge hit with energy drink lovers and those feeling under the weather for many years, but some are vowing never to buy the drink again after a change to its composition..

The recipe of a famous Gloucestershire-manufactured drink has had a revamp, leaving some fans unimpressed. Suntory Beverage & Food, which has a factory in Coleford, has upset a number of Lucozade drinkers by changing the recipe of the iconic drink, favoured by those feeling under the weather.

The manufacturers have confirmed that they have switched up the composition of the drink after one customer went as far as saying the new formula made it taste like “disinfectant”. Energy drinks enthusiasts may notice that the Original and Orange varieties of Lucozade have a “more zingy taste” to them following changes brought about by consumer demand.

Whilst the amount of sugar in each bottle has not been changed, aspartame, the sweetener previously used in the recipe of the drink, has been swapped for sucralose. It comes following some worrying news about the artificial sweetener, linking it to both cancer and type 2 diabetes.

When it first came on the scene, the drink was called Glucozade, and was marketed towards sick people who needed energy to recover from illnesses, such as colds or flu.

Its name was changed to the one many of us are familiar with just two years later in 1929, and was bought by Beechams in 1938.

“The enhancements to the drinks go live in August and respond directly to key notes that consumers want and enjoy from Lucozade. The new recipes deliver a more “zingy” taste, with a bolder taste for the unique Original flavour and more citrusy, orange note for Orange, giving consumers more of what they love.”



New look packaging!



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Gogglebox fans ‘loving’ FOD stars

Since it first hit our screens back in 2013, Gogglebox has become a Friday night staple for many after a long, tiring week of work. In its decade-long history, it goes without saying that there have been plenty of sad departures and exciting arrivals to the cast of ordinary television critics since Gogglebox first began.

Following the exit of two beloved longtimers on the show, Daniel and Stephen Lustig-Webb, Gogglebox has welcomed two new armchair critics to the fold.

And, rather excitingly, they’re from Gloucestershire. Elaine and her son Seb made their living room debut in the second episode of season 22, which hit the airwaves on Friday night (September 15).



Inspirational Quote

“ When we choose to trust the journey and embrace love and joy, we are free to fly ”

Annicken R Day