

# Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Richmond War Memorial  
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

7<sup>th</sup> February 2025

T&RT

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Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read



# TickerTape - News in Brief

## Road closures in Twickenham ahead of England v France

On Saturday 8 February, England will play France at the Allianz Stadium, kicking off at 4.45pm.

It is anticipated that London, Rugby and Whitton Roads will close between 2.45 and 4.45pm, and then between 6.15 and 8.45pm.

The CPZ will be in operation between 11am and 11pm and shuttle buses will run to the stadium from Richmond and Hounslow East stations.

Live traffic updates will be posted on X/Twitter [@rfuhometurf](https://twitter.com/rfuhometurf) on the day.

[Details of all upcoming events](#) are available on England Rugby's dedicated local webpage.

## Banksy's goat artwork removed from Kew building

The artwork depicting a goat appeared last summer and was the first in a series of animal-based works by Banksy that appeared across London.

The building owners have stated that they had appointed a specialist art restoration company to remove and preserve the artwork.

It is not known what will happen to the goat artwork.



**The Tree Agency**

darryl parkin

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# Local Picture Postcard Column - Part 287

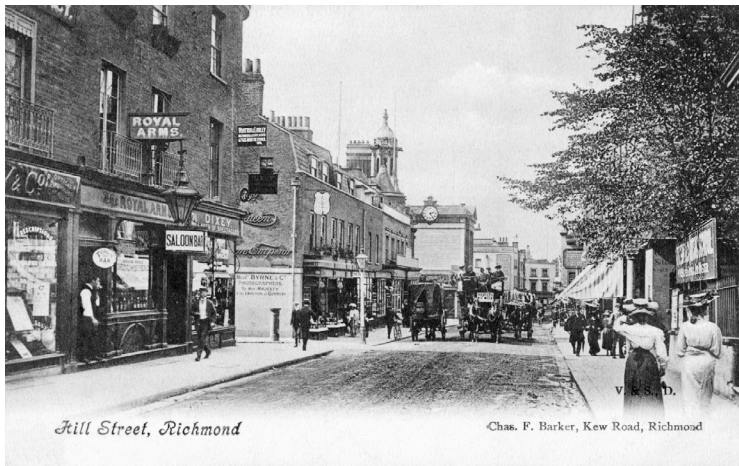
## Royal Arms Pub – Hill Street Richmond

By Alan Winter

The postcards this week all show a pub at the beginning of the last (20<sup>th</sup>) century in a prime position at number 23 Hill Street, Richmond. I doubt if anyone reading this ever had a drink in there but if you did, please let us know!

If you walked over the bridge and turned left towards Richmond town centre, the Royal Arms with its public and saloon bars was the first pub you would come to.

This pub was called the Royal Arms as it started life as the tap room for the Royal Hotel in 1834. The Royal Hotel was converted from a mansion on the site of the most southerly of three Heron Court houses which went down to the river. The Hotel was a competitor of the Talbot Hotel which stood on the top of Richmond Bridge where the Odeon cinema now stands and also the Castle Hotel which stood a little further down Hill Street.



In 1838 extra land was acquired by both Bridge and Hill Streets, and Royal Terrace was built - stretching from the entrance to Heron Court, round the corner into Bridge Street. By the mid 1850s The Royal was split into three houses, one being merged into the new Tower House. The facade of the old mansion was preserved in the modern development.

The last landlord of the Royal Arms that I could find was Sidney Bradford who appears in the 1937 edition of the Kelly's Directory. It seems that the pub did not survive for too long after that.

This part of Hill Street was certainly a busy area in the 1903 to 1915 period when these postcards were published.

With nearly 300 weekly columns behind me in the Tribune I am beginning to run out of postcards of our local area that I haven't already written about. So, my search for old postcards continues. I am always looking for old postcards and old photograph albums etc. The postcards can also be British or Foreign, black and white or coloured and of places or subjects.



If you have any that are sitting unwanted in a drawer, in a box in the loft or in the garage or under a bed, please contact me on 07875 578398 or [alanwinter192@hotmail.com](mailto:alanwinter192@hotmail.com) I would like to see them and I pay cash!



# CrusaderTravel

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[crusadertravel.com](http://crusadertravel.com)

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# Join the Mayor for an entertainment-filled charity dinner

From Mayor of Richmond upon Thames

On Thursday 20 February, residents are invited to join the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames for a delicious three-course dinner in support of his chosen charities Home-Start and Richmond Borough MIND.

Guests to the event, held at Forty Four Sheen Lane Restaurant, will also have the opportunity to enter an exciting raffle and hear from respected guest speaker Dame Sara Thornton, Professor of Modern Slavery Policy at the University of Nottingham and UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner from 2019 to 2022. Dame Sara will talk about her career and experiences.

Event details:

- **Date:** Thursday 20 February 2025
- **Time:** Doors open at 7pm
- **Location:** Forty Four Sheen Lane Restaurant, 44 Sheen Lane, SW14 8LP
- **Price:** £45 (includes a welcome drink)

[Book your tickets now](#)

The Mayor regularly holds events to raise funds for his chosen charities [Home-Start](#) and [Richmond Borough MIND](#).

Find out more about the [Mayor's charity events](#).



# News from Holy Trinity Twickenham

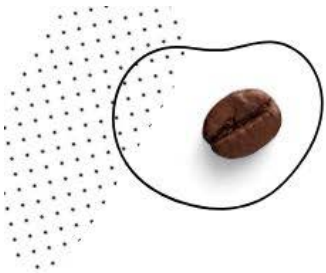
## Youth Social - This Sunday

Youth will be meeting this Sunday from 4.30-6pm in the Green Room and church. We look forward to seeing all youth in Yr. 7 upwards for games, food and friendly chat.

## Upcoming Events

We have several events coming up in the first few months of this year, from an Alpha Course to a quiz night. Click on the following link for more details of all the upcoming events:

[Events](#) – Holy Trinity Twickenham

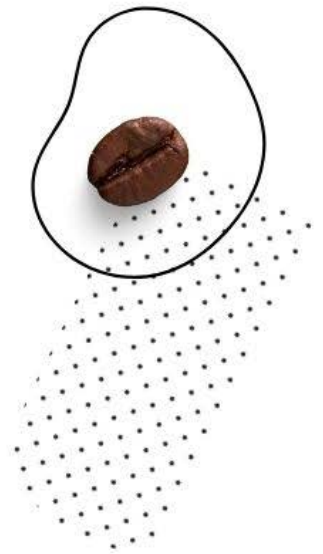


# THE GREEN POP UP CAFE

THURSDAYS

10.30-12.00

The Green Room  
Holy Trinity Twickenham  
Twickenham Green  
TW2 5TS



A community space where  
everyone is welcome to pop in  
for refreshments, friendly chat and activities



HOLY TRINITY TWICKENHAM

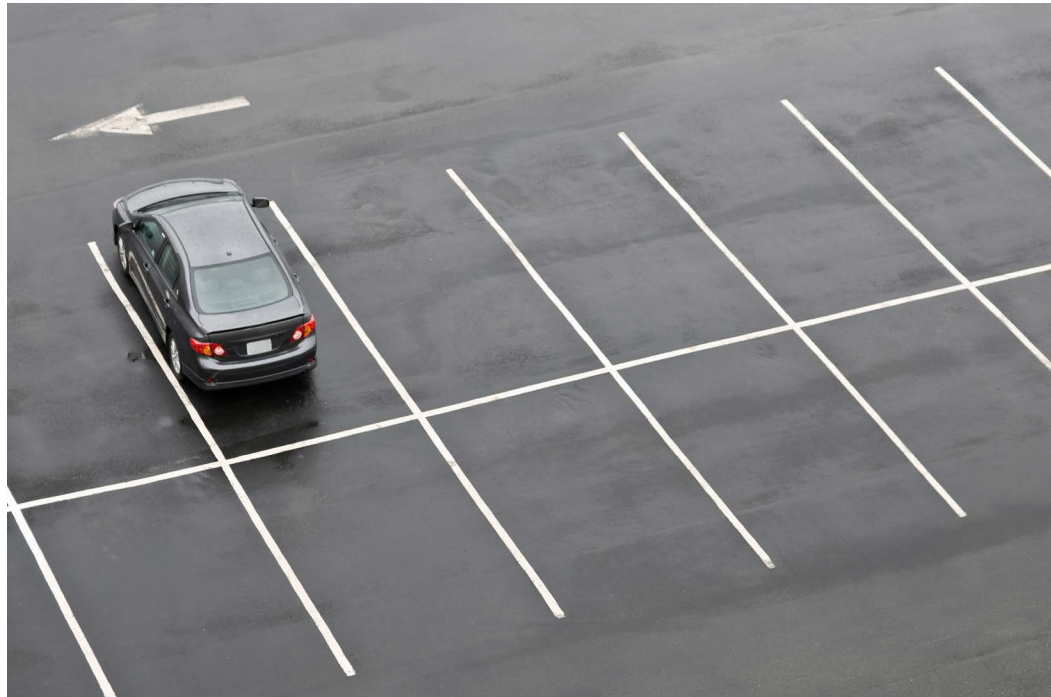
# Richmond's Parking Hike Sparks Backlash

Motorists in Richmond are bracing for another financial blow as the council pushes ahead with an **inflation-busting 11% hike** in parking charges, part of the policy to make parking more expensive than a return bus fare. At the same time, discounts for low-emission vehicles are being scrapped, in what critics have called a “blunt and ill-thought-out” tax on drivers that could deal a fresh blow to struggling high streets.

The measures, approved by the borough's Transport and Air Quality Committee, will come into effect from July, with the council justifying the changes as part of a strategy to reduce car dependency and encourage greener transport options. However, many fear the policy will have unintended consequences, leaving elderly and disabled residents isolated while making it even harder for high street shops and businesses to survive.

## Pricing Drivers Off the Road

The council's rationale for the parking fee hike is that car use should not be cheaper than public transport. A report presented to councillors noted that, at present, “a return bus fare costs £3.50, while parking in some locations remains cheaper than this.” The 11% increase, officials argue, is designed to address this disparity.



Yet local businesses and residents were quick to

condemn the move, warning that it would only drive shoppers away from Richmond's town centres and further accelerate the decline of the high street. “This is economic madness,” said one shop owner in Twickenham. “Retail is already on its knees, and now they're effectively telling customers to stay away. People will just go to out-of-town retail parks where they can park for free, or shop online instead.”

The disparity between Richmond's parking charges and those in neighbouring boroughs is striking. In Kingston, a three-hour stay at the Seven Kings multistorey car park costs just £3.75. By contrast, parking for the same duration at Richmond's Paradise Road car park will cost a staggering £9.80 from July—more than two and a half times the price. Many now fear shoppers will simply take their business elsewhere, further hollowing out Richmond's high streets.

## No More Incentives for Electric Vehicles

Adding to residents' frustration is the decision to scrap discounted permits for electric and hybrid vehicles, a policy that had long been championed to encourage the transition to greener



transport. Council officials insist that the subsidy has served its purpose and is no longer necessary, as more people have switched to electric. A report accompanying the decision noted that the discount was “providing a significant subsidy to certain car users, many with more costly new electric or hybrid vehicles, at the expense of other road users”.

However, residents who invested in electric cars in good faith now feel unfairly penalised. “We were encouraged to go green, and now we’re being punished for it,” said one frustrated driver.

### **A Blow to the Elderly and Vulnerable**

While the council insists that the changes are designed to encourage public transport use, critics argue that the policy ignores the reality for many residents who have little choice but to drive as public transport coverage is poor in many suburban parts of the borough.

For elderly people and those with mobility issues, the increased parking costs could mean a loss of independence, as public transport is often impractical or unavailable in certain areas. “My mother is in her 80s and relies on her car to get around,” said one local resident. “She can’t stand around waiting for a bus in the cold, and she certainly can’t carry heavy shopping home from the supermarket. This isn’t just an inconvenience—it’s going to cut people off from their communities.”

### **Will More Gardens Be Lost?**

An overlooked consequence of higher on-street parking fees is the increased pressure on homeowners to convert front gardens into private driveways to avoid escalating costs.

Richmond has long prided itself on its attractive residential streets, lined with trees and well-maintained front gardens. However, the financial burden of higher parking charges could force more homeowners to pave over their green spaces to provide off-street parking, leading to an irreversible loss of greenery and biodiversity.

“People will feel forced to install driveways just to escape these unfair charges,” said one concerned resident. “The council claims to be protecting the environment, but they’re actually encouraging more paving and concrete at the expense of trees and gardens. It’s completely contradictory.”

Environmentalists have long warned against the creeping loss of front gardens, citing the increased risk of flooding, damage to local wildlife habitats, and the overall decline in Richmond’s leafy character. If these parking permit hikes go ahead, many fear the borough’s streets could be permanently altered.

### **Revenue Raising:**

There is increasing suspicion that the council’s true motivation is financial rather than environmental. As the report underscores, the council currently collects over £17 million from parking and traffic violations, and this year’s fee increase is expected to yield the council an additional £1 million. Many believe this initiative focuses less on reducing congestion and more on addressing gaps in the council’s finances. “This is merely another stealth tax,” remarked one motorist. “If they genuinely cared about air quality and reducing emissions, they would improve public transport instead of penalising people for driving.”



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# ENGLAND FRANCE



**ALLIANZ STADIUM | SAT 8<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**  
**KO 16:45 | LIVE ON ITV**



# Council Leader Blasted by MP Over Pensford Field 'Debacle'

Richmond Park and North Kingston MP, Sarah Olney, has publicly condemned Council Leader Gareth Roberts' decision for terminating the lease of the Pensford Field Environmental Trust (PFET) prematurely and transferring it to the mental health charity Dose of Nature (DoN) without prior consultation. Her letter states "The Council's reputation in Kew has been severely damaged by this debacle..."

## The Pensford Field Controversy

For over three decades, PFET has managed Pensford Field, transforming it into a cherished ecological and educational site. The Council's abrupt decision to end PFET's lease in September 2025, two and a half years early, and reassign it to DoN has been met with widespread criticism. Critics argue that the Council failed to consult with PFET, local schools, nurseries, and residents before making this decision.

## Sarah Olney's Response

In December 2024, Sarah Olney wrote to Council Leader Gareth Roberts, expressing her concerns over the lease termination and the lack of consultation. She emphasised the importance of transparency and community involvement in such decisions. Olney also questioned the long-term future of the site once DoN's proposed lease concludes.

## Community Backlash

The decision has led to significant backlash from the Kew community. Residents and local organisations have expressed their dissatisfaction with the Council's handling of the situation, stating that this debacle has severely damaged trust with the council in Kew.

## Council's Justification

Council Leader Gareth Roberts has acknowledged shortcomings in how the decision was communicated but maintains that transferring the lease to DoN is in the community's best interest, citing the growing need for mental health services in the borough. He assured that the new lease would include provisions to maintain the natural environment and ensure continued access for current users.

## A Shift in Liberal Left Priorities

The Pensford Field controversy highlights a broader shift in priorities among left-leaning political groups, including the Liberal Democrats. Where environmental causes once stood as a central pillar of progressive politics, there is an increasing tendency to champion other social causes at their expense. The decision to prioritise a mental health charity over an environmental one at Pensford Field is emblematic of this new trend. While mental health support is undeniably important, it should not come at the cost of green spaces that benefit both wildlife and public well-being. In recent years, the Liberal Democrats have increasingly modelled themselves on the American Democratic Party, shifting further leftward and away from the centre ground. This ideological transformation has influenced their policy decisions, often prioritizing new progressive causes over traditional environmental concerns. The Pensford Field case is a prime example of how this shift is playing out at the local level, where environmental conservation is being sidelined in favour of other more trendy social priorities.

## Internal Divisions and Electoral Consequences

The controversy over Pensford Field has also exposed deep divisions within the local Liberal Democrats. While some party members support the reassignment of the lease, others have voiced concerns over the lack of transparency and the alienation of environmentally conscious voters. These internal fractures have turned the situation into a full-blown Liberal-Democrat vs. Liberal-Democrat clash, with different factions of the party at odds over the issue.

With mounting criticism over the handling of Pensford Field, there is a real risk that the Liberal Democrats could lose control of key council seats in the upcoming 2026 local elections. The infighting has weakened the party's local standing, and unless they can present a united front and address the concerns of their voter base, they could see their grip on Richmond Council slip away.

The Pensford Field lease controversy underscores the tension between environmental stewardship and the provision of mental health services. While both are vital, the manner in which the Council has handled this transition has led to significant community unrest and criticism from local leaders, including MP Sarah Olney. As the situation develops, it remains crucial for the Council to engage transparently with all stakeholders to rebuild trust and ensure the best outcomes for the community.

# The Renters Rights Bill

By Jonathan Hulley

Conservative Parliamentary Spokesman, Twickenham



Most people understand that when a landlord wishes to regain possession of their property, there needs to be a fair balance between their rights and those of their tenants. However, should that result in the need to go to court to enforce those rights, landlords often face long and expensive delays.

Whilst the last Conservative government introduced legislation to end the so-called ‘no fault eviction’ rights that landlords have under S21 of the 1988 Housing Act, they intended to delay this coming into effect because they recognised a capacity problem in the courts system. **The new Labour government is intent to press on with changing the law regardless, which will lead to increased pressure on the courts.**

**I argue that the First Tier Property Tribunal should be used in more landlord and tenant legal disputes, speeding up justice and relieving pressure on the County Court system.**

The Renters Rights Bill had its Third Reading in the House of Commons on 14 January and is now undergoing scrutiny in the Lords. This Bill will become an Act of Parliament soon, bringing about some of the most substantial changes to landlord and tenant law since 1980.

Many fear there will be unintended consequences such as fewer homes to rent, due to Landlords withdrawing from the market, and higher rents for those who manage to secure accommodation.

But should landlords be concerned? Yes, because these reforms give tenants more rights and security at the cost of landlords.

**The most significant change is the abolition of the Section 21 “no-fault” eviction process.**

Landlords will then only be able to gain possession for a limited number of reasons under existing housing legislation. That’s for rent arrears, breaching other tenancy terms, causing damage to the landlord’s property, exhibiting antisocial behaviour or needing the property for personal use, redevelopment or sale.

It must be said that most residential tenancies are problem free. The tenant pays rent on time, looks after the property, and leaves by giving notice.

However, a minority of tenancies go wrong for one reason or another, and landlords have no choice but to seek possession in the courts. The legal grounds for possession safeguard landlords against the many issues that can go wrong and assist landlords in successfully evicting a problem tenant.

**Rightly, the primary concern for landlords has been the backlog of court cases, particularly in the County Court where the vast majority of landlord and tenant cases are heard, causing delays in landlords getting access to justice.**

Housing Minister Matthew Pennycook has pledged that the Government will invest in additional court capacity to manage the expected increased demand once Section 21 is banned – but his warm words are meaningless given that some cases are already taking over a year to be heard.

As the Association of Landlords recently pointed out, their primary concern remains the ability of the courts to deal with the increased workload that will come their way without Section 21 evictions.

**They say that without court reform and improvement, the new system won’t work well and deliver fair access to justice.**



## **Is the County Court system fit for purpose?**

**The County Courts are buckling under the strain of excessive caseloads.**

The Law Society, the independent professional body for solicitors, recently published data showing an access to civil justice crisis for individuals, landlords and small businesses as the County Courts battle delays.

Some cases can take more than a year (54 weeks) to go to a hearing or trial. Analysis of the figures shows that the time it takes for some landlord-tenant disputes, to be heard has risen by 30 weeks since 2010, despite 2,000 fewer cases than 14 years ago. While for more complex, higher value cases, it now takes more than a year and a half (80 weeks) to reach trial.

These figures lay bare an emerging crisis at the heart of our civil justice system and undermine efficient and effective access to justice, a cornerstone Conservative principle.

### **A potential solution**

So, what can be done?

**Well, the answer may lie in expanding the First-Tier Tribunal (Property Chamber) role to hear more, perhaps all future landlord-tenant cases.**

The First-Tier Tribunal already provides landlords, tenants, and leaseholders with a means to resolve property-related disputes if other forms of alternative dispute resolution, such as mediation, have failed. The First Tier Tribunal is also a more user-friendly forum for members of the public and more cost-effective.

The First-Tier Tribunal (FTT) hears disputes about various issues, mainly residential and tenancies, and land registration. These include the determination of rent levels, for example, what is a fair or market-rate rent increase, financial penalties under tenancy agreements, rent repayment orders and refusals of the right to buy a council home.

The FTT can decide some cases without needing to be heard. These decisions are based on the weight of evidence presented in the application and are known as 'paper decisions'.

A paper decision is usually reached within 6 weeks of the application being received, a much shorter time than the typical year-long wait for justice in the County Court. If an oral hearing takes place, FTT panel may ask questions, and each party can do so to the other as well.

Once the hearing has concluded, a decision is usually reached within 6 weeks, again a much shorter time than the year-long wait for justice in the County Court.

**As a Conservative, I believe in efficient and effective access to justice. Unfortunately, the County Court system is currently not effective enough.**

The Renters Rights Bill represents a pivotal moment for landlord-tenant relations in England and Wales.

But its objectives are bound to fail unless the inefficiencies within the County Court system are addressed. Expanding the role of the First-Tier Tribunal offers a pragmatic pathway to achieving this goal, ensuring that justice is both timely and accessible.

**As a senior housing lawyer with over 20 years' experience of conducting housing litigation in the County Court and the FTT, I know from experience that the FTT can deliver efficient and cost-effective justice.**

**As has been said so many times in the past, justice delayed is justice denied.** Shifting landlord and tenant disputes from an overburdened County Court system to the FTT will deliver more efficient justice to landlords and tenants alike.

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CLOSED ON BANK HOLIDAYS

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TWICKENHAM



PLEASE COME TO OUR PAY AS YOU FEEL  
COMMUNITY CAFES AND FOOD SURPLUS HUBS

BRING A BAG TO TAKE SURPLUS HOME

## MONDAY

11.30AM - 1.30PM ETNAEAST TWICKENHAM  
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB  
2.30 - 4.30 PM LINDEN HALL, HAMPTON  
FOOD SURPLUS HUB

## TUESDAY

11.00 AM - 12.00PM NOBLE GREEN WINES, HAMPTON HILL  
FOOD SURPLUS HUB

11.30AM - 1.30PM HAM YOUTH CENTRE, HAM  
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

## WEDNESDAY

11.30AM - 1.30 PM ETNA, EAST TWICKENHAM  
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

11.30AM - 1.30PM CAMBRIAN COMMUNITY CENTER, RICHMOND  
COMMUNITY CAFE

## THURSDAY

11.30AM - 1.30PM LINDEN HALL, HAMPTON  
TAKEAWAY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

## FRIDAY

11.30AM - 1.30PM ETNA, EAST TWICKENHAM  
COMMUNITY CAFE & FOOD SURPLUS HUB

[WWW.TRJFPTWICKENHAM.COM](http://WWW.TRJFPTWICKENHAM.COM)



# ‘Clean Your Own Augean Stables First’

## Councillors Criticise Government Oversight

By James Knight

30 January 2025 - Richmond Council’s **Audit, Standards, and Statutory Accounts Committee** convened this week to address critical financial matters, audit qualifications, and concerns regarding ethical oversight.

### Audit Findings and Financial Oversight

The discussion was dominated by the update on the council’s 2023-24 financial accounts, with auditors EY presenting their latest findings. While the 2022-23 accounts were signed off on schedule, the committee was informed that the 2023-24 audit remains in its final stages, with completion expected by the end of February.



However, concerns were raised regarding uncorrected misstatements, including issues related to pension scheme

valuations and property asset assessments. An unadjusted £5.5 million discrepancy related to Collis School was corrected, but committee members pressed for clarity on a separate unresolved valuation issue. Despite reassurances from EY representatives that these misstatements were not material, the presence of ongoing estimation gaps prompted calls for tighter controls in future audits.

Notably, the audit remains **qualified**, continuing a trend from previous years. This qualification indicates that while progress has been made, significant concerns persist over the reliability of some financial reporting elements. The council was advised that further structural improvements were necessary to move toward an unqualified audit status in the coming years.

Another area of concern was the council’s assurance ratings. While progress has been made since the previous year’s qualified audit opinion, limited assurance remains in key areas due to unresolved discrepancies from previous reports. The committee was assured that by 2026-27, the council could achieve a fully ‘clean’ audit opinion, provided the current trajectory of improvement continues.

### Standards Report Lacks Key Transparency

Attention also turned to the council’s latest report on standards and complaints against councillors. While the report concluded that overall complaints remained low, some members expressed frustration at lacking a detailed breakdown of the types of complaints received.

Liberal Democrat councillor James Chard pointedly remarked that without categorisation—such as complaints linked to social media misconduct, meeting conduct, or conflicts of interest—the report lacked meaningful analysis. Others echoed the concern, arguing that a more structured breakdown would allow the council to identify and address potential patterns of behaviour requiring intervention.

The council’s monitoring officer defended the report’s approach, stating that trends were not significant enough to merit further breakdowns. Nevertheless, in response to criticism, he agreed to provide a more granular categorisation in future reports.

During the discussion, Councillor John Coombs commented that before the government imposed new rules on local councillors, it should first “clean out their own Augean stables.” His remark drew murmurs of agreement from some committee members, who questioned whether the proposed reforms would apply equally to Westminster.

What was not mentioned at the meeting is the practice of NOT disclosing upheld complaints when an investigation has not been needed due to councillors holding their hands up. Something which has become a get out of jail free card. This includes cases such as that of Councillor Michael Wilson, who was found not to have declared his employment on his register of interests in 2024. (Neeta Sharma -Head of Law, Social Care and Education Team & Deputy Monitoring Officer - said *I have made enquires with councillor Wilson who has updated his register of interest and has apologised for the oversight. In this case, the failure to declare within 28 days is not an issue under Code.*) The current arrangement that draws a veil over upheld complaints may suit the councillors but undermines public confidence in the standards regime at Richmond Council.

### **Governance Reforms and Training Concerns**

The committee also reviewed proposed updates to its terms of reference, which aim to align the council’s governance framework more closely with national best practices. A notable amendment under discussion was whether the chair of the Audit Committee should be required to deliver an annual report to the full council—a move largely supported by committee members.

In a wider debate about governance, concerns were raised about the effectiveness of councillor training, with calls for more structured induction programs and role-specific guidance. Councillor Nancy Baldwin highlighted gaps in the onboarding process, suggesting that new committee members often had to ‘learn on the job’ without sufficient preparatory support.

Further discussions revolved around the government’s ongoing consultation on strengthening standards for local councils, including the potential for harsher sanctions against councillors found guilty of misconduct. The committee agreed to submit feedback, with some members questioning whether proposed reforms would be applied consistently across local and national government bodies.

### **Audit Resources and Risk Management**

On internal audit matters, Richmond’s head of audit, Andrew Hamilton, reported that the council was on track to complete its 2024-25 audit plan. However, resource constraints were highlighted as an ongoing challenge, prompting reliance on external contractors. The issue of risk management also surfaced, with committee members underscoring the need for continuous oversight of high-risk areas, including the ongoing ‘change program’ intended to streamline council operations. Despite these challenges, the committee acknowledged improvements in financial oversight and governance but urged for continued diligence in addressing longstanding issues.

### **Conclusion**

The meeting reflected a council striving for financial and ethical robustness but still facing significant hurdles. While steps have been taken to address prior audit failures and governance concerns, the continued **qualification of the audit** and lack of full transparency in standards reporting underline the need for further reform. As Richmond Council looks ahead to future audits and governance reviews, the committee’s effectiveness in delivering meaningful oversight will remain under close scrutiny.

The committee papers and webcast can be viewed by following the link [HERE](#)



# POLICE LIAISON GROUP MEETING

COME AND MEET YOUR LOCAL POLICE AND SHARE YOUR CONCERNS

**THURSDAY 20TH FEBRUARY 2025**  
**7.30PM**

**BULLEN HALL**  
**BENNET CLOSE**  
**HAMPTON WICK**  
**KT1 4AT**

**HAVE YOUR SAY!**



**Crime** - If you see a crime being committed call **999** for an immediate response.  
This would be you if you are witnessing harm to a person or property.

Low level crime or anti-social behaviour call **101**.  
An example of this may be you find some graffiti outside a building.

**SAFER NEIGHBOURHOODS**  
LOCAL POLICE, LOCAL KNOWLEDGE



**METROPOLITAN POLICE**

Richmond Safer Neighbourhood Teams  
41 London Road Twickenham, TW1 3SY

Safer Neighbourhoods Teams  
Teddington / Hampton Wick / South Teddington

Email: [HamptonWick@met.police.uk](mailto:HamptonWick@met.police.uk)  
[Teddington@met.police.uk](mailto:Teddington@met.police.uk)

X: [@MPSHamptonWick](https://twitter.com/MPSHamptonWick) [@MPSTeddington](https://twitter.com/MPSTeddington)



# Richmond's Crumbling Roads

By James Knight

3 February 2025 – The **Transport and Air Quality Committee** meeting at York House last week saw discussions on a range of key issues, including the cost-effectiveness of Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) changes, an 11% increase in parking fees, and the worsening condition of the borough's roads. Chaired by a somewhat irritable Alexander Ehmann, the meeting covered multiple reports on transport policy, budget allocations, and the future of Richmond's infrastructure.

**A £25,000 Exercise in Bureaucracy?** The review of Kew's Controlled Parking Zones was meant to address longstanding complaints about parking availability and fairness, particularly around Kew Gardens and Brentford FC's match days. Instead, residents have received a minor reshuffle at an eye-watering cost of £25,000. The changes have done little to alleviate the pressures faced by residents, particularly the elderly and those without off-street parking, who continue to struggle to find spaces near their homes. Some residents questioned whether this was simply an exercise in bureaucracy rather than a genuine effort to fix parking problems.

With the council positioning itself as a champion of sustainability, there was little mention of how these changes would encourage greener transport options. Instead, the meeting largely focused on minor administrative adjustments that failed to tackle the root causes of parking stress in the borough.

**Parking Charges Soar 11%:** One of the most controversial announcements was the 11% rise in parking charges set to take effect in July 2025. This increase far exceeds the rate of inflation and raises serious questions about whether the council is using parking as a revenue-raising tool rather than a means to manage traffic effectively.

Despite the council's claims that higher charges will encourage more sustainable travel, the lack of viable alternatives—such as frequent public transport capacity or better cycling infrastructure—undermines this argument. For many residents, driving remains a necessity rather than a luxury, and the latest price hikes will simply make everyday life more expensive.

Even penalty charge notices (PCNs) are expected to become a bigger cash cow for the council, with projections suggesting an increase of £615,000 in revenue from fines. Critics argue that while the council talks about reducing car use, its policies focus more on squeezing money from residents than meaningfully improving green transport options.

**Crumbling Roads and Empty Promises:** While residents are being charged more to park their cars, the state of the borough's roads continues to decline. The meeting confirmed that Richmond's road network is in what has been described as “managed decline”, with long-standing underinvestment leading to worsening conditions.

A recent emergency repair on a collapsed section of the towpath between Richmond Lock and Kew Gardens has already cost the council £257,000. Reinstatement work will cost far more—a stark reminder that failing to maintain infrastructure properly only leads to higher costs down the line.



The council's latest planned highway maintenance programme acknowledges that many roads have reached a critical state, yet the budget remains insufficient to deal with the growing backlog of repairs. Residents continue to report potholes, failing pavements, and poor road surfaces, yet little is being done to address these concerns in a meaningful way.



This situation is particularly ironic given Richmond's environmental rhetoric. While the council is happy to promote cycle hangars and other green transport schemes, it has failed to ensure that roads are safe enough for cyclists to use.

**Corporate Plan Report:** The council's *Corporate Plan Mid-Year Performance Report* was also discussed at the meeting, outlining progress on transport and air quality initiatives. While the report highlighted improvements in some areas—such as new pedestrian crossings and increased bike parking—it also acknowledged that key targets remain unmet.

Notably, air quality objectives for nitrogen dioxide levels have still not been achieved, despite the borough's green ambitions. The report also detailed efforts to encourage walking and cycling, but with roads in poor condition and public transport reliability remaining a concern, critics have been questioning whether the council's long-term strategy was translating into meaningful action. The meeting made it clear that while the council is keen to position itself as progressive-thinking and environmentally responsible, many of its initiatives are struggling to keep pace with residents' expectations. With the Green Party snapping at their heels, the Liberal Democrats risk being eclipsed by them unless they can up their game.

**A Council Out of Touch?** Despite repeated claims about sustainability and community engagement, the council's transport policies appear increasingly disconnected from its residents' everyday realities. Many left the meeting questioning whether the borough's leadership is more interested in raising revenue through fines and fees than in genuinely improving transport and infrastructure. Until the council prioritises real investment in roads and practical green solutions, residents will continue to bear the cost of its failing policies.

Currently, Richmond's drivers and pedestrians are challenged to navigate a borough where the roads are crumbling, parking fees are escalating to unsustainable levels, and the aspirations of a greener future remain mere empty promises. It's time for real action and commitment to improve our infrastructure and restore faith in the community's future.

You can read the papers of meeting and watch the webcast by clicking [HERE](#)

# Next week at Richmond Council

On Monday evening, the **Adult Social Services, Health and Housing Committee** meet to discuss; (1) adult social care annual report, (2) quarterly budget Monitoring, (3) revenue budget and fees & charges for 2025/26, Richmond housing associations annual audit report, (4) Richmond sexual and reproductive health strategy, (5) joint health overview and scrutiny committee updates. The meeting commences at 7.00 pm, at York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

On Tuesday evening, the **Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee** will meet with the following items on the agenda: (1) domestic retrofit report, (2) the Richmond upon Thames climate and nature strategy, the Richmond adaptation and resilience strategy, the Richmond retrofit strategy, (3) housing delivery test, (4) leisure infrastructure plan, (5) arboriculture contract, (6) quarterly monitoring report, (7) budget report 2025/26. The meeting commences at 7.00 pm, at York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

On Thursday afternoon, **The Finance, Policy and Resources Committee** will meet to discuss; (1) connect to work scheme for the disabled, (2) consultation on the empty home and second home property premiums, (2) corporate monitoring report, (3) budget report 2025/26 including fees & charges, (4) council tax for 2025/26, (5) Richmond capital program and funding review, (6) treasury management strategy. The meeting commences at 7.00 pm, at York House, Twickenham.

For full details, please follow the link [HERE](#)

How to participate: We encourage all members of the public who live or work in the borough to participate. You can submit questions or speak on an item on the agenda. To ask a question, submit it by noon two working days in advance. To speak, you must register by noon the working day before the meeting.

For further details on how to participate, please follow the link [HERE](#)

## Celebrate Valentine's Day with Age UK Richmond

From Age UK Richmond

Come along to Age UK Richmond to celebrate love and enjoy an afternoon filled with delicious treats and great company!

Residents are welcome to join [Age UK Richmond](#) for a delightful afternoon tea at Whitton Social Centre. This event is a wonderful opportunity to socialise, make new friends, and enjoy a relaxing time in a friendly atmosphere.



- **Date:** Friday 14 February 2025
- **Time:** 2 to 4 pm
- **Price:** £10 - includes sandwiches, cake, tea, and fizz
- **Location:** Whitton Social Centre, 111A Kneller Road, Twickenham TW2 7DT

To book your place, please contact the organisers on Tuesdays and Fridays at 020 8894 4963 or email [surinder.kaur@ageukrichmond.org.uk](mailto:surinder.kaur@ageukrichmond.org.uk).



## Some Foodie Valentine's Gift Ideas

It's not long now till Valentine's (or 'Galentine's', for some) Day. The shops are full of all sorts of gift and food suggestions, so I thought I'd share a few recommendations with you - in a range of budgets.

As a precursor to your meal, try a little hot stuff with these new Sriracha flavoured seaweed crisps from **Emily Crisps**. They have no artificial colouring or flavours, they are less than 100 calories a bag, which is an added bonus if you're planning one of those special meal deals (see below). Available in 18g and 50g packs and priced at £1.10 and £2 respectively, Emily Sriracha Crisps join the current line up of Sea Salt, Salt & Vinegar and Cheese flavours, currently available from Tesco, Waitrose, Co-op, Holland & Barrett, Ocado and Amazon. The spicy flavour of Sriracha comes from capsaicin which is known to enhance bodily sensations, another key ingredient is garlic which can improve blood circulation. With hot sauces known to boost endorphins and dopamine ...the rest is up to you.



Still keeping the prices low, Sweet Hearts, these tasty little cakes from **Bonne Maman**, are individually wrapped, so perfect for a fun little treat to pop into your Valentine's or child's lunchbox. Available in two flavours: **Chocolate Sweet Hearts** or **Marbled Sweet Hearts**, they're made using the finest ingredients to a traditional French recipe. The **Chocolate Sweet Hearts** are soft vanilla flavoured sponge, topped with milk chocolate, while the **Marbled Sweet Hearts**, combine vanilla and chocolate sponge. Individually wrapped and in packs of seven, these



Bonne Maman treats are available at around £3 a pack from Waitrose, Sainsbury's and Tesco

If you're going to be passing a branch of **Ole & Steen**, check out this delicious limited edition Valentine Social, decorated with pink icing and pink chocolate hearts, the Danish bakery has added a touch of romance to its soft, sweet, buttery cinnamon dough, it's available now till 17 February in three sizes: £4.65 a slice, £12.45 half and the whole Social is £20.95



Feeling fruity? Another Scandi treat for your sweetheart is from Danish confectioner **LAKRIDS BY BÜLOW**. The new **LOVE SELECTION BOX** offers something for every taste, with fruity options including passion fruit and peaches, along with decadent dark & sea salt and classic caramel. Each box features a mix of textures - chewy, crispy, and crunchy, all made from natural ingredients. There's a new small box option too. 450g £39, 175g £16.95 available to order online and in store at Selfridges, John Lewis, Harvey Nichols, lakridsbybulow.co.uk, and at the LAKRIDS BY BÜLOW stores in Canary Wharf, Monmouth Street Seven Dials, and Westfield

If you want to show someone that your relationship has really made its mark on you, how about a bottle of this delicious **Maker's Mark Bourbon**? Maker's Mark is America's only handmade American whiskey, known not only for its soft, wheat-forward character, but also its iconic red-wax-dipped bottle. Using wheat, rather than rye, as the second grain in its recipe gives a less spicy character than many bourbons, resulting in a soft and sweet character with a touch of fruit. £33 a 70cl bottle from Tesco, Morrisons or The Whisky Exchange.





I was lucky enough to visit the **Robert Mondavi** vineyard when I was in California, and love the bold, tannic reds. Whether you're planning a night in with a home cooked gourmet meal, or wanting to give a lovely present to a red wine aficionado, this stonkingly good red will fit the bill. It isn't cheap, but do consider what it would cost in a restaurant. **The Prisoner Red Blend 2021** is a vibrant wine inspired by Napa Valley's Italian heritage. Combining Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petite Sirah, Syrah, and Merlot, it offers notes of blackberry, dark cherry, sweet spices, and a smooth, balanced finish. Around £56 a bottle from VINVM and other fine wine stores

There's still time to surprise your loved one with a lovely hamper, (and you might be allowed to share it!). **Hampers.com** has a brand new website, which makes it even easier to choose the most appropriate gift by occasion, content or recipient. There's something for all tastes and budgets and the contents are always beautifully packed. I was very taken with the idea of the 'Hot Stuff' (Chilli lovers) hamper at £39, so that you can show your sweetheart how you feel about them! Or there's "Charcuterie and Fizz" - a lovely snacky one to start the evening including a really unusual bottle of Argentinian fizz to accompany the range of indulgent savoury treats £69. There's the most fabulous range available [here](#)



Other Valentine hampers are available from [The British Hamper Company](#) and at some stores like **John Lewis** and **Marks and Spencer**



Talking of **M&S**, we've been excitedly waiting to find out what they are offering for this year's **M&S Valentine's Meal Deal** and it certainly doesn't disappoint. It's unveiled its "most luxurious" Valentine's Day menu to date, with returning favourites and new dishes. This year's romantic three course meal with drink and side dish is £25, with a maximum saving of £17.50. The extensive offering is seven starters, eight main courses, eight side dishes, seven desserts and 15 drinks and even includes both vegan and pescatarian options.

All the supermarkets seem to have a meal deal: **Tesco** has two options at two different prices. At larger Tesco stores, the deal offers a sharing menu for two with a starter, main, side, dessert, and drink for £18, but with a Tesco Clubcard. However, those with a smaller appetite may want to head to a Tesco Express Store for the same menu excluding a starter for £12. (And I'm told the included cocktail alone costs more than the entire Tesco Express menu.) **Waitrose** is offering a £20 three-course meal for two from its No.1 range, including a drink. **Sainsbury's** has an £18 deal which serves two and includes a starter, main course, side dish, dessert and drink. **Asda** is offering shoppers the chance to enjoy a dine-in meal for two including starter, main course, two sides, dessert and drink for just £11.97. At the **Co-op** couples can pick up a main course and side each and a bottle of booze for £10 if they are members or £12 otherwise.

There's still plenty of time to check out other suitable gifts and meal deals - and of course, almost every local restaurant has a special Valentine's menu.

Have fun, whatever you decide to do!



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# Traveller's Tales 169



## Holidays Ahead

Doug Goodman Seeks Holiday Inspiration.

We're all rushing to book Spring and Summer holidays if the crowds at the Destinations Holiday and Travel Show and the comments from the companies exhibiting there are any indication. This annual show, held at Olympia and in Manchester, is the perfect event at which to collect brochures, meet the tour operators and get first-hand information, listen to talks from travel experts and get advice for your next holiday. Over 200 holiday companies were exhibiting ranging from cruise to ski and from safari to spa breaks. Advice from someone who knows about and has visited your chosen destination is so valuable when you decide on the type of holiday you want.



Visitors on the Riviera Holidays Stand



Experts from Kirker Holidays



Sunvil Holidays

**TOP TIPS:** My first visit was to the stand of the award winning holiday and cruise company Riviera Holidays. I wanted an update on a Rhone cruise I have booked...but more about that trip in due course. Next I called on friends from Sunvil Holidays based in Isleworth, Sue John and Noel Josephides. Top places are the Greek Islands especially The Dodecanese where prices are reasonable and crowded beaches are few. The company is introducing holidays to the Caribbean for the first time. Kirker Holidays specialises in culture, art history and gastronomy with expert guides and historians on their tours. Kirker organised a wine tasting session at the show with expert Valentina. Italy is their number one destination, according to manager Hisham Mahmoud. The 'once in a lifetime' journey on The Orient Express is proving very popular. Rickshaw Travel offers independent, tailor-made and sustainable holidays to Europe, Asia, Central and South America. McKinleyKidd based in Scotland provides highly acclaimed, tailor-made holidays throughout the UK. Joanna their expert, described a rail tour of the UK, which really appealed to my love of rail travel. Then it was back to the Kirker wine tasting for a glass of Alsace wine.



The Rickshaw Team



McKinley Kidd Stand



Wine Tasting with Valentina, Kirker Holidays

### TIME TO BOOK:

When you have decided upon your type of holiday, destination, dates, duration and budget visit a travel agent to get-up-to-date advice before making your booking. There's nothing better than getting personal service from an expert behind a desk. Many years ago there were eight travel agencies in Twickenham: all disappearing after the arrival of the Internet and on-line booking. Now, just one travel shop remains and that's Crusader Travel by St. Mary's church. Drop in for any holiday help you might need.



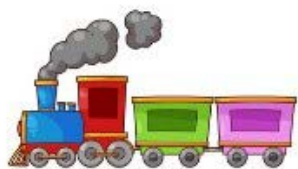
Bruce at Crusader Traveller



# Curating Travel Is My Passion

By Bruce Lyons

*Travel Curated*



*By Bruce*



Over time travel has evolved as has our use of instant means of communication. Our great grandparents would have up to a year planning a trip to nearby Europe, let alone the more adventurous trips to the Holy Land, Africa and more distant lands. Today it is all a click away! Then, in the “Golden Age of Travel” you had to do it by post/telegrams – hire carriages/ships & consider provisions, just endless!

Today travel is available to all, considered part of the fabric of modern living, often regrettably, the experiences are not always fully appreciated.

The choice is mind blowing and there is a plethora of pursuits and interests you can join across the World.

Small Groups -escorted by local experts. Short Scientific trips/ Musical Tours/Gardening/the list goes on. The biggest explosion is in the Expedition Ships and the Adventure Markets and it is in this area that I have the most fun- joining up one trip to another and embracing the different protocols and disciplines and managing the whole as a seamless journey.

When you do these trips it is not only possible to take advantage of the different companies ability to keep costs to a reasonable level but also making it possible to satisfy “all the family” as in today`s world I often find that whilst parents that need “R and R” to recharge the batteries the Teens need experiences, so it is good to combine the different products. Just this week I combined a Galapagos Expedition itinerary with an Upper Amazon “add on “with stop in the middle – joining them all up is the tricky bit – but also a skill I enjoy. Our Great Great Grandparents would often wait over a week or more to make connections (and enjoy the break) – that`s not often possible today or even necessary.

Having worked in the Travel Business since the 1950`s I have witnessed all these remarkable changes and enjoy using all my experiences to make really memorable trips for all our clients. You may have some ideas but not sure how to string it together – drop by, we are open from 11.00 daily and would be delighted to see you. We have our little travel laboratory off the delightful square at 58 Church Street, where the spring bulbs we planted in Winter are just coming out 😊

# You and your chocolate bar

By Deep Patel

~Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper~

Once you have been running a shop for as long as my family have, you acquire a supreme and very specialist skill that very few other occupations would allow you to obtain...you may be thinking I am talking about the skill of providing five-star customer service, the skill of knowing what your customers want to buy before they have even picked it off the shelf or maybe you're thinking the skill of being a generally understanding and charming person? Well, yes of course, we shopkeepers do end up possessing all of those skills naturally, however, for the case of this article, that isn't the supreme and specialist skill that I am talking about...can you guess what specialist skill I am actually talking about?

What if I was to tell you that through putting in years of working as a shopkeeper in Twickenham, I have acquired the ability to accurately describe an individual's personality and attitude towards life based solely on the chocolate bar they frequently buy or their favourite chocolate bar? Seems pretty impossible right? Well, it takes many years of observational chocolate selling before one is able to acquire this skill, but I am proud to say, I have achieved this rare and rewarding specialist skill from the chocolate-gods of the universe and it has been really useful in guiding me further on how to approach and speak to that particular customer in a way that best suits them and their individual personality. It's blooming marvellous! Who would have thought that your choice of favourite chocolate bar would be able to say so much about you?

In a WORLD EXCLUSIVE, I want to share with the readers of The Twickenham and Richmond Tribune some of the secrets of some well-known chocolate bars and what they say about your personality and attitude towards life if you choose them as your favourite chocolate bar...

## **KitKat:**

Those who choose a KitKat as their bar of choice tend to prefer life to be kept simple. They like to stick to familiar things in life and are usually rather cautious people. They often like to read and tend to keep their circle of friends small and close. KitKat lovers tend to generally be tidy people who take pride in being clean and tidy. Are you a KitKat lover?



## **Cadbury Fruit & Nut:**

Those who choose a Cadbury Fruit and Nut as their bar of choice tend to favour variety in life. They are traditional people, but also modern too. They like to go out and socialise with friends and quite often have an interest in music. They tend to be open to try things and are often not afraid of saying what they like in life. They like to often be a little different and generally do whatever they want to in life. Are you a Cadbury Fruit & Nut lover?





### **Cadbury Caramel:**

Those who choose a Cadbury Caramel as their bar of choice tend to enjoy the finer things in life. They are often people who would prefer an evening on the sofa watching a good film and eating a take away more than perhaps going out for a run or to the gym. They can be spontaneous often act impulsively but tend to have a more relaxed outlook and don't think too much about the future as much as valuing the present time. They also tend to be predominantly female for some reason and also like to enjoy themselves in life. Are you a Cadbury Caramel lover?



### **Crunchie Bar:**

Those who choose a Crunchie bar as their bar of choice tend to be fun-loving and young at heart. They usually have quite a good sense of humour and tend to generally be liked by others. They tend to care less about what others think about them and more about what they care about and like in life. They like to be different and they are not afraid of new experiences. They are good to have a friend and will be thoughtful with things that others may miss. They tend to be generally happy and care about those around them. Are you a Crunchie bar lover?



This highlights the fact that every choice you make says something about you...every choice. As a shopkeeper, I see it all the time, the descriptions may not always fit...but rest assured...the vast majority of times they actually do...after all...you are what you eat!

## ***Remember...***

***“Every choice you make says something about you...”***

### **CREATURE KINDNESS TIP REGARDING SPIDERS...**

To stop spiders residing in your residence purchase high-frequency plug-in pest stopping plugs into each room, buy ones with good reviews online and follow the instructions...they really work if you get the good ones! We stock them at Meet & Deep Newsagents here too, they work really well to keep ALL “pests” away, without harming any...good karma always!

For ANY specific tip to stop any “pest” or insect KINDLY (for good karma/blessings), email me: [thedeepatel@gmail.com](mailto:thedeepatel@gmail.com) or join my Facebook page: “INSECT LOVERS UNITE”

# Creating Carmen

by Clare Norburn

The Telling at OSO Arts Centre, Barnes then on tour until 7<sup>th</sup> March

*Creating Carmen* begins with the strum of Spanish guitar, setting the platform for an exploration of the interplay between creation and creator.

It's meta and it's musical. The creator is Prosper Mérimée, the author and originator of the untameable Carmen, later to be immortalised in Georges Bizet's opera. Here, Mérimée's creation is no figment of his imagination. Carmen, his tormenting muse, is real and exists beyond her pages to take control of her own narrative.



Suzanne Ahmet's Carmen is the heart of the production, carrying herself magnetically, an operatic antihero, part pantomime villain, part tragic figure. Ahmet is every bit as charismatic as one would hope as Carmen, an equal concoction of daring rebellion and doomed romance. Against her, Niall Ashdown's Mérimée is understandably a more subdued presence, a man who is pulled into Carmen's orbit but struggles to keep up with the planetary rotations of her vitality. Overrun by the force of Carmen, and it is Mérimée's who submits to her to do the story's heavy lifting.

The real energy of *Creating Carmen*, however, comes from its musicality. With a duo of Spanish guitars (David Massey and Francisco Correa), a flute, and operatic vocals (both performed in tandem by the supremely talented Emily Andrews), three-piece CarmenCo more than accompany the play, but are a leading character, propelling the play like the bulls of Pamplona. The music is a constant auditory heartbeat that underscores Carmen's domination and where it intertwined with drama this *soi-disant* "concertplay" finds its most compelling rhythm.

As the final Cordoban chords crescendo, there remains a lingering question: does the creator ever truly control their own story, or does it inevitably take on a life of its own?

The answer is clear in director Nicholas Renton's *Creating Carmen*, with its Carmen a character unconfined within original fiction and the lines of this concertplay, seizing her place at the centre of the stage, masterfully parading to musical performance.

As I stepped out into the bitter November air, those Spanish strings still reverberating, I found myself wandering amongst the streetlights of suburbia, their glow accompanied by CarmenCo's melodies following me home.

Read Brent Muirhouse's review at [www.markaspen.com/2025/02/01/creating-carmen](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/02/01/creating-carmen)

Photography courtesy of The Telling





## The Maids

by Jean Genet, translated by Martin Crimp  
Jermyn Street Productions at the Reading Rep Theatre

*The Maids* delves deep into the complexities of identity, power, and social oppression, a raw examination of servitude, resentment, and the destructive power of role-playing. Genet's 1947 classic is brought into stark focus with remarkable intensity to give an unflinching view into the characters psychology, leaving conflicting feelings of pity, discomfort, and fascination.

Two maids, Solange and Claire, engage in elaborate role-playing exercises as they imagine killing their Mistress, while in reality performing demeaning tasks in her service. The tension between fantasy and reality is a fundamental theme, and the small, stark stage highlights the psychological labyrinth in which the characters are trapped.



Anna Popplewell's portrayal of Solange is a masterclass in controlled rage, and repressed emotions simmering below the surface, that maintains a palpable air of tension. Popplewell's nuanced performance makes Solange sympathetic and terrifying in equal measure. Her delicate balance between vulnerability and bitterness is captivating.

Carla Harrison-Hodge, as the Mistress, brings a calculated air of hauteur. She embodies the coldness of superior privileged class, while revealing cracks beneath this facade. Teetering towards caricature, she effectively highlights the absurdity and cruelty inherent in the class structure that the play critiques.

However, it is Charlie Oscar's portrayal of Claire that stands out. Claire is filled with contradictions, pitiful yet comical, tender yet ruthless, and Oscar navigates these complexities with impressive skill. She portrays a trapped vulnerability as Claire desperately tries to assert some form of power in a world where she is constantly humiliated. Yet, as she finds moments of levity her performance shines most brightly, eliciting laughter while evoking a deep sense of pathos.

Cat Fuller's set design is striking in its simplicity. Its white sterility echoes the clinical nature of the Mistress's emotional detachment. In contrast, the dark red flowers fill the room with an oppressive sense of foreboding, of emotional confinement and repressed desires.



Director Annie Kershaw masterfully navigates the power dynamics by constant shifting between absurdist humour and heartbreaking despair. By making intelligent use of the intimate space, she creates a production both claustrophobic and all-consuming. *The Maids* is a delight in direction and performance, an intensely crafted piece, as compelling as it is uncomfortable, forcing one to confront the darkness that lurks in the corners of the human psyche.

Read Sam Martin's review at [www.markaspen.com/2025/02/02/maids-rr](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/02/02/maids-rr)

Photography by Steve Gregson



## Ghost, the Musical

by Dave Stewart and Glen Ballard, book by Bruce Joel Rubin  
Bill Kenwright at the New Wimbledon Theatre and on tour until 5<sup>th</sup> April

Faithfully follows the plot of the hit 1990 film, *Ghost the Musical* delivers a mixed bag of an evening's entertainment. It tells the story of Molly and Sam, a loving couple who have just moved into their dream apartment in Brooklyn with the help of their close friend, Carl (James Mateo-Salt). All is not what it seems when Sam is killed in what appears to be a random mugging, leaving Molly bereft and distraught. Sam is left in a limbo state of despair, soon learning that his death was part of his double-crossing friend's money laundering scheme, and that his beloved Molly is also in danger. He enlists the help of the fraudulent Oda Mae, whose latent psychic powers are so awakened by Sam's insistence that she helps him communicate with Molly and avenge his murder.



However, against the Oscar-winning film the musical adaptation, the stage version felt at times laboured and slow. (Disappointingly the film's iconic *Unchained Melody* motif only made three fleeting appearances.)

As Molly, encapsulating the immense pain of loss and grief, Rebekah Lowings' powerful yet vulnerable voice delivered the musical's signature ballad, *With You*. But, despite her stellar performance, the depth of emotional connection between Sam and Molly didn't feel authentic and convincing. The famous pottery scene felt rather disjointed, although it gave Lowings chance to impress us with her skills on the pottery wheel!

Mark Bailey's designs, along with Richard Pinner's illusions, recreate a terror-inducing haunting of the New York Subway. Here was lost opportunity to further utilise movement and dance in this production, as seen in Josh St Clair's Matrix-like physicality as Sam, which may have injected more connection and emotion between the characters.



Jaqui Dubois' portrayal of Oda Mae gives a welcome change of pace in her lively, fun and gospel-infused renditions of *Are You a Believer* and *I'm Outta Here*. These scenes really stand out and let Dubois give the role her own stamp of comedy and originality, the highlight of the show.

Despite reservations about the re-telling of this classic love story, *Ghost the Musical* makes an enjoyable night out.

Read Thea Diamond's review at [www.markaspen.com/2025/02/05/ghost-musical](http://www.markaspen.com/2025/02/05/ghost-musical)

Photography by Alastair Muir



# YOUNG ACTORS at the MARY WALLACE

February 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>



The Young Actors Company of the Richmond Shakespeare Society will be presenting “**The IT**” - a modern Gothic tale by Vivienne Franzmann - at the Mary Wallace Theatre from February 13<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup>.

Grace conceals a dark secret from her family and friends - something is growing inside her. No, not a baby - she doesn't know what it is, but it expands. It has claws. Grace can't contain it forever and sooner or later something's got to give.

Booking open now at [www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk](http://www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk)

Find the Mary Wallace Theatre on Twickenham's Embankment, close to the Barmy Arms.



## Twickenham Museum

Our new canvas of Pope's Villa in Twickenham looks great!

It will be part of our JMW Turner 250th birthday celebration display coming very soon!



# Murals, Gentrification, and the Battle Over Public Space

Public murals have long been a potent form of artistic expression, transforming otherwise drab urban environments into vibrant, politically charged canvases. From the bold statements on Belfast's Falls Road to Brixton's iconic depictions of Windrush heritage, street art has served as a visual archive of social struggle, resistance, and identity.

Yet, as local councils and developers increasingly champion murals as part of regeneration strategies, the question arises: are these projects genuine acts of cultural celebration, or are they tools of gentrification—designed to make neighbourhoods more palatable to investors while quietly pricing out long-standing communities?

## A Tradition of Protest and Identity

Historically, murals have given voice to communities whose stories are often sidelined. In Northern Ireland, Republican and Loyalist murals have long documented the island's contested history, offering stark, powerful reflections on identity and conflict. In London, the *Brixton Windrush Mural*, painted in 1981 by Brian Barnes, stands as a defiant tribute to the Caribbean immigrants who reshaped post-war Britain. More recently, the *Justice for Grenfell* mural in Ladbroke Grove serves as both a commemoration and an indictment of political negligence.

These works are not mere decorations; they are declarations. But in an era of rapid urban change, the meaning and function of murals are shifting.

## When Art Becomes a Marketing Tool

What happens when murals are no longer subversive, but instead commissioned by councils and private developers? Increasingly, these large-scale public artworks are being deployed as part of "placemaking" initiatives—projects designed to signal that a neighbourhood is "up and coming" rather than to reflect the realities of those who live there.



Hackney and Peckham, once working-class areas, have witnessed a wave of bright, council-approved murals arriving in tandem with soaring property prices and an influx of affluent newcomers. The *Brixton Design Trail*, a local council-backed initiative, introduced a series of such murals to mark the area's transformation. While aesthetically striking, these projects have been criticised for failing to address fundamental issues such as housing shortages and economic inequality.

This practice has been dubbed *artwashing*—a process in which street art is co-opted to smooth the edges of gentrification. Dr. Oli Mould, a lecturer in human geography at Royal Holloway, describes this as an attempt to "rebrand" urban areas in ways that ultimately benefit developers rather than existing communities.

## Twickenham's N6tur3: A Case Study in Controversy

A recent example of the uneasy relationship between murals and urban renewal is unfolding in Twickenham, where plans for a 30-metre-high mural on Regal House have divided opinion. The mural, titled *N6tur3*, has been proposed as part of an international campaign to promote ecosystem restoration, in collaboration with *Street Art for Mankind (SAM)* and the United Nations.

Supporters, including Richmond Council's Cllr James Chard, argue that the mural, inspired by the classical figure of Mother Nature, represents "considerable artistic merit" and could raise awareness of environmental issues. Some residents have welcomed the initiative, seeing it as a bold and modern addition to Twickenham's townscape.



But opposition has been just as vocal. Critics describe the mural as ugly and out of place, arguing that it disrupts the visual balance of Regal House. Others fear the artwork could be repurposed for advertising, particularly given Twickenham's prominence during international rugby events.

The controversy has been exacerbated by Richmond Council's failure to consult residents before commissioning these works. Many locals feel these murals are being imposed upon them without any meaningful engagement, leading to frustration over a lack of transparency and public input. Some argue that while murals may be a visually striking addition, they are not the kind of investment local communities need—or want.

### **Richmond's Mural Boom: Who Benefits**

Twickenham's *N6tur3* mural is part of a wider trend in Richmond upon Thames, where the council has been rolling out a number of large-scale public art projects. Recent commissions include:

**A315 underpass in Whitton**, repainted to highlight Richmond's links with our European twinned towns  
**Regal House in Twickenham**, the site of the proposed *N6tur3* mural promoted by the new owners of the building Akoya

**King Street**, the site of a large Kingfisher mural paid for by the owners of 3-33 King Street, Essential Living  
**Barnes Station**, where new murals aim to enhance the commuter experience, sponsored by Richmond Council through the Community Rail Partnership

On the surface, these projects appear to be positive contributions to the borough's cultural landscape. But their timing and intent have raised eyebrows. Richmond, like much of London, is experiencing a housing crisis. Property prices continue to climb, and renters face increasing pressures. The Liberal Democrats, who control Richmond Council, include numerous councillors who are themselves buy-to-let landlords—a fact that does little to dispel concerns that aesthetic improvements are being prioritised over meaningful policies to address affordability and displacement.

The concern is that murals, rather than serving the community, are being used to enhance property values and attract investors—turning public art into a branding exercise for urban renewal.

### **Reclaiming Murals for the Community**

Despite the growing commercialisation of street art, some grassroots initiatives are pushing back. In **Bristol**, the *People's Republic of Stokes Croft* (PRSC) has taken an unapologetically radical stance, championing murals that address issues such as austerity, racism, and corporate greed. Unlike many council-led projects, PRSC works directly with local residents, ensuring that murals serve as genuine expressions of the community rather than as decorative marketing tools.

In Liverpool, the *Granby Four Streets Community Land Trust* has integrated mural art into a broader strategy of community-led regeneration, where local people—not external investors—decide how public spaces should evolve. These examples demonstrate that murals can still be subversive and be powerful—when they are truly rooted in the communities they depict.

### **Murals as a Battleground for the Future of Urban Spaces**

Public murals are no longer just artistic statements; they have become political battlegrounds. Across the UK, from Twickenham to Manchester's Ancoats, murals are appearing alongside luxury developments, heralding change that does not always benefit those already living there.

For councils and developers, murals can be a convenient way to signal progress. For long-standing residents, they can serve as warning signs—indicators that an area is being rebranded, often at their expense.

The challenge is ensuring that murals remain authentic expressions of local culture rather than tools of displacement. Art, at its best, should provoke, inspire, and reflect the voices of the people it surrounds. If public murals are to have real meaning, they must be shaped by communities, not imposed upon them. Because, as history has shown, when street art truly speaks for the people, it has the power to challenge—not just to decorate.

# Never Mind - Never Mind - Never Mind

By TwickWatch



1962 Proposed 'Pedestrianised' Shopping Area © "LBRuT"

*In 2020 we are due to see the demolition, in the name of progress, of practically everything from the Quadrant through to the back of the Parish Church, which would say goodbye to all of Waterloo Place and half of St James' Cottages, along with the corner of Eton Street and Sheen Road.*

It is of course, "fake news" today, but not in 1962. Hopefully it made you sit up and take note about your environment! Do you care, or can't you be bothered until an eyesore development or scheme raises its head? Do you engage in council consultations to influence the future? Do you keep an eye on the weekly publication of [new planning applications](#) made to the Council?

In 1962 a proposed 'pedestrianised' Shopping Area in Lower George Street was actually under consideration as shown in a watercolour design by D. J. Draper. It shows the 'pedestrianised' street towards the junction of Lower George Street and Sheen Road with an additional high-rise building and *elevated walk-ways*. Prepared for G. S. Weddle, Richmond Borough Architect (LBRuT). At the time it was "trendy" but would it have stood the test of time and be considered so now, 58 years later?

Every building cannot be kept as originally built and indeed many underwent modifications during their life-time. We cannot continue to live in the past and over the years, many historic buildings have been destroyed or replaced. Some by necessity like those in King Street Twickenham shown opposite from c1837. One of the main reasons for demolishing buildings is that they have apparently become too old and not in a fit state to use, often through neglect or they stand in the way of new bigger "modern" developments singularly promoted for large financial gains for the few.



*C1837 King Street Twickenham looking towards Cross Deep "Courtesy of Richmond Local Studies"*

Modern buildings, often with their "wind-tunnels" whipping around them or lifeless designs, require more living space and to provide this, it is necessary to clear away old buildings. However, old buildings, when properly renovated or restored, can use less energy than "flash" new buildings (even those lauded as sustainable) that set up problems for themselves by over-glazing, or by creating an excessive depth in floor rafts, requiring ventilation fans and lights on all day. Ideally historic buildings should be renovated if necessary and people should be educated about their importance.

Such measures would ensure that these buildings will remain for future generations to witness and admire not just the construction methods of them but their place in history. Although having historical importance, it is acknowledged that not all of them would necessarily be architecturally distinguished. The only way to view our ancestors' skills and tradition is through these buildings. Allocating some budget to repair these buildings may save them from destruction.

It is often left to ordinary citizens to police development changes, often conducting campaigns demonstrating the importance of retaining some of the old buildings, emphasising that they are a reflection of our tradition and heritage. It is to be hoped that this would be led by those we elect to represent us. For all the latest technology, there are energy-efficiency lessons to be learned from historical buildings. For example, before the advent of air conditioning in the 1960s, structures made do with passive environmental control from cross-ventilation windows to shutters, awnings and masonry that helped keep out the sun.



Similarly, the high thermal mass of stone, as seen in Victorian buildings, retains warmth in winter and cold in summer.

Richmond Council nowadays has a better heritage record than on some occasions in the past but still seems to lack a transparent vision for the future. The Borough has a wealth of history worth preserving and promoting unlike its “partner” Wandsworth, which continues to demolish its town centre with apparently little thought for heritage.



*Graz - combining old with new in pedestrian area*

There are many examples across the UK and the world of imaginative schemes to enhance and “modernise” town centres retaining the heritage to attract visitors and rejuvenate centres. One I happen to know well, is the second city of Austria called Graz,

which combines old and new among a building heritage going back hundreds of years. A living museum with a modern twist. If they can we could.



*Graz - pedestrian bridge over River Mur. The use of great imagination.*

Pedestrianisation for-instance can have a place although it is not a panacea and can be difficult to implement as the wider non-pedestrianised area has to be taken into account so as not to create new problems with traffic flow elsewhere. Meaningful consultation with citizens in addition to self-interest groups would be key to eliciting new ideas and solutions.

Few policy makers display a depth of vision with a long-term future plan, determined and agreed along with their “ordinary citizens”. PROAction not REAction surely?



*1952 George Street Richmond*

For-instance imagine a pedestrianised town centre where property owners are obliged to restore - maybe over time, building façades with no garish signage boards by traders “doing their own thing” but “floating” and “agreed” signage set away from wall façades. Pedestrian areas can create a safer and more attractive centre where people go to shop and relax in a convivial atmosphere created by restored surrounding buildings, at the same time reducing pollution, supporting carbon neutral aims.

*Time never stands still; it's always moving on. The past is beyond our control, but the future is still in our hands. To shape it we must use our intelligence and make an effort.*

The preservation of buildings is achieved by statutory listing undertaken by [Historic England](#). Sometimes speed is of the essence when a building is in imminent danger of destruction and Historic England provide for a Building Preservation Notice (BPN) which is a means for a local planning authority (LPA) to protect a building which it considers to have special architectural or historic interest, but which is in danger of demolition or alteration in such a way as to affect its character.

A locally listed building (also known as a ‘Building of Townscape Merit’) is a building or structure which is not statutorily listed, but is recognised for its significance to the history and character of the local environment. Those designated by the Council in Richmond upon Thames can be found online under “[Listed Buildings](#)”.

# St Mary's University

## St Mary's University is Hiring a Director of Undergraduate Medicine

St Mary's University is seeking an academic leader to join its School of Medicine (SoM) as Director of Undergraduate Medicine. This is an exciting opportunity to join the SoM which is transforming medical education by developing academically and purpose driven doctors who lead by example and change the world for the better.



St Mary's University is seeking an academic leader to join its School of Medicine (SoM) as Director of Undergraduate Medicine. This is an exciting opportunity to join the SoM which is transforming medical education by developing academically and purpose driven doctors who lead by example and change the world for the better.

The School of Medicine will become an internationally recognised centre with established expertise and resources. At both undergraduate and postgraduate level, St Mary's is committed to offering vocationally relevant programmes of study with the highest academic standards.

The Director will be responsible for the new MBBS Programme and will drive forward further development of medical education within the School of Medicine. This is a key strategic leadership role and the post provides an exciting opportunity to make a major contribution to the University and field of medical education at a

critical time in its development. The post holder will be responsible for the overall development, delivery, and quality assurance of the MBBS programme.

Key aspects of the role include leading a cohesive values-led programme team, and liaison with professional bodies such as the GMC and local education providers.

The post holder will be a practising and experienced clinician, with extensive experience of UK medical education and the associated governance and quality assurance of an undergraduate medical programme. They will be expected to promote, develop, and support pedagogic research and ensure research informed teaching and curriculum design. The postholder is expected to be medically qualified, clinically active, and registered with the GMC with a full licence to practise. An appointment would be made at between 0.6fte and 0.8fte to facilitate the continuation of clinical practice.

St Mary's is an established provider of health sciences, bioethics, and education, ranking top 5 for teaching quality and top 10 for student experience in the UK.

Those interested in the role should submit an online application form with their CV and supporting statement on the [St Mary's recruitment portal](#) explaining how any qualifications, skills, and experience fulfil the essential criteria for the job.

For informal enquiries, please contact the Executive Dean of Medicine, Professor Sonia Kumar:

[sonia.kumar@stmarys.ac.uk](mailto:sonia.kumar@stmarys.ac.uk)



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London



# ECITB Engineering Student Completes Work Experience at Local Steel Fabrications Company, Steelo



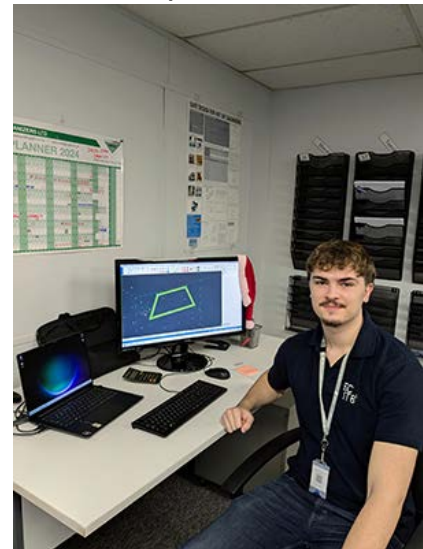
Last term, Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) Engineering student, Adam Jastrzebi, completed a successful work experience placement at Hounslow based Steel Fabrications company, [Steelo](#). Adam is currently studying on our Level 3 [ECITB](#) course, beginning his college career in 2022 to study his A-Levels.

Steel detailing company, [Steelo](#), manufactures high quality steel products, from simple connections to entire building frames, and has earned recognition as one of London's leading steel fabricators. Adam completed his weeklong work experience at [Steelo](#) in November, working under Design Team Leader Sadd, who as a mentor, provided tasks and oversaw Adam's work.

Sadd, commented:

*"It was a smooth work experience process with RuTC. Adam was a quick learner, following instructions carefully for training models he was given and making minimal mistakes."*

Technology and Engineering tutor at RuTC, Ashok, has played a key role in helping secure work experience placements for his students, including Adam. Our college staff work tremendously hard to build connections with employers and local businesses, ensuring our students are provided with the best training opportunities and future job prospects.



Adam's goal for the future is to become a chartered Engineer and work within the oil and gas industry. He is currently enjoying the benefits of RuTC's recently developed STEM Centre, providing the most up to date facilities and equipment to enhance learning and skill development.

Adam said of his work experience:

*"My work experience at Steelo was incredibly valuable. I gained hands-on insight into steel detailing and had the opportunity to learn*

*Tekla, a software that will be a big asset for my future in design and engineering. The skills I developed there, combined with the knowledge I'm building through my course at RuTC, have given me a great foundation to pursue a career in this industry."*



# Buckingham Palace announce Royal Star & Garter's new Patron

Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal has been announced as the new Patron of veterans' charity Royal Star & Garter.

The Princess Royal is the charity's third Patron since it was founded in 1916, succeeding her late mother, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, from Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe. It has also launched new services reaching out into the community.



The charity was established on 14 January 1916 to care for severely injured men returning from the battlegrounds of WWI, following concern expressed by Queen Mary. She charged the British Red Cross Society with finding them a 'permanent haven' and became the charity's first Patron.

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth was Royal Star & Garter's Patron from 1953 until her death in 2022.

The Princess Royal is involved with over 400 charities, organisations and military affiliations in the UK and overseas, and is renowned for her warm relationship, affinity and support for Armed Forces veterans.

Major General Tim Tyler CB is the Chair at Royal Star & Garter. He said: "We are honoured to welcome Her Royal Highness The Princess Royal as our new Patron.

The Princess is admired for her dedication to good causes and her devotion to public work, as well as her long association with the Armed Forces. We look forward to welcoming Her Royal Highness to our Homes to meet the veterans and partners we care for.

"Our former Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth, demonstrated genuine enthusiasm for our work. We are delighted that The Princess is continuing her mother's support for the military family. The Princess is already well acquainted with our charity, both through Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's Patronage and the support of her great-grandmother Queen Mary, who was our first Patron in 1916. On behalf of the residents, relatives, volunteers and members of staff, we welcome our new Patron and look forward to sharing our ambitions to support more veterans and their families than ever before."

HRH Princess Alexandra will remain as the charity's President, a role she has served in for 60 years, since 1964.



**Royal Star  
& Garter**

Care with courage

*(Photograph courtesy of Jeremy Makinson)*



# FIXTURES

2025

— GMT —

<b>ROUND 1</b>	<b>FRA</b> 	FRI 31 JAN <b>20:15</b>	 <b>WAL</b>	<b>ROUND 1</b>
	<b>SCO</b> 	SAT 1 FEB <b>14:15</b>	 <b>ITA</b>	
	<b>IRE</b> 	SAT 1 FEB <b>16:45</b>	 <b>ENG</b>	
<b>ROUND 2</b>	<b>ITA</b> 	SAT 8 FEB <b>14:15</b>	 <b>WAL</b>	<b>ROUND 2</b>
	<b>ENG</b> 	SAT 8 FEB <b>16:45</b>	 <b>FRA</b>	
	<b>SCO</b> 	SUN 9 FEB <b>15:00</b>	 <b>IRE</b>	
<b>ROUND 3</b>	<b>WAL</b> 	SAT 22 FEB <b>14:15</b>	 <b>IRE</b>	<b>ROUND 3</b>
	<b>ENG</b> 	SAT 22 FEB <b>16:45</b>	 <b>SCO</b>	
	<b>ITA</b> 	SUN 23 FEB <b>15:00</b>	 <b>FRA</b>	
<b>ROUND 4</b>	<b>IRE</b> 	SAT 8 MAR <b>14:15</b>	 <b>FRA</b>	<b>ROUND 4</b>
	<b>SCO</b> 	SAT 8 MAR <b>16:45</b>	 <b>WAL</b>	
	<b>ENG</b> 	SUN 9 MAR <b>15:00</b>	 <b>ITA</b>	
<b>ROUND 5</b>	<b>ITA</b> 	SAT 15 MAR <b>14:15</b>	 <b>IRE</b>	<b>ROUND 5</b>
	<b>WAL</b> 	SAT 15 MAR <b>16:45</b>	 <b>ENG</b>	
	<b>FRA</b> 	SAT 15 MAR <b>20:00</b>	 <b>SCO</b>	

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HOTELS & RESORTS

# England Team To Play France At Allianz Stadium

England men's head coach Steve Borthwick has named his starting XV to play France at Allianz Stadium on Saturday 8 February (kick-off 4.45pm, live on ITV1).

Saturday's second round Guinness Six Nations Test match will be the 111th game between England and France since the first meeting in 1906.

In the front row, vice-captain Ellis Genge takes his place at loosehead prop, alongside Luke Cowan-Dickie at hooker and Will Stuart at tighthead.

At lock, England captain Maro Itoje is paired with George Martin.

The back row sees No.8 Tom Willis earn his first start for England, lining up alongside Tom Curry on the blindside flank, and Ben Earl at openside to round off the pack.

In the half-backs, fly-half Fin Smith is partnered with club teammate Alex Mitchell at 9 to earn his first Test start. In the midfield, Henry Slade is named at inside centre, with Ollie Lawrence at 13.

In the back three, Ollie Sleightholme returns to the side on the left wing, with Tommy Freeman on the right, and Marcus Smith moves to full-back to complete the starting line-up.

Vice-captain Jamie George, Fin Baxter, Joe Heyes, Ollie Chessum, Chandler Cunningham-South, Ben Curry, Harry Randall and Elliot Daly take their places on a 6-2 split replacements bench.

*"England versus France is an incredible fixture to be involved in,"* said Borthwick.

*"We're looking forward to being back at Allianz Stadium in front of our home supporters, for what I am sure will be a great game of rugby."*

ENGLAND v FRANCE

Saturday 8 February 2025, Allianz Stadium, Twickenham

Kick-off: 4.45pm (GMT)



15. Marcus Smith (Harlequins, 40 caps)
14. Tommy Freeman (Northampton Saints, 16 caps)
13. Ollie Lawrence (Bath Rugby, 32 caps)
12. Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs, 70 caps)
11. Ollie Sleightholme (Northampton Saints, 5 caps)
10. Fin Smith (Northampton Saints, 7 caps)
9. Alex Mitchell (Northampton Saints, 19 caps)

Replacements:

16. Jamie George (Saracens, 97 caps) – vice-captain
17. Fin Baxter (Harlequins, 6 caps)
18. Joe Heyes (Leicester Tigers, 8 caps)
19. Ollie Chessum (Leicester Tigers, 24 caps)

1. Ellis Genge (Bristol Bears, 67 caps) – vice-captain
2. Luke Cowan-Dickie (Sale Sharks, 45 caps)
3. Will Stuart (Bath Rugby, 46 caps)
4. Maro Itoje (Saracens, 89 caps) – captain
5. George Martin (Leicester Tigers, 20 caps)
6. Tom Curry (Sale Sharks, 57 caps)
7. Ben Earl (Saracens, 38 caps)
8. Tom Willis (Saracens, 2 caps)

20. Chandler Cunningham-South (Harlequins, 12 caps)
21. Ben Curry (Sale Sharks, 7 caps)
22. Harry Randall (Bristol Bears, 12 caps)
23. Elliot Daly (Saracens, 69 caps)



# Danish Bees join NATURLI' for a Brentford watch party

**Official club partner NATURLI' hosted 50 Bees fans at an event in Aarhus, Denmark to watch Brentford's Premier League match against Tottenham Hotspur on Sunday**

Written by Brentford Football Club

Over 50 Bees fans came together over the weekend for a Brentford watch party in Aarhus, Denmark.

Club partner NATURLI' hosted the event at one of the city's top sports bars for Sunday's Premier League match against Tottenham Hotspur.

The group included members of the Danish Bees, the club's official Danish supporters' group, and even club mascot Buzz Bee was in attendance at To Kolde sports bar in Aarhus.

NATURLI', the club's official plant-based food partner, provided goodie bags filled with their plant-based products and Brentford merchandise.

Fans at the event also won exclusive raffle prizes including a signed shirt, a video message from their favourite player and tickets to watch the Bees live at Gtech Community Stadium.



Attendees enjoyed one final surprise on the day: a video message from head coach and compatriot Thomas Frank thanking them for their support. Sørine, a member of Danish Bees, described the event as “a dream come true for Danish Brentford fans.”

Henrik Lund, NATURLI' CEO, said: “We were thrilled to welcome the Danish Bees and fans of NATURLI' to a great event. Even though we were not in the Gtech Community Stadium, the energy at the watch party was as if we were.

“And with the video greeting from Thomas Frank, the mood was set for supporting the Bees all the way from Denmark.”



# Thames Water High Court Battle ‘Futile’ And Company Must Be Nationalised

GMB Union has described the High Court battle over Thames Water’s finances as ‘futile’ - and says the company must be nationalised.

The debt-ridden water giant is subject to a hearing this week as negotiations continue as to whether the near-bankrupt firm should be placed into administration.

Gary Carter, GMB National Officer, said:

*“Creditors battling it out to loan Thames large sums of cash and increase its debt mountain of debt have the long-term interests of the company at heart. It’s a futile exercise.”*

*“Thames requires stable, long-term investment. The time has come to put Thames out of its misery and put it into special administration, essentially renationalising it.*

*“The Government has been too quiet for too long and must act to secure Thames for its customers and workers.*

*“If Ministers don’t do it now, they are storing up bigger problems and will have to put much more money in when they are forced to rescue Thames down the line.”*



## Public Health Grant – LGA response

Responding to the announcement of the 2025/26 public health grant for councils, Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the Local Government Association’s Community Wellbeing Board said:

*“We are pleased the Government has increased the public health grant for councils, acting on our concerns over the significant funding pressures public health teams have been under to maintain vital services such as sexual health services, smoking cessation programmes and drug treatment. It is important this marks a reset which sees government work in partnership with councils.*

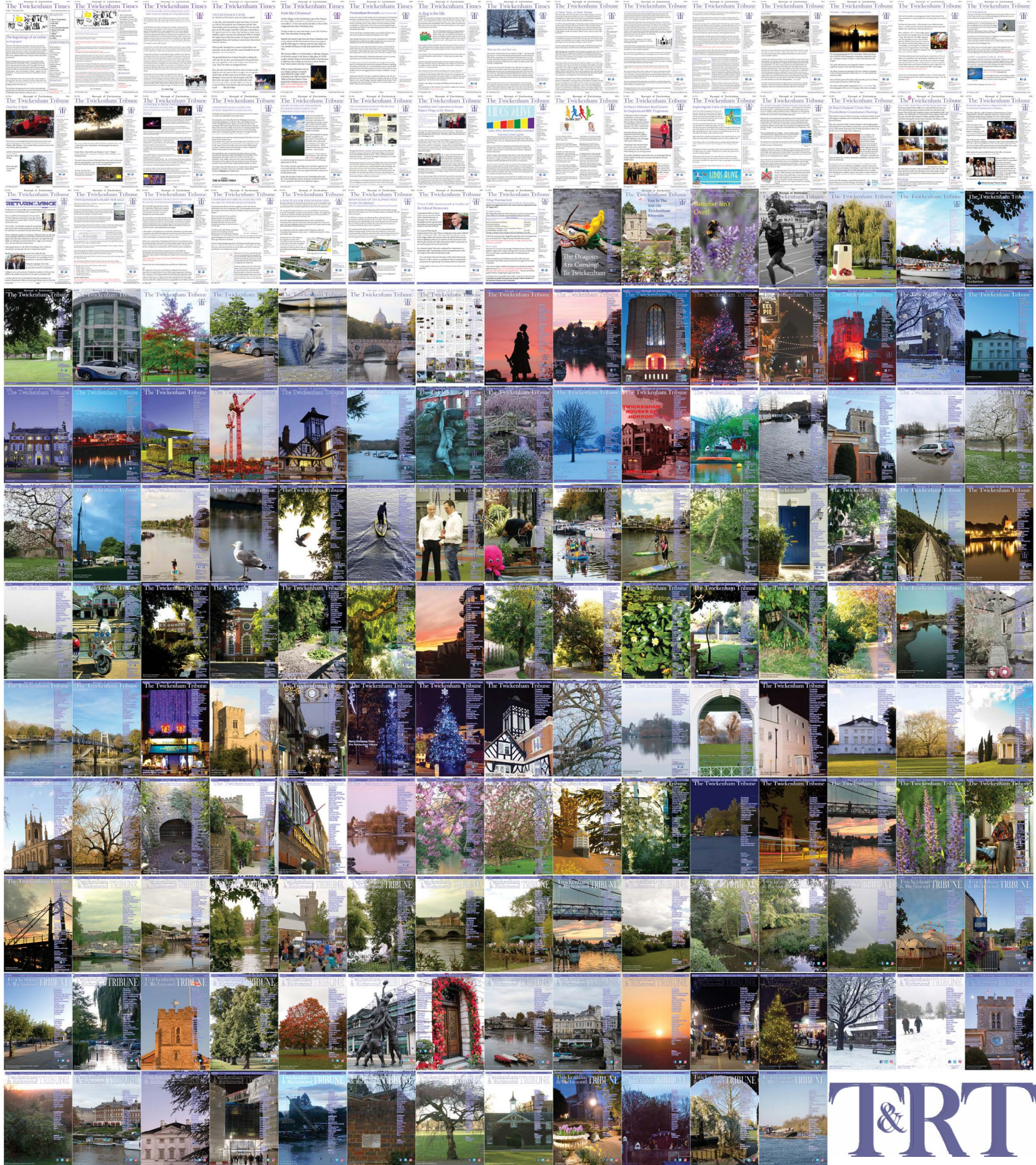
*“Investing in public health is key to bridging the health inequality gap, improving population health and preventing ill-health, reducing the pressure on social care and the NHS.*

*“As public health teams continue to face increasing demand, we are calling on the Government in the Spending Review to set out a long-term sustainable funding plan for public health, which will give councils the long-term certainty they need to plan services that meet the needs of their communities.”*





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Quarter Page Portrait

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**Published by:**

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune (in association with World InfoZone Limited)

Registered in England & Wales

Reg No 10549345

The Twickenham Tribune is registered with the ICO under the Data Protection Act, Reg No ZA224725

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