

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



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TickerTape - News in Brief

Rugby at Twickenham Stadium

Sat 21st June: County Cup Finals & England XV v France XV

KO 15:15.

Expected attendance 25,000.

Estimate that Whitton, Rugby & London Roads may close between 14:00-15:15 & 16:45-18:00.

The CPZ will be in place from 11:00-23:00.

Altered train services due to Royal Ascot and Rugby at Twickenham Saturday 21 June

London Waterloo - Shepperton

- Between 0841 and 2141, Shepperton to London Waterloo services will be diverted via Twickenham.
- Between 0942 and 2242, London Waterloo to Shepperton services will be diverted via Twickenham.

London Waterloo – Reading

- Services will depart earlier from Reading through most of the day (at xx:03 and xx:33).
- Trains departing Reading after 1530 will call additionally at Putney & Vauxhall.

London Waterloo – Windsor

- Between 0833 & 2133, London Waterloo to Windsor services will be diverted to Reading calling at Virginia Water, Ascot, Bracknell and Wokingham.
- Between 0953 & 2253, Windsor to London Waterloo services will start from Reading calling at Wokingham, Bracknell, Ascot and Virginia Water.



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The Tree Agency

Pride and Prejudice on the High Street

Why Kew is Well Maintained, Whilst Whitton Declines

By James Knight

It's hard to imagine a resident of Richmond Hill being ridiculed for pointing out that the wrong paving has been laid outside their local shops. In Kew or Barnes, a single mismatched slab would provoke phone calls, emails, and formal complaints until the contractor addressed the issue. Public realm standards in those areas of the borough are sacred.

But in Whitton? Apparently, noticing is not acceptable.

Last week, a local resident, posting anonymously, raised concerns about the patch of paving that Cadent Gas reinstated outside Sainsbury's. Their observation was careful and entirely correct: the slabs don't match the rest of the High Street, the pattern is inconsistent, and the installation fails to meet the standards set out in TfL's streetscape guidance. Worse still, the stones appear to have been laid over hardcore instead of a proper sub-base—an all-too-familiar shortcut that caused reinstated stones opposite Iceland to break up earlier this year.

But instead of prompting concern, the post unleashed a wave of ridicule. "You must have a lot of spare time on your hands," sneered one reply. "Jesus Christ, bore the bore off, mate," said another. One user suggested the slabs were "just weathered differently," while others questioned the mental state of anyone who could possibly care.

Even Cllr Michael Wilson weighed in, not to defend the standard of work or promise a proper inspection, but to gently mock the poster's anonymity and offer a vague assurance that a High Street clean-up would happen "soon." For a councillor, it was a remarkably offhand way to address a legitimate concern from a taxpayer.

What all this reveals is more than a few off-colour comments. It demonstrates the extent to which expectations have collapsed in parts of the borough, like Whitton, and how that collapse is actively encouraged.



Let's step back. Whitton's High Street underwent refurbishment in 2013 at a cost of £2.3 million. In current terms, that amounts to well over £3 million. It was a significant investment, with new paving, lighting, bins, planters, and furniture, all designed to elevate the area to the same public realm standard as Richmond or Kew. The materials were intentionally high-spec: Yorkstone, laid in a staggered pattern for strength, visual cohesion, and longevity.

So when Cadent Gas comes along a decade later and patches up their works with cheap stone in the wrong colour and pattern, it absolutely matters. Not because Whitton residents are obsessive about flagstones, but because they have already paid for a higher standard and are entitled to expect it to be respected.

But instead of solidarity, the response from some residents is scorn. What's especially galling is that many of those who dismissed the complaint would rightly demand perfection if the same work had been done in Richmond or Teddington. They are paying the same council tax, funding the same borough-wide standards, and yet, when Whitton is short-changed, they ridicule those who speak up.

This is what sociologists like Pierre Bourdieu would call *internalised inferiority*, when a community starts to believe it deserves less and penalises anyone who suggests otherwise. It is not merely civic apathy; it is civic self-sabotage.

The truth is that **public realm standards exist only when residents are willing to demand them**. This is why Yorkstone is reinstated properly in Richmond, heritage lighting is preserved in Barnes, and shopfronts in East Sheen do not feature external roller security blinds. Residents there do not question whether these aspects matter; they simply take it for granted that they do.

In Whitton, by contrast, a creeping culture of shrugged shoulders and "don't make a fuss" prevails. When elected councillors like Michael Wilson join in the mockery instead of championing their ward, the message becomes dangerously clear: if you want something done properly, go live somewhere else.

But Whitton shouldn't have to accept second-class treatment. It has every right to the same standards, the same investment, and the same civic pride as any other part of the borough. This begins with residents refusing to feel embarrassed about caring, and councillors remembering that their role is to raise standards, not lower expectations.

Public spaces reflect public values. If we do not take pride in them, who will? Furthermore, if we mock those who do, the decline will not stop at paving; it will extend to everything we once deemed worth preserving.

Whitton deserves better. And saying so shouldn't be a joke.



HAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY

Saturday 21 June 2025, 7.30pm

Songs and Sonnets
George Shearing

Feel the Spirit
John Rutter

Five Mystical Songs
Ralph Vaughan Williams

Musical Director Emma Warren
with professional soloists & musicians

St James's Church, St James's Road
Hampton Hill, TW12 1DQ

Tickets: £15 (Adults), £7 (Under 16's) Box Office: 020 8941 5394
On the door: contactless, card, cheque, cash
www.hamptonchoral.org.uk

Charity Number 261788

The Thames in Teddington

(Imminent) Threats, Risks and Hopes

By Mike Pemberton

On Monday nearly 200 people attended an open evening review of current River Thames projects and initiatives titled “The Thames in Teddington – (Imminent) Threats, Risks and Hopes”. The evening was hosted at The Lensbury riverside resort by Teddington weir in collaboration with The Teddington Society in the desire to help local people appreciate the nature of, and issues around current Thames projects and how they can express their views. Presentations were given by representatives of local river groups.

The Teddington Society website <https://teddingtonsociety.org/riverside> records links for following the development of these subjects.

Thames Water’s proposed Teddington Direct River Abstraction (TDRA) was reviewed by Ian McNuff of Save Our Lands And River (SOLAR) [STOP Thames Water TDRA - Save Our Lands & River from Thames Water](#) – in discussion concerns were expressed about a cost of more than £1b for the water extraction project to operate on average only six weeks a year, and the abstraction of water when the river is at its most ecologically vulnerable to deal with partially treated sewage pumped back into the river.



Thames Water (TW) have just announced the dates and locations for their Statutory Consultation events. This schedule and related TDRA construction, environmental and social issues can be found on the SOLAR site. Ian McNuff stressed the importance of residents reviewing TW’s plans and expressing their views through the routes available. He invited them to a SOLAR rally on Saturday June 28th (see the website).

The River Thames Scheme (RTS) piece was led by John Adams of the River Users Group, Teddington Stretch. This project will push more flood water to this stretch and next year the Environment Agency/ Surrey Council plan to start major works to build more weir gates to cope at Teddington. Concerns were expressed however that the projections for the volume, speed and flood risk of increased flows from the scheme do not adequately take account of the “back flow” when big tides go up over the weir pushing far upstream causing significant river level rises and flood risk.

A presentation on London Mayor Sadiq Kahn’s mission for a “swimmable river” was led by Zack Polanski, Chair of London Assembly’s Environment Committee for 2024-25 which is reviewing the Mayor’s commitments for swimmable rivers in London. Early days yet to get a clear picture of how the initiative will develop however implications so far suggest the initiative to improve our amenity and river water quality for bathing will be in non-tidal stretches and inseparable from the issues around healthy quality river water.

Councillor James Manthel of Kingston Council, introduced this new initiative for the benefit of both river users and wildlife from Mayors of river-fronting boroughs from Hounslow to Runneymede. Along the river linked regular water quality readings by citizen science volunteers will enable recreational and conservation groups to access up-to-date readings and anticipate conditions for their activities.

Photo: Teddington Weir ©Berkley Driscoll

Talk Big, Build Small

By James Knight

The Liberal Democrats are eager to claim that Richmond upon Thames is making serious progress on housing. They are far less willing to admit that the real picture is one of stagnation, missed targets and mounting frustration among residents who are still waiting for meaningful action.

Last week, Councillor Chris Varley was appointed as Richmond's new Lead Member for Housing, replacing Councillor Jim Millard. In a blog published on the Council's website, Varley painted a positive picture. He spoke of hundreds of affordable homes being delivered and promised a fairer borough.

However, he claims do not stand up to the slightest bit of scrutiny. According to the Council's own figures, just one hundred homes were completed in the last year. It was the lowest annual total in more than twenty years. Only ten of those homes were affordable. These numbers reflect failure, not progress.

Millard's Tenure Seen as a Missed Opportunity

Richmond also failed to meet the government's Housing Delivery Test, achieving only ninety-one percent of its required target. This shortfall necessitated a formal Housing Delivery Action Plan and close scrutiny from central Government.

Jim Millard's tenure as Housing Lead is widely regarded as disappointing. While he waxed lyrical about fairness and social justice, the record shows little delivery and even less ambition. Targets were missed, major projects were delayed, and the Council's affordable housing pipeline became jammed. Under his leadership, the borough developed a reputation for talking extensively about housing while building very little of it.

Rebranding the Work of Others

Under Councillor Varley, the Council seems intent on presenting inherited Conservative projects as new Liberal Democrat achievements. The regeneration of Ham Close serves as a prime example. This initiative was conceived under the Conservatives, with collaborations and planning already well advanced before the 2018 election. The Liberal Democrats are now promoting it as one of their own projects.

The same pattern is evident at the Stag Brewery site in Mortlake. Originally approved years ago and championed by the previous administration, the development has been stalled by repeated delays, including prolonged disputes with the Mayor of London's office. The latest version of the scheme, approved earlier this year, has dramatically cut the level of affordable housing, from 30% to just 7.5%. Nevertheless, it too is being presented as a Liberal Democrat success story.

Government Intervention After Missed Targets

Earlier this year, Richmond experienced government intervention after failing to fulfil its statutory housing obligations. The borough achieved only ninety-one percent in the national Housing Delivery Test, which is below the required ninety-five percent threshold. This shortfall triggered the need for a formal Housing Delivery Action Plan, a corrective measure imposed on councils that are not constructing sufficient homes. The document aims to identify the reasons for underdelivery and outline how the Council intends to enhance its performance.

The necessity of such a step in a well-funded borough, governed by a Liberal Democrat administration for seven years, is a serious indictment of its performance. Instead of recognising the gravity of the failure, the Council regarded the plan as a mere formality. It was not. It served as a signal that the borough's approach to housing is ineffective, and that after years of governance, the Liberal Democrats have little justification remaining.

Serving the Comfortable, Not the Struggling

There is a growing sense that the Council is more focused on presentation than on substance. The language of fairness is used freely, yet the actions do not match the words. Most of what the Council refers to as affordable housing consists of shared ownership and intermediate rent. These homes target households on moderate to high incomes and are out of reach for many residents who are most in need. There is almost no provision for new social rent homes, despite the rising numbers of families in temporary accommodation and on the housing waiting list lists.

The Green Party has also been outspoken in its criticism. Local Green councillors have accused the Liberal Democrats of failing to rise to the occasion, arguing that the borough's housing strategy serves the interests of the comfortable middle classes while overlooking the challenges faced by low-income residents and essential workers.

Fairness in Name, Failure in Practice

Richmond's housing challenges are well known. The borough is tightly constrained by conservation areas, protected open spaces, and a powerful lobby that resists new development. However, these challenges are not new. The Liberal Democrats have been in power for seven years now. They cannot continue to blame others for the state of housing delivery in the borough, nor can they take credit for schemes they did not initiate.

Richmond does not suffer from a shortage of policy documents or strategic reviews. It suffers from a shortage of homes. The Council has become adept at managing its message, but that does not provide roofs over people's heads. While key workers struggle to rent near their workplaces, while families are priced out of their communities, and while hundreds sit on waiting lists with no realistic hope of being housed locally, the Council continues to focus on headlines rather than housing.

The Real Test for Varley and His Party

Councillor Varley now has the opportunity to chart a different course. However, that opportunity will mean little if the Council continues to prioritise political gain over practical outcomes. Until Richmond ceases to govern for those who are already well-housed and starts addressing the needs of those who are not, its talk of fairness will ring hollow. Voters can discern the difference between progress and performance. In housing, the Liberal Democrats have thus far delivered far too much of the latter and far too little of the former.

You can read the council press release [HERE](#)

The housing monitoring report can be accessed [HERE](#)

The Housing Delivery Action Plan [HERE](#)

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Congratulations Bruce on being awarded the TTNG Lifetime Achievement Award



Twickenham Riverside

Teresa Read

Finance, Policy and Resources Committee 25 June 2025 – Project update and authorisation to enter the construction contract. View the report [HERE](#)

Excerpt from the report:

*4.24. The outcome of the lengthy and detailed workstreams has produced a net saving (after cost additions and savings achieved) of £1.3m. **The total project costs in January 2023 were estimated at £49.580m but are now £67.187m with details set out in the exempt paper.***

***The construction cost is confidential,** where this is used in the Social and Additional Value report, this is an approximate figure.*

Remembering Twickenham outdoor swimming pool

Twickenham Lido was built on the site of Richmond House overlooking the Thames.

Richmond House was demolished in 1927 and following a petition by residents an outdoor swimming pool was built in the style of its time and at the beginning of the heyday of the lido movement. The pool was closed in 1980 for refurbishment but was never reopened.

One of those who learned to swim in the Twickenham swimming pool in the early 1970s said: *"A very special memory, and such a shame it went to ruins."*

Twickenham Lido was a beautiful Art Deco pool, unusual in that it was deep in the centre, shallow at each end. The diving boards were obviously in the centre and there was a slide either side of them. It was a big pool in length and width. The walking area around the pool was spacious and at each end was a stylish fountain. In one corner was a paddling pool and up some steps, a cafe. People could sunbathe at either end of the pool. The changing rooms were spacious unlike modern cubicles! The building was Art Deco, a long building with Crittall windows. It always felt stylish and spacious inside."



It is interesting to note that the pool is still beneath the ground on the Twickenham Riverside site to be developed.

Dear Tribune,

Prepare to be ignored, AGAIN!

Last week, Cllr Alexander Ehmann, Chair of the Transport Committee, was reported as saying:

“E-bikes offer significant benefits, but we need to ensure they are used responsibly. The Council has a strong idea of the benefits and disadvantages associated with e-bike operations, but we are keen to hear fresh views, both positive and negative, particularly from those who have not previously expressed their opinions. Your feedback is crucial in helping us shape a balanced and effective approach.”

In fact, my experience, and that of many others, is that they are NOT used responsibly and the Council doesn't really want to hear any views apart from their own.

Since the Council's e-bike trial started several years ago, I have lost count of the times I have had to avoid e-bikes, e-scooters, and private bikes, all ridden illegally on footways, and have been subjected to extreme abuse and threats of violence three times merely for walking on our footways.

One time was a woman riding towards me on a dark, wet winter evening. As I stepped aside to let her pass, she shouted: *‘Get out of the way, you f----- b-----’. Next time, I’ll run you over*. She stopped just past me to repeat her charming greeting. As this was an offence under the Public Order Act 1986, and as advised by our local police team, I dialled 999 but no-one came.

Recently, at my local bus stop while waiting for a bus to Kingston Hospital, I was surprised to be crashed into from behind and, when I looked round, it was another woman on a bike. She tried to force her way past me on the narrow pavement so I stepped back. She then raised her fist to hit me, shouting: *‘I’ll smash you, you b-----, get out of my way’*.

Having spent all of my life training in Japan in classical and modern martial arts, and with 17 years experience as a Metropolitan Police special constable, I was not intimidated but I have no desire to get into brawls. I asked her what she was doing but she continued viciously abusing me and then drove her bike over my feet, stopping after a few yards to turn round, shake her fist again, and shout aggressively: *‘You f----- b-----. You f----- - OLD b-----’. I’ll smash you’*.

This was another public order offence and assault which necessitated a 999 call but again no response from the police in spite of their broken promise to check local CCTV.

I am not particularly old but I wonder what would happen to someone elderly, frail or blind because such attacks could easily result in death. Some of my neighbours will not go out any more for the very real fear of being hit by a bike or falling over those dumped on pavements everywhere.

Every day, we see bikes of all types ridden dangerously on footways and going through red traffic lights at speed. Any suggestions to the Council to deter such lawlessness are met with sarcasm or ignored. They just pass the buck to the police who have actually told me that they *‘will do nothing’*.

The backbone of law and order is visible uniformed police on the streets but now the only visible uniforms on our streets are traffic wardens collecting parking fines.

Our Council is now running one of their so-called ‘surveys’ to elicit opinions on the use of e-bikes and e-scooters. As their constant misuse, even by children, has been ignored, one must assume it is condoned – so what's the point of a survey apart from yet more self-aggrandising virtue signalling?

It therefore remains to be seen whether our caring councillors will actually do something to control this menace and make Richmond the safe place that it once was before they foisted their blind and ignorant fanaticism on the rest of us.

From past experience, it seems unlikely.

Michael Jay, Hampton

Have your say on a brighter Tangier Green Play Area

From Richmond Council

We're inviting local residents and community groups to share their views on a proposal to introduce automatic evening lighting at the Tangier Green Play Area – helping young children enjoy more time to play and stay active, even as the evenings get darker.

The proposed lighting would come on automatically at sunset, gently brightening the playground during the early evening. Lights would be fitted with sensors and timers to ensure they operate at appropriate times and support the space's safe, family-friendly use.

This improvement could make a real difference in the autumn and winter months - offering more opportunities for active, outdoor play after school.



The consultation is open until 13 July 2025 - [have your say now](#).

This proposal supports our [Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–2029](#), which highlights the need to expand opportunities for children to be active through play, sport and recreation.

It also forms part of our [Richmond Moves campaign](#), which encourages everyone to make physical activity a natural and accessible part of daily life. Creating more chances for children to be active in safe, local spaces is a key part of that vision.

If you'd prefer a paper copy of the consultation or need it in another format, please contact us at consultation@richmond.gov.uk.

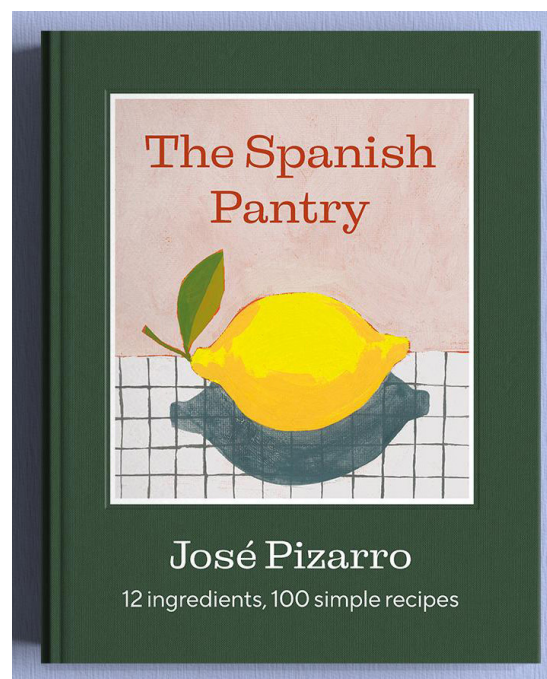
Next week at Richmond Council

On Wednesday, 25th June, the **Finance, Policy and Resources Committee** will convene to discuss 1) the proposed grant of lease to Pensford Field to Dose of Nature, 2) to approve a £16.8 million budget increase for Twickenham Riverside Development, 2) the Change program update, 3) the cost of living support update, 4) the end of year performance report, 5) changes to the procurement strategy, 6) the capital and revenue outturn [£4.975 million overspend on revenue & £43.19 million spent on capital], and 7) additional budget requests. The meeting will begin at 7pm at York House, Twickenham. For details, click [HERE](#).

For guidance on how to **participate** at different types of council meetings, such as speaking or asking written or verbal questions, please click [HERE](#)

The Spanish Pantry

Did you know that the key to Spanish cooking lies with 12 ingredients? In this just published book, José Pizarro invites you into his home to share these key ingredients that form the building blocks of Spanish flavour. **'The Spanish Pantry** is a tapestry of flavours, colours and textures, deeply rooted in local traditions and enriched by a history of global influence.' says Pizarro. Championing the ingredients over 100 recipes, he transforms the simple pantry into a portal to this vibrant world of Spanish cuisine and a celebration of these humble, yet mighty, ingredients. From ingenious ways to use tomatoes, peppers and almonds to Manchego, chorizo and jamón, **The Spanish Pantry** offers an authentic taste of Spain with José's signature style – short on ingredients yet punchy on taste. Taking inspiration from all over Spain, the book champions ingredients that are integral to the countries' dishes and heritage, a testament to the land and people who have nurtured them through the generations. The book is filled with menu ideas for weeknight meals, or feasts with friends, as well as beautiful location photography,



José Pizarro is an award-winning chef and bestselling author, dubbed 'The Godfather of Spanish Food' in the UK. He runs three successful restaurants on London's Bermondsey Street: José, his original sherry and tapas bar; Pizarro; and his most recent opening, Lolo. Alongside this, José also runs The Swan in Claygate, two restaurants at The Royal Academy of Arts, and José by Pizarro at the Conrad Hilton in Abu Dhabi. He is also very proud to have his food on P&O Cruises, bringing Spanish flavours to the sea. José regularly appears on Channel 4's Sunday Brunch and James Martin's Saturday Morning on ITV. This is his seventh cookbook. The Spanish Pantry is an essential addition to any cookbook collection or to anyone, like me, who's longing for a trip to Spain! Here are a couple of recipes from this lovely book: The Spanish Pantry by José Pizarro (Quadrille, £28) Photography © Emma Lee.

Aubergine and bean dip (serves 6-8) Takes one hour

"Enjoying this gorgeous dip sitting outside Iris, our home in Andalusia, watching the sunset with a glass of amontillado in hand, is a spiritual experience. When I prepare this dip with tahini instead of yoghurt, it transforms into a brilliant vegan treat. It certainly enhanced the joy of overlooking the waters towards Tangier from my home. It really shows the versatility and richness that beans can bring to our diet, providing texture, nourishment and depth to so many recipes. The combination of creamy, smoky roasted aubergine with the hearty beans creates a simple but satisfying snack. This dip is all about the flavours best enjoyed with home-made tortilla chips or crudités. A good Amontillado is the perfect accompaniment."

- 1 aubergine (eggplant)
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 700g (1lb 9oz) jar of gigante or butter (lima) beans, drained
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed

- 1 tsp ground cumin
- good pinch of smoked hot pimentón
- 3–4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp thick plain or Greek yoghurt
- squeeze of lemon juice
- flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
- crisps, tortilla chips or crudités, to serve

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C fan (190°C/375°F/gas 5).
2. Rub the aubergine in olive oil, pierce with a knife in several places and place in a small roasting tin. Roast for 40–45 minutes until really tender and squishy. Allow to cool enough to handle.
3. Scoop the insides out of the aubergine into a food processor and add the beans, garlic, spices and extra virgin olive oil. Whiz together, then add the yoghurt and whiz again. Add lemon juice and salt and pepper to taste, then serve with crisps, tortilla chips or crudités.



Crispy fried Manchego salad (serves 4) Takes 30 mins

"This recipe is inspired by my much-loved Fried gordal olives stuffed with Manchego, a big favourite at Pizarro restaurant. Here, the creamy, nutty Manchego is fried until perfectly golden and crisp, bringing a warm, savoury crunch to the salad. Paired with peppery rocket and the vibrant sweetness of fresh blood oranges, the result is a dish that is both refreshing and deeply comforting. A simple honey-mustard dressing ties everything together, adding a zesty punch that balances the sweet, savoury and tangy flavours in every bite. For the best experience, serve the cheese straight from the pan while it's still hot and melting. While it definitely shines in this salad, the fried Manchego also makes a fantastic tapa on its own, perfect for sharing or as an indulgent snack."

- 150g (5oz) rocket (arugula)
- 2 oranges (or blood oranges, when in season), segmented
- 250g (9oz) Manchego, cut into cubes
- 2 tbsp plain (all-purpose) flour
- 1 free-range egg, beaten
- 100g (3½oz/2 cups) panko breadcrumbs
- 300ml (10fl oz/1¼ cups) olive oil, for deep-frying
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- juice of ½ lemon
- 3–4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- flaky sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

1. Put the rocket and orange segments in a large serving bowl.
2. Dust the Manchego cubes in flour. Dip in the beaten egg, then coat all over in panko.
3. Heat the olive oil in a small, deep pan to 170°C (340°F). Fry the cubes of cheese a few at a time until golden and crispy. Drain on paper towels.
4. Blend half the honey with the mustard, lemon juice, salt and pepper, then whisk in the extra virgin olive oil to form a dressing. Pour it over the leaves and toss together. Drizzle the rest of the honey over the cheese and scatter over the salad and serve straight away.



Top Notch Treats from the Top Notch Grocer

I don't know about you, but I've always found **Fortnum & Mason** to be a rather special place. It's not just a shop, it's a haven of foodie delights and lots more. I've been lucky enough to be invited to a few events in the store's Food & Drink Studio, and most recently the launch of **Fortnum's Kitchen**, a new and exclusive collection of flavour-packed ingredients and beautifully designed homeware. The collection is aimed at folk who enjoy cooking and want to elevate their home cooking experience. Designed to add a generous dollop of Fortnum's joy to the everyday kitchen experience, this range offers some really exceptional and incredibly tasty (trust me, I've tasted quite a few of them!) culinary ingredients.

These include:

Flavour Pastes & Marinades, from £6.95 – Incorporate world flavours in a quintessentially Fortnum's fashion and transform dishes with unexpected yet effortless additions like Miso & Black Garlic Flavour Paste, (*which was surprisingly good drizzled over vanilla ice cream*) Honey & Smoked Harissa Paste, and Fennel, Anchovy & Preserved Lemon Paste.



Nut Pastes, from £8.95 – A unique launch for baking and beyond, the range of pure and sweetened nut pastes can be used in patisserie or eaten alone and includes IGP Piedmont Hazelnut Paste, Sicilian Pistachio Paste, Sweet Almond Paste, and Sweet Italian Pistachio Paste.

cheese and quick additions to gravies and sauces.

Balsamic Jelly, £12.95 - Choose from Cherry or Rose. Both are excellent pairings for meat and



Infused Olive Oils, from £7.95 - A capsule range of flavoured extra virgin olive oils made by cold pressing fresh olives directly together with aromatics. Choose from Garlic, Basil, Chilli, or my favourite - **orange-infused EVOO** – all ideal for dressing, drizzling, and more.

Brilliant Basics, from £18.95 - Essentials for the discerning home cook, including Italian, Spanish, and Greek Extra Virgin Olive Oils covering a breadth of flavours and different processes and origins, Condimento Bianco – ideal as a marinade, in cocktails, in salads, or to deglaze a pan - and Rosé Balsamic Vinegar – the perfect addition to bitter leaf salads and earthy vegetables.



Finishing Flourishes, from £7.95—Add a burst of flavour to uplift, elevate, and complete dishes with Gold Balsamic Vinegar, Chilli-Infused Olive Oil, Smoked Chipotle and Chocolate Hot Sauce, and Lime and Green Chilli Hot Sauce.

The new homeware range is the most extensive cookshop collection ever launched by Fortnum & Mason. With a stand-out range designed by London-based artist Kelly Anna, the collection is functional and eye-catching, bringing colour to the kitchen, key pieces include:

- **Exclusive Bakeware** and utensils, from £8 – Featuring roasting dishes, measuring cups and spoons, mixing bowls, pie dishes, and salt pigs, all crafted with the highest quality and longevity in mind.
- **Textiles Collection**, from £18.95 – Stylish yet practical tea towels, aprons, double oven gloves, and gauntlets, designed for everyday use.
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Bruce's Lifetime Achievement Award

By Shona Lyons

Bruce Lyons will be 91 on the 11th of August! He was born 1934 in Primrose Hill, whose name is very apt, as he has always had a great affinity with nature, being very outdoorsy. My fondest memories of him are walking in the rain in the fields nearby, sometimes picking blackberries & climbing over the garden fence into the nearby green fields, escaping from a bit of a hot house whilst visiting my grandparents. In later years, as a family we would often compete in the great river race, a gruelling 22-mile race on the Thames. As a young man he was also an ardent canoe racer as a member of the canoe club, spending many weekends with friends and my mum racing his double canoe with his best friend, David Green who went on to run his own successful canoe making business. In fact, my dad courted my mum, with his canoe, taking her from Richmond to the then Eel Pie Island Tea House, Min Y Don (on the edge of the Waves in Welsh) where they would climb the steep stairs (still there to this day but now a private residence) to have rock hard rock cakes my mum would fondly recount, and tea.



My parents met in the early 60s at the Israeli Tourist office and married on the 1st of May 1965. In 1966 they set up their own Travel business at 22 Church Street, in what was then a rather dilapidated street, which they thought would be perfect as it did not actually have too much footfall then & they were hopeful that people would especially seek out the shop. Previously as a manager of Kempthorne's travel agency in Richmond's George Street, and then Embassy Travel, also George Street but closer to the bridge, he says he was plagued by people passing by on a whim but not really seriously looking for a holiday with countless trifling questions which would take up vast quantities of his time.



Mum and Dad wedding day



Arson



Budapest



Venice

When my parents married and after their first year together, they brought 22 Church Street where they had their very first travel agency together, I was born above the shop in their little flat and I remember quite a idyllic childhood, it was all very old fashioned and home spun. I have memories of my mum handwashing all our clothes as we didn't have a washing machine, we just had a black and white TV, & there were often drunks falling through the door and being propped up on the counter, with plasters and coffee, as the Fox Pub was, and is still, just opposite.

Bruce worked in travel since his twenties gravitating to this exciting and emerging new business, after a little time as an agricultural student and a theatrical agent. Together my parents built the business

up & for many years had shops in St Margarets, Church Street, Hampton Rd and in London (In Chester Row and Marylebone Lane) They were the first to charter flights to Hurghada, Eilat and Sharm and he was even awarded the Freedom of Eilat! He also led his own diving safaris in the Sinai which he really loved, camping under the stars and picnicking on surf boards when he ran a specialist business in the Red Sea called Red Sea Holidays, a springboard for many in the trade, who started with him and then went on to open their own successful businesses. He tour operated to Iceland, Finland, America. Whereas my mum absolutely loved to travel off the beaten track and would often create and lead her own wildlife tours and safaris, she even organised the re- enactment of the first fleet's voyage to Australia where many tall ships took passengers on the journey for the anniversary of the first landings. They both were never daunted by anything, picking themselves off and dusting themselves down on countless occasions, always with lots of optimism and enthusiasm for their life of travel in Twickenham. I think that is the tantamount to the strength of their marriage and their love and trust, and respect they had for each other.



Mum and Dad before Paris trip



Mum and Dad on the river



Great River Race

In fact, my parents had many trials and tribulations, & were victims of serious fraud a couple of times which both times threatened to close the business and in the 80s, they sold Hampton Road to Owners Abroad and the office in 22 Church even burnt down, which they always suspected was Arson, as at the time they were constantly picketed by protestors outside the door, because they sold Safaris in South Africa, which then had Apartheid. But my parents were never ever racists, quite the opposite! I don't think, for one moment, you could ever be racist in this business! It is an oxymoron and something that is totally incompatible with our lives, working with lands and people so different from our own. I think you have to love all the different people and places, the more you love the fact that the world is so exciting because of all our unique differences, the better travel agent you are.



Mum in Eilat



Mum on a trip



Mum

All this time my dad and mum were deeply involved with the local community, something he & my mum believed passionately about and organised the Twickenham Festival since 1995 until 2019 & chaired the Church Street Association until 2022, pioneering Al Fresco Dining in the mid 1990's and street fairs & was instrumental in getting the street finally pedestrianised in 2021. He always worked closely with the traders in the street and the council, and I feel it really is a lot to do with my parents'

passion & strong sense of Civic & Communal responsibility that Church Street became the street it is today, moving from a dilapidated side street to the jewel in the Crown of Twickenham.

Many years have gone by since the early days when as 30-year-olds they first set up their travel shop at 22. In 1995 as they were getting older, they downsized & moved to the Church Street Square. Very sadly my beautiful mum, my dad's best friend and love of his life died on the 14th of May 2023. We loved her so much... She was just as determined and as obstinate as my dad and would not have liked us to give up. We really are still very busy as a community travel agency. Bruce is still a font of all knowledge & his mind is as quick and alert as ever & his love & passion for travel undiminished. He still works as hard as ever in the shop and probably manages to be as productive and happy working, because we live just a 10 minute walk away, on the same island that he courted my mum, at Min Y Don, we now live also at the edge of the Waves, not at Min Y Don, but just a few doors down.

Travel has been in my dad's blood most of his life, he has a very inquisitive mind and an adventurous spirit and a great sense of direction! All things I think are quite useful in this profession. He loves nothing more than getting his teeth into complicated enquiries, getting the maps and brochures out, talking to his good friends and colleagues in the trade trying to get the right holiday and travel solution for his clients.

Since 1995 and opening up Crusader Travel, being part of the TTNG has been a god send for a small independent business like ours. We don't have many problems but when we do, the lovely Katrina and Lonela have always been incredibly helpful and supportive as has Steve Button and all the team at the TTNG. It is a perfect organisation for a business like ours, always in the background, but not ever intrusive, giving us lots of freedom to be as creative as we like and letting us get on with running our successful little business the way we like, without telling us we have to do this or that, but also always being there, if we need them.



Winning the TTNG's lifetime Achievement Award was a great honour for my dad. I cried watching him go the stage, escorted carefully by Lonela and greeted warmly by Gary and the team. I felt so pleased to see him recognised for all the incredible hard work he has done all these years. He has not stopped working since he was 15! He sits at his desk, 6 days a week, pretty much every week, and every month and has done so for the last 57 years at least! He greets everyone who walks in, with a cheery smile. He just loves new enquiries. He is still never daunted. Sometimes people come in and sit in front of him, with the most incredibly difficult itineraries and I sit just by his side, and I smile to myself, as I can see how shocked they are, when this 90 year old, almost 91 year old, takes it all in his stride, takes it all in and writes it all down and then puts it together pretty quickly, again with his customary smile and good humour and always great passion for and interest in travel and his relentless optimism. Nothing is impossible really, is his greatest belief and we live this idiom every day. I think that will probably be his epitaph, as he and my mum, ride the clouds together again, united once more, one day.

Now Summer is Over?

By Deep Patel

~ Life Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



Well Twickenham certainly has been roasting these past few days, and all my customers have been coming into my shop so much happier as the sun seems to make us smile more and worry less somehow, so to try and balance things out a little, I thought of dampening the mood a little by reminding people that we are officially passing the longest day of the year in the UK today, so now the days are getting shorter and the nights are drawing in... like it or lump it, I am sorry but it's the truth...and us shopkeepers love speaking truth... those days when it's dark at 4pm are on their way back to us (maybe start to make your Christmas shopping list this weekend?).

The longest day of the year is thought by many to be of particular spiritual significance... perhaps to chant, to meditate, to reflect and radiate inner positivity...but back to the immediate sad and gloomy reality now guys...the longest day of the year in the UK is passing us now...so how does that make you feel? Most customers in my shop were pretty damn disappointed when I asked them about it...they said, "oh no, summer is coming to an end then?" ...Although it has technically started to become darker earlier now (yes I have already noticed it) summer is by no means over...it's only just getting started... I mean some of the hottest days of the year are in July and even August, and I always think summer never really "starts" until the school summer holidays start as that is when I remember it to actually feel like summer...how it was when I was a child...summer days, when people go away, eating ice creams on Twickenham Green, meeting friends by the riverside to feed the ducks and generally soaking up the sun... so to the majority of customers coming into my shop this week whom have accused me of being depressing when I told them "the nights are drawing in now"...I would like to say, it isn't about how much of summer has passed that we should be focusing on, it is about how much of summer is still left...equally life isn't about how many things we may have done wrong...rather about how many things we can still do right...and therefore our outlooks in life perhaps should not be about how much we have lost of anything really...but instead of how much we still could gain, the different opportunities that still may come our way and indeed to see what tomorrow may still bring...for as long as we have life...we have hope...and for as long as we have hope...how can our days or nights can never really be dark?

Remember...

"Light doesn't matter to those who learn to make our own sunshine..."

My Creature-Kindness Tip Of The Week...

STOP ANY INSECT KINDLY (GOOD KARMA): Sprinkle Olbas oil around places where you don't want them to come (but NOT directly on them) ...they will go without you having to harm them.

For ANY specific tip to stop any "pest" or insect KINDLY (for good karma/blessings), email me:

InsectLoversUnite@gmail.com or join my Facebook page: "INSECT LOVERS UNITE"

The Last Laugh

by Paul Hendy

Jamie Wilson Productions at Richmond Theatre until 21st June, then on tour until 31st August

A play about three comedy greats presents a double-edged sword. How could this fail to be a brilliant evening? But what if it doesn't do justice to such luminaries? Fortunately, *The Last Laugh* absolutely lives up to expectations. It imagines a meeting in a dressing-room between Tommy Cooper, Eric Morecambe and Bob Monkhouse. What results is a mixture of well-known and well-loved comedy material, reflections on their lives and some discussion on the nature of comedy.

The audience is given time to draw breath from a familiar Cooper skit, Morecambe quip or Monkhouse one-liner, then to be challenged as to why that is funny. Setting quick repartee against measured cogitation works brilliantly.



The three actors, Bob Golding as Eric Morecambe, Damian Williams as Tommy Cooper, and Simon Cartwright as Bob Monkhouse, are excellent. While they are not simply doing impressions, they are a good likeness and perfectly capture the essence and mannerisms of the comedians, allowing us to be drawn in, rather than simply critiquing the impersonations. They bring a strong characterisation to their roles, coupled with a real warmth born out of obvious affection for their namesakes. The staging in a fading dressing room, with their dressing tables and mirrors around the sides, gives freedom to the actors to use the space – and they make the most of it. The public never saw

these comedians when they weren't performing, but we are given a rounded look at these men, through both their acts and their reflective moments, although it would be worth knowing a little about their later lives.

Tommy Cooper says there is Funny and there is Funny-Funny. This production is definitely the latter, but it also provides some food for thought after the curtain goes down and the writer, actors and production team do a great job of honouring the memory of these comedy heroes. How did they achieve all this? Well ... Just Like That!



Read John Davies' review at www.markaspen.com/2025/06/18/last-laugh-rt

Photography by Pamela Raith

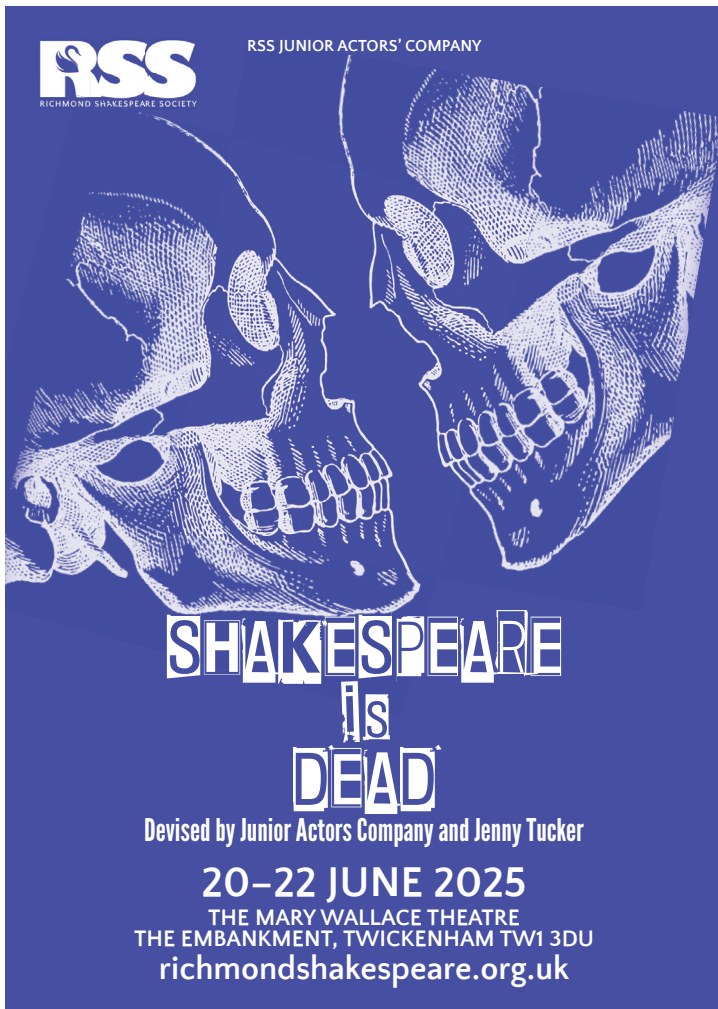
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the Mary Wallace Theatre - June 20th-22nd

In a world drowning in uncertainty, five girls find solace in the words of Shakespeare.

Trapped in the town hall during a flood, a group of schoolgirls turn to the only resource at their disposal - Shakespeare's complete works. As they read, they are forced to confront their futures amidst the uncertainties of the climate change crisis.

A new play, devised by members of the RSS Junior Actors Company and their leader, Jenny Tucker, showcasing the talents of our energetic and inventive group of young actors



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Devised by Junior Actors Company and Jenny Tucker

Directed by Jenny Tucker

In a world drowning in uncertainty, five girls find solace in the words of Shakespeare

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Guidance | This play contains challenging themes & mild threat

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Richmond Shakespeare Society is affiliated to Arts Richmond and this production is entered for the Swan Awards for Drama and Musicals



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



RICHMOND SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY

The Royal Parks urges visitors 'to take extra care' during the heatwave

The Royal Parks charity has issued an urgent 'care alert' to all visitors ahead of the heatwave this week urging everyone to stay safe by taking shade, staying out of the ponds and lakes and helping to prevent wildfires.



The charity, which manages London's eight Royal Parks, is expecting to welcome bumper numbers of Londoners and visitors from further afield to the parks, to seek respite and shade beneath the cooling treescape as they escape the searing heat of the capital. This follows the recent yellow heat health alert from the UK Health Security Agency.

The dry grassland, bracken and deadwood habitats across the parks present a high risk of fire spreading. This is particularly concerning this summer given that this spring has been a double record breaker as the warmest and sunniest on record.

Visitors are reminded that:

- BBQs and open fires are strictly prohibited in all Royal Parks.
- Cigarette butts must be fully extinguished and disposed of safely.
- Litter, especially glass, must be placed in bins or taken home if bins are full – glass bottles can focus sunlight and ignite fires.

Paul Richards, Park Manager for Richmond Park, said: *"To keep visitors and wildlife safe, BBQs are not allowed in any area of any park. Sadly, it only takes one falling ember onto dry grass to start a terrible fire, which can risk lives and devastate the environment, destroying wildlife."*

"Please take care of yourselves, others and your environment by leaving your BBQs at home."

Visitors are also reminded that swimming in any pond, lake or waterbody within the Royal Parks is forbidden apart from in the Serpentine Lido during designated public swimming sessions.

Deon de Jager, The Royal Parks' Head of Health and Safety, added: *"It is understandable that people are seeking to stay cool in this hot weather but please remember to stick to only swimming in the Lido during opening times, in order to prevent an awful incident."*

"During designated public swimming sessions, the Lido is always manned with qualified lifeguards and support staff, and there are several ways swimmers can help themselves to stay safe. People should never enter the water after drinking alcohol, should stay strictly within the marked parameters of the Lido, ensure all children are supervised, minimise the time they spend in direct sunlight and speak to a member of staff if they feel unwell."



MP Votes for Abortion Reform in Defiance of Religious Tradition

Munira Wilson, the Liberal Democrat MP for Twickenham, was among the majority of MPs who voted this week to remove abortion from the criminal law in England and Wales. The change, passed by 379 votes to 137, abolishes a legal framework that has been in place since the Victorian era. Campaigners for reform have long argued that the 1861 law, which made abortion a criminal offence punishable by life imprisonment, is outdated. Yet for many voters with religious convictions, the reform raises serious moral and constitutional questions.

Mrs Wilson, who converted from Islam to the Church of England and has spoken about her faith on Tim Farron's podcast *A Mucky Business*, cast her vote in favour of full decriminalisation. Her support aligns with her party's liberal left values but sits uneasily alongside traditional Christian and Islamic teachings, both of which affirm the sanctity of unborn life.

Critics have raised concerns not only about the content of the change but also about the method by which it was introduced. Rather than coming before Parliament as a full bill with its own debate and committee stages, the reform was passed as an amendment to the Crime and Policing Bill. This route allowed the measure to bypass the usual level of legislative scrutiny.

Kemi Badenoch, the Leader of the Opposition, opposed the move, warning of the risks to vulnerable women and girls. She raised concerns about the possibility of late-term abortion pills being administered under coercion, including by abusive partners. She argued that decriminalisation, by removing safeguards, could expose women to precisely the sort of predatory pressure Parliament should be working to prevent.

Faith communities have also reacted with alarm. The Catholic Church teaches that abortion is a grave moral evil. In the United States, Archbishop Salvatore Cordileone banned former Speaker Nancy Pelosi from receiving Holy Communion due to her support for abortion rights. Although the Church of England does not function in the same manner, the ethical divergence remains stark.

Islam also imposes strict restrictions on abortion, permitting it only in the early stages of pregnancy and in cases of clear medical necessity. Jewish law allows it solely to safeguard the life or serious well-being of the mother. All three Abrahamic faiths consider human life in the womb as sacred and not to be terminated lightly.

Supporters of the reform see the vote as part of a broader international pushback by the liberal left, of which Mrs Wilson is a vocal part, against rising restrictions on reproductive rights since the US Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022. For progressive lawmakers in Westminster, the vote was not just a domestic legal reform, but a chance to signal their opposition to what is happening in the United States and other parts of the world where access to abortion is being rolled back.

Internationally, England and Wales now join a growing number of jurisdictions moving toward more permissive abortion laws. France recently enshrined abortion rights in its constitution. Denmark has extended its legal limit to 18 weeks. By contrast, several US states have enacted near-total bans, while countries such as Poland and Malta continue to enforce some of the strictest abortion laws in Europe.

Given Mrs Wilson's religious background and conversion, some constituents may find her vote difficult to reconcile with the shared moral tradition of both Islam and Christianity. Others may see it as consistent with her party's liberal platform. But the wider public is left with a serious question: how can a change of this scale, both legally and ethically, be pushed through as a footnote to a larger bill?

The change will not take effect immediately. The Crime and Policing Bill has yet to complete all its parliamentary stages and has not received Royal Assent. Until that happens, abortion remains a criminal offence unless carried out under the existing terms of the 1967 Abortion Act. If passed into law, this will be the most significant change to abortion legislation in England and Wales in over 60 years.

In Twickenham and across the country, that debate is only just beginning.



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Environment Committee

By James Knight

This week, the Richmond Council's Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee meeting addressed several of the borough's most significant priorities, ranging from the net-zero strategy and leisure contracts to budget overspends, park access, and tree planting. However, amidst the flurry of reports and officer presentations, it became increasingly evident that the sharpest questions were raised not by councillors, but by residents.

Leisure Contract Award: Public Money, Private Clarity?

The Council has approved a new 10-year contract to manage Pools on the Park and Teddington Pools. The council has been seeking to outsource the management of these pools after incurring millions of pounds in losses due to management inflexibility, lack of marketing, poor customer service, and a rigid booking system that prioritises lap swimming over leisure users.

The contract promises significant investment, the reintroduction of steam and sauna facilities, and a renewed focus on energy efficiency. However, residents and campaigners have expressed concerns about a lack of transparency. Regular swimmer Philippa Edmonds raised fears regarding pricing and service levels, while Kelvin Cheetle and Martin Baker criticised the complete absence of publicly available contract details. Baker noted: "There is absolutely no public visibility of what the council is getting into for 10 years."

While the contract may unlock investment, the lack of transparency undermines public trust. The Council's scrutiny processes require a more robust and transparent approach.

Net Zero Strategy: Aspirational But Unrealistic?

Richmond's Climate and Nature Strategy outlines a net-zero target for 2043, placing significant emphasis on decarbonising buildings and transport. Officers characterised the strategy as ambitious and essential. However, Lucy Hayden, a Teddington resident and retrofit assessor, offered the most incisive critique. She pointed out a mismatch between the scale of emissions and the pace of retrofitting: 3,800 new gas boilers are still installed annually, yet fewer than 30 heat pumps are replacing them. "no viable economic pathway... of eradicating fossil fuel use predominantly mains gas, in Richmond Houses by 2043," she warned. Friends of the Earth and local architects echoed Hayden's concerns, advocating for interim targets, funding transparency, and a borough-wide approach to upskilling contractors. Overall, the new strategy is strong on moral language but significantly lacking in providing a realistic roadmap.



Parks Locking Policy: Divided Views, Disjointed Process

Following a trial to stop locking 11 of the borough's parks overnight, the Council proposed a

mixed policy: seven parks will remain unlocked, while four will be locked. Public consultation revealed a significant division. While early risers welcomed greater access, 67% of respondents opposed the changes, citing fears over antisocial behaviour. Police data, however, showed no serious incidents during the trial. The move is expected to save £24,000 annually.

London Plan

Although not formally on the agenda, the Mayor of London's draft London Plan cast a significant shadow over discussions regarding housing, planning, and sustainability. The new plan establishes higher housing targets and encourages boroughs to adopt increased density and carbon standards. Officers referenced the plan during the climate strategy debate; however, there was no thorough committee discussion on how Richmond would align these new expectations with local planning policies, greenbelt protections, and infrastructure pressures. With changes in national policy, some golf courses in the borough may be considered for development, particularly those located near railway stations, due the need to provide more housing for the expected 10 percent growth in London's population over the plan period.

Tree Planting Strategy: A Greener Equity?

The committee also approved "Trees for Richmond," a 10-year planting strategy backed by £1 million in capital funding. It aims to expand canopy cover, enhance biodiversity, and prioritise planting in underserved communities. Residents strongly endorsed the plan, with over 80% supporting more trees in streets, parks, and housing estates. Officers emphasised their role in climate adaptation, health, and wellbeing.



Budget and Performance

Financial outturns presented to the committee revealed a troubling picture. The committee overspent its revenue budget by over £1.1 million (3%), with the planning department exceeding its budget by 34%. Legal costs, declining application fees, and staff shortages were cited. Meanwhile, capital projects, including libraries, parks, and depot works, experienced delays and underspends totalling nearly £900,000. Officers attributed this to supply chain issues and project slippage, but no councillors questioned the extent of under-delivery. The figures speak for themselves, but the councillor's silence was deafening. Budget scrutiny must be regarded as a cornerstone of effective governance, not merely a formality.

Final Verdict: Residents Are Scrutinising. Are the Councillors?

Across all agenda items, a pattern emerged. While officers presented many councillors failed to challenge, question or probe the detail. Informal briefings on major contracts, lack of challenge on overspends, and cursory engagement with London-wide policies all contributed to a sense that scrutiny is not functioning as it should.

You can view the webcast and read the committee papers by clicking [HERE](#)

Richmond Council Still Failing Children Over SEND & Mental Health Support

By James Knight

At the Education and Children's Services Committee meeting held on 12 June, Richmond Council received updates on its performance across key children's services. While headlines indicated budget underspends and the successful delivery of the borough's Children and Young People's Plan, the underlying picture presented by the meeting and associated reports revealed deeper and more pressing concerns, most notably in the ongoing struggles to provide adequate support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those requiring mental health services.

This was the first meeting chaired by Cllr Julia Cambridge, following the elevation of Cllr Penny Frost to Mayor. Inheriting a complex and politically sensitive portfolio, the new chair opened proceedings with a confident introduction. Yet the challenges facing the borough's children's services were quickly laid bare in the detail of the reports and exchanges that followed.

The committee received a series of reports from Achieving for Children, the council's delivery partner. On paper, some metrics looked encouraging. A reported underspend of £1.083 million on the general fund for children's services was positioned as a sign of prudent financial management. Similarly, the council's Corporate Plan refresh and performance update made much of improvements in EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plan) timeliness and increases in the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation.

Yet the tone of these reports was carefully calibrated. While performance against headline targets was celebrated, deeper structural failings were acknowledged only fleetingly. The reality is that Richmond continues to face acute challenges in meeting its legal and moral obligations to some of the borough's most vulnerable residents.

SEND Budget Warnings and a System on the Brink

The report on revenue and capital outturn clearly indicated that the high needs block within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) overspent by £4.1 million in 2024/25. The number of children with EHCPs increased by 12 per cent during the same period, with a net rise of 212 children receiving plans significantly above sustainable levels.

This is not a sudden crisis. It is a continuation of a long-standing failure to manage demand, costs, and provision effectively. Richmond was one of several authorities named by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2020 for "systemic failings" in SEND delivery. Despite a government "Safety Valve" bailout, the council is once again on the brink of financial and operational instability.

The final year of that bailout scheme has now concluded. The report confirmed that the borough's cumulative DSG deficit stands at £225,000 and is already £303,000 above the expected position outlined in the Safety Valve agreement. Without additional funding from the central government, which seems unlikely given national trends, the council faces an increasing funding gap with no clear strategy to address it.

Even more concerning, the updated SEND Futures Plan, presented as a solution, relies on reforms that are neither guaranteed nor swift. Proposed savings depend on reforms to commissioning and expanded local provision, but many of these changes will take years to materialise. Councillors were informed that inflation is driving placement costs up by between 6 and 12 percent per annum, far outstripping the council's 3.4 percent increase in high needs funding for 2025/26.

Tone management was evident throughout. While officers acknowledged the “widening gap” between need and funding, this was framed as a national issue rather than a failure of local leadership to anticipate or respond to trends that had already been visible for half a decade ago.

Mental Health: Transition or Turmoil?

A separate report updated the committee regarding the transition of children’s mental health services to a new single-provider model led by St George’s NHS Trust. The intention is to simplify the service offering and align provision with the nationally recognised I-THRIVE framework. At first glance, this appears to be a step forward.

However, examining the details raises alarm. The transition will see 24.4 full-time staff members transferred from Achieving for Children to the NHS. Councillors were informed this would result in an anticipated saving of £200,000, yet no clear risk assessment was presented regarding the potential impact on the continuity of care or staff retention. The report did not provide reassurances on contingency planning should clinical or operational issues arise during the transition.

This is concerning in any context, but it is particularly so in Richmond, where the provision of mental health services for children and adolescents has long been inconsistent. Local families have reported variable access, long waiting times, and in some cases, children being placed out of borough due to a lack of capacity. A 2022 Ombudsman report criticised the council for failing to support a vulnerable child with mental health needs, leading to unnecessary distress.

There will no longer be direct oversight of service delivery by councillors under the new arrangement. The NHS is keener than councils to ration care, so this move does not augur well for the vulnerable children who will need mental health support going forward. That context should have warranted a more cautious approach. Instead, the meeting acknowledged progress and financial savings with minimal exploration of clinical outcomes or service resilience.

Services Under Strain

Officers also reported a £661,000 overspend in the looked-after children budget. Residential placements now average £4,856 per week, with some individual cases costing over £12,000 per week. The number of children in high-cost placements has increased, driven by more complex needs and a lack of affordable alternatives. Meanwhile, in-house foster care provision has diminished, with only 39 percent of looked-after children placed in such settings—down from over 50 percent the previous year.

The report acknowledges the shortfall, yet maintains a managed tone. Steps are being taken to recruit more carers and develop local housing options, but results are mixed, and the situation remains precarious.

A Need for Political Accountability

To its credit, the committee did not entirely gloss over the seriousness of these issues. Some councillors posed challenging questions and pressed officers on staffing shortages and budget sustainability. Yet, much of the meeting proceeded with an air of bureaucratic detachment, as if meeting national average performance metrics were an adequate substitute for ensuring that every child in Richmond receives the support they are entitled to.

The gap between presentation and substance has rarely been more evident. While Richmond may appear to be “managing the risks,” the reality on the ground tells a different story. SEND families still face long waits and incomplete plans. Mental health services are being restructured with little apparent clinical input. Placement costs for vulnerable children continue to rise unsustainably. Furthermore, the borough’s reliance on agency staff in social care remains a costly crutch rather than a deliberate strategy.

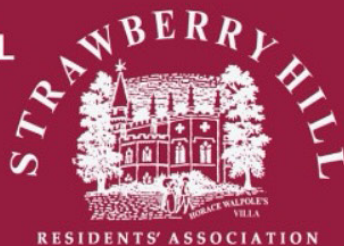
To watch the meeting and access the officers report click [HERE](#)



THE STRAWBERRY HILL PICNIC & BBQ



SUNDAY, 29 JUNE
03.00–06.30 PM



Tickets: Garden Only (Adult) - £6, Garden Only (Under 16s) - FREE,
House & Garden (Adult) - £16, House & Garden (Under 16s) - £5.



St Mary's University

St Mary's Announces Director of Undergraduate Medicine

Prof Heather Angus-Leppan has been appointed as the Director of Undergraduate Medicine at the new School of Medicine, St Mary's University, London.

Previously, Prof Angus-Leppan held the position of Professor of Medical Education at University of East London (UEL), leading curriculum development on the undergraduate medicine programme. At UEL, she ran an active clinical, teaching, and research programme, with special interests in epilepsy, migraine, intellectual disability, and patient empowerment.



Speaking of her appointment, Founding Executive Dean of Medicine at St Mary's Prof Sonia Kumar said, *"Heather joins us at a very exciting time in the launch of the new School of Medicine at St Mary's. She brings a wealth of clinical, research and educational experience which will add incredible value to our growing team, we are very much looking forward to her joining us."*

Prof Heather Angus-Leppan said, *"I am delighted to take up the position of Director of*

Undergraduate Medicine at St Mary's University. I will be joining a wonderful team, who really put into practice the values of the University. We are developing an exciting undergraduate medicine programme with compassion and respect as central values.

The School of Medicine at St Mary's will train students to be human-centred, clinically advanced, and digitally innovative doctors, committed to making a sustainable difference to our world. They will be taught at our purpose-built London School of Medicine, where digital health and cutting-edge technology form part of everyday learning. Students will graduate not only with clinical skills, but also with empathy, leadership, and a lifelong commitment to care."

Over her career Prof Angus-Leppan has held various national and international positions, particularly in the fields of neurology and epilepsy research. She belongs and contributes to various clinical research networks such as National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NIHR), the Association for British Neurologists, and the Medical Society of London – for which she is Honorary Secretary. She has also been an Honorary Associate Professor for the Department of Clinical and Movement Neurosciences, at UCL Queen Square Institute of Neurology since 2020.

At the Royal Free London (RFL) NHS Foundation Trust, Prof Angus-Leppan was Research Director of Theme 2 Research and Development from 2021 to 2024.



**St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London**

HRUC awarded matrix Standard accreditation for Student Services and Apprenticeships & Skills provision

HRUC (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges), has been accredited to the matrix Standard, demonstrating the high quality of the Colleges' Student Services and Apprenticeships & Skills provision to students and businesses.

Following a merger in 2023, [HRUC](#) (Harrow, Richmond and Uxbridge Colleges) has rapidly evolved into a thriving educational hub with three colleges and a strong apprenticeship provision. The diverse and aspiring college group now serves nearly 15,000 learners across west and south London.



The matrix Standard is the international quality standard for organisations that deliver information, advice and/or guidance (IAG), either as their sole purpose or as part of their service offering.

Harrow and Uxbridge Colleges held matrix Standard accreditation prior to the merger with Richmond upon Thames College, and this accreditation of the HRUC group demonstrates the priority the group places on providing high quality support to students, apprentices and businesses.



Students when interviewed by the assessor commented: “there was help at every turn” and they “thought college support was brilliant”.

Roger Chapman, Head of the matrix Service for The Growth Company said: *“This is a fantastic achievement for HRUC and I would like to congratulate the team on their success. We believe that at the heart of high-quality advice and support services are strong leadership, excellent service and a focus on continuous improvement, all underpinned by effective use of the resources available. The matrix Standard is designed to benchmark organisations against best practice in these areas. With their accreditation success, HRUC is working to provide the best possible support to their clients.”*

Commenting on the award, Dylan McTaggart, Group Principal and Deputy CEO for HRUC said: *“At HRUC we aim to provide exceptional learning experiences and create opportunities and success for all. HRUC’s success is supported by our entire staff’s focus on best progression & best opportunity for students. This matrix assessment was supported by our hard-working Student Services and Apprenticeships & Skills teams who work tirelessly to support and respond to the needs of our students, apprentices and local businesses. It is fantastic to see this pride in our work, our students and our strong connections with businesses rewarded in this way.”*

For more information about the matrix Standard please visit matrixStandard.com.



Armed Forces Day: Finding a home for Army veteran Alfred

A vulnerable veteran, who found himself in and out of hospital after being diagnosed with dementia, has a new home at Royal Star & Garter.

Poor health meant 95-year-old Alfred, who was living alone in Buckingham, was constantly being admitted to Milton Keynes University Hospital NHS Trust (MKUH).

But thanks to a number of organisations and teams working together on his behalf, including the Royal Star & Garter team and the hospital's Armed Forces Covenant Support Officer Johanna Hrycak, the Army veteran has been discharged into the charity's Surbiton Home.

Alfred's story is being shared ahead of Armed Forces Day, which takes place on Saturday 28 June.



Royal Star & Garter provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia, from Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe, and now in Worthing, having recently merged with the military charity Care for Veterans. The charity also [has services reaching into the community, including Day Care, Lunch Club and a free-to-use Telephone Friendship Service.](#)

It means Alf is now in a loving and caring environment which understands his needs and celebrates his military background. It also means his hospital bed can be used by someone needing acute care, and reduces waiting times for incoming patients.

Figures released by NHS England in February 2025 shows around one-in-seven beds were taken up by patients who were medically fit for discharge.

Alfred had served in the Army for two years for his National Service, from 1949-51, and was then a Reservist until 1964.

Among her many tasks as MKUH's Armed Forces Covenant Support Officer, Johanna helps patients get discharged into appropriate settings. She said: *"Alfred has had multiple hospital stays over the past few years and it has become clear that he was no longer safe to live alone at his home."*

She was impressed by the charity's Home in High Wycombe, which she visited when the hospital was going through its VCHA accreditation – a programme designed to support NHS healthcare providers understand and meet the needs of the Armed Forces community. With knowledge of the excellent care and support the charity provides for veterans, Johanna reached out to Royal Star & Garter. The team found Alfred a room at its Surbiton Home, as there was nothing suited to his specific needs in its High Wycombe Home at the time, and he has been living there since February.

Johanna said: *"It was a complicated case as Alfred lived in the Bucks Council area, and was at hospital in the Milton Keynes council area, so it took some time to establish who could help him. But we were able to clear this hurdle, and I told the discharge team and dementia team at the hospital about Royal Star*

& Garter. So we were all able to work together to get the very best outcome for Alfred, and I'm absolutely delighted."

Praising the relationship between the charity and MKUH, Johanna continued: *"When someone no longer needs acute medical care, it is important to quickly find them an alternative to hospital. As a military charity offering exceptional nursing and dementia care, Royal Star & Garter can look after patients such as Alfred, and we have the motivation to get them off a ward and to a more suitable setting. Whenever we have suitable veterans, Royal Star & Garter is always my first port-of-call. It's essential that hospitals have good relationships like this with organisations like Royal Star & Garter."*

Alfred said: *"I'm happy to be here, and I am looked after very well. They're very good, you couldn't get better than you get here. It really is excellent."*



Alfred's niece Gaby, said: *"Alfred has been in and out of hospital non-stop for the past five or six years. Unfortunately, he had very little insight into how unsafe he was at home, but Royal Star & Garter is perfect for him. I think it's terrific that everyone was able to work together to get him to Royal Star & Garter. It's been a God-send, and a huge relief to me."*

Shirley Hall is Director of Care & Wellbeing at Royal Star & Garter. She said: *"Our residents are all part of the Armed Forces community, and it is our privilege to care for them. Relationships such as the one we have with Milton Keynes University*

Hospital NHS Trust are vital because it allows us to help vulnerable people in need. We need to breakdown the perceived barriers that we say 'no' to discharges, this doesn't happen at Royal Star & Garter. Alfred isn't the first resident to be discharged from hospital and welcomed into our Homes, and he won't be the last."

Shirley added: *"It's really essential that hospital trusts such as MKUH have dedicated Armed Forces Covenant Support Officers to help and support its veterans. This is a great example of their value and importance."*

Royal Star & Garter has also launched services to help the wider Armed Forces community. It is also one of the charities behind the [Veteran Friendly Framework \(VFF\)](#), the care-home equivalent to the VCHA model.

Armed Forces Day marks the culmination of a week of celebrations, beginning on Monday 23 June, when the public show their support and appreciation for the Armed Forces community - from currently serving personnel to service families, veterans and cadets.

Royal Star & Garter is welcoming residents into its Homes in Solihull, Surbiton and High Wycombe. For more information on this, its new services or to work for the charity, go to www.starandgarter.org



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

England XV Team To Play France XV At Allianz Stadium

England men's head coach Steve Borthwick has named his England XV to play a France XV at Allianz Stadium on Saturday 21 June (kick-off 3.15pm).



George Ford and Jamie George are named as co-captains. In the front row, Fin Baxter starts at loosehead, alongside George at hooker and Joe Heyes at tighthead. The second-row features Alex Coles partnered with Nick Isiekwe.

The back row sees Ted Hill on the blindside flank, his club teammate and last weekend's Premiership Final player of the match Guy Pepper on the openside, with Tom Willis at No.8 to complete the pack.

The half-back pairing is Ben Spencer at scrum-half with Ford at fly-half. In midfield, Seb Atkinson lines up at inside centre with Henry Slade outside him at 13. The back three is made up of Immanuel Feyi-Waboso on the left wing, Tom Roebuck on the right, and Joe Carpenter at full-back.

Theo Dan, Bevan Rodd, Trevor Davison, Chandler Cunningham-South, Jack Kenningham, Alex Dombrandt, Raffi Quirke and Oscar Beard are named as replacements.

"We're excited to be playing at Allianz Stadium and to test ourselves against a strong French side," said Borthwick. "I'm really looking forward to seeing this young team get out there and show what they're capable of. It's a great opportunity to take another step forward ahead of the summer Tour to Argentina and the US."

Tickets for Saturday's clash are still available from £25. For more information and to book, visit: www.englandrugby.com/xvtickets

England's summer Tour includes two Tests in Argentina, followed by a match against the USA in Washington, D.C. The Tour squad will be announced on Monday 23 June.

ENGLAND XV v FRANCE XV

Saturday 21 June 2025, Allianz Stadium, Twickenham

Kick-off: 3.15pm (BST)

15. Joe Carpenter (Sale Sharks, uncapped)
14. Tom Roebuck (Sale Sharks, 4 caps)
13. Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs, 72 caps)
12. Seb Atkinson (Gloucester Rugby, uncapped)
11. Immanuel Feyi-Waboso (Exeter Chiefs, 8 caps)
10. George Ford (Sale Sharks, 99 caps) – co-captain
9. Ben Spencer (Bath Rugby, 8 caps)

Replacements:

16. Theo Dan (Saracens, 17 caps)
17. Bevan Rodd (Sale Sharks, 7 caps)
18. Trevor Davison (Northampton Saints, 2 caps)
19. Chandler Cunningham-South (Harlequins, 15 caps)

1. Fin Baxter (Harlequins, 11 caps)
2. Jamie George (Saracens, 101 caps) – co-captain
3. Joe Heyes (Leicester Tigers, 12 caps)
4. Alex Coles (Northampton Saints, 7 caps)
5. Nick Isiekwe (Saracens, 15 caps)
6. Ted Hill (Bath Rugby, 4 caps)
7. Guy Pepper (Bath Rugby, uncapped)
8. Tom Willis (Saracens, 6 caps)

20. Jack Kenningham (Harlequins, uncapped)
21. Alex Dombrandt (Harlequins, 20 caps)
22. Raffi Quirke (Sale Sharks, 2 caps)
23. Oscar Beard (Harlequins, uncapped)

Brentford's 2025/26 Premier League fixtures:

The key dates

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford's fixtures for the 2025/26 Premier League season have been released; find out all of the Bees' key games and important dates for next term, including when west London derbies against Fulham and Chelsea are scheduled for.

With Brentford's 2025/26 Premier League fixtures released, here are all the key dates you need to know for next season.

The Bees won't have to wait long for their first west London derby of the campaign, as they take on Chelsea and Fulham inside the opening four games.



Bookending the season are trips to Nottingham Forest and Premier League champions Liverpool, respectively.

Find out all the dates for next season's noteworthy games below.

First game of the season

Nottingham Forest (A) - Sunday 16 August

Brentford travel to Nottingham to take on Forest at the City Ground on the opening day of the season.

Two 2-0 away wins were the results between the two teams last term, as Nuno Espírito Santo's side won at Gtech Community Stadium, [before a victory for the Bees thanks to goals from Kevin Schade and Yoane Wissa towards the end of the campaign.](#)

[The full list of the Bees' 2025/26 Premier League fixtures](#)

West London derbies

Chelsea (H) - Saturday 13 September

Brentford's first west London derby comes just four games into the new season, with Enzo Maresca's side travelling the short distance across west London to face the Bees.

[Their last visit to TW8 ended in a goalless draw.](#)

Fulham (A) - Saturday 20 September

A week after that Chelsea clash, the Bees head to Craven Cottage.

Two late goals from Harry Wilson saw the Cottagers take all three points from this fixture last season.

Chelsea (A) - Saturday 17 January

Brentford travel to Stamford Bridge - usually a happy hunting ground for the Bees, after three wins in their last four games there - in January 2026.

A late [Bryan Mbeumo](#) goal wasn't enough to rescue a point in this fixture last year, as goals from Marc Cucurella and Nicolas Jackson secured the win for the Blues.

Fulham (H) - Saturday 18 April

On the same date as last term's clash, Fulham will head back to the Gtech.

In a similar story to the reverse fixture, a second-half goal from Harry Wilson turned the game around for Marco Silva's side, helping them to an 11th-place finish in 2024/25.

[Experience it your way and access tickets with a membership. 2025/26 memberships are on sale now](#)

Festive fixtures

Wolverhampton Wanderers (A) - Saturday 20 December

A visit from Wolves kicks off the festive schedule for Brentford, with a clash with Vitor Pereira's side scheduled for five days before Christmas.

[This fixture last term ended in a 1-1 draw on the final day of the campaign](#), as Marshall Munetsi cancelled out Mbeumo's opener.

Bournemouth (H) - Saturday 27 December

Just after Christmas, Bournemouth head to west London.

[An entertaining 3-2 win for the Bees was the result in this fixture last term](#), with a Yoane Wissa brace and Mikkel Damsgaard's first Premier League goal securing the victory.

Tottenham Hotspur (H) - Tuesday 30 December

Brentford's final game of 2025 comes against Tottenham Hotspur at Gtech Community Stadium. Former Bees boss Thomas Frank will return to TW8 for the first time [since his departure this summer](#) with his new side Spurs.

[Add Brentford's 2025/26 fixtures to your calendar](#)

Final game of the season

Liverpool (A) - Sunday 24 May

A trip to Merseyside to take on Premier League champions Liverpool is how Brentford will finish the 2025/26 campaign.

The Bees were unfortunate when they headed to Anfield last season, losing 2-0 in a closely fought encounter.

All fixtures are subject to change. Kick-off times and broadcast schedules will be announced when confirmed.



London Councils responds to parliamentary report warning of 'cliff edge' for local government's finances

From London Councils

Commenting on the Public Accounts Committee's new report on council finances, London Councils agrees with its assessment of a "fast-approaching cliff edge for under-pressure authorities."

Boroughs in the capital face a funding shortfall of at least £500m this year, according to London Councils' analysis.

Cllr Claire Holland, Chair of London Councils, said:

"Many local authorities are already teetering on the brink after more than a decade of structural underfunding, growing demand, and rising costs. The continuing crisis in town hall finances has worrying implications for Londoners' local services. Worsening pressures also undermine our ability to contribute to priorities we share with the government, including investing more in prevention, boosting delivery of new homes, and generating economic growth."

"We all know the local government finance system is complex and outdated – now we want to see the bold reforms that we have needed for years."

"We will work with the government on setting a different direction, starting with its funding reform plans. London boroughs must secure resources that match the high levels of need, deprivation and cost of delivering services we face in the capital."

London Councils welcomes the committee's focus on many of the key concerns for boroughs as they grapple with enormous budget challenges. These concerns covered by the committee's report include:

- The government's **Exceptional Financial Support (EFS)** policy is a short-term, unsustainable approach to managing councils' budget crises. Seven London boroughs now require EFS from the government to balance their budgets for 2025-26, the highest rate of any region in the country, and London Councils has [described the EFS regime as a "misnomer"](#). EFS is an emergency measure that effectively forces councils into further borrowing or selling assets rather than addressing structural funding issues.

Growing council overspends relating to temporary accommodation and special educational needs. London accounts for 56% of all England's homeless households in temporary accommodation. Boroughs collectively spend £4m every day on temporary accommodation and have seen [skyrocketing overspends](#) on their homelessness budgets. Almost half of London boroughs are at heightened [bankruptcy risk due to ballooning SEND deficits](#).

- Budget pressures are **undermining councils' ability to invest in prevention**, leading to fewer early intervention services. London Councils is arguing that more resources for prevention now will reduce demand in years to come, helping to deliver improved value for money as well as better outcomes for Londoners.
- The importance of the government's plans for **reforming the council funding system** and better reflecting local authorities' needs. In its response to the Spending Review, London Councils said that the planned reforms are now ["make or break"](#) for boroughs' finances.



England faces 5 billion litre public water shortage by 2055 without urgent action

From the Environment Agency

England's public water supply could be short by 5 billion litres a day by 2055 without urgent action to futureproof resources, the Environment Agency has warned today. (June 17th 2025).

Climate change, population growth, and environmental pressures are impacting supplies with the predicted shortfall equivalent to a third of our current daily use – or the volume of 4.5 Wembley Stadiums.

A further one billion litres a day will also be needed to generate energy, grow our food, and power emerging technologies.

The analysis is outlined by the Environment Agency's National Framework for Water Resources. The report, published every five years, sets out the actions required by water companies, regulators, businesses, and the public to best manage water usage into the future.

The EA expects 60% of this deficit to be addressed by water companies managing demand and dramatically reducing leaks. The remaining 40% would come from boosting supply, including the building of new reservoirs and water transfer schemes.

The government has secured £104 billion in private sector spending in water company infrastructure over the next five years, including £8 billion committed to boost water supply and manage demand.

Further recommendations and actions include:

- **Leakage:** The EA will continue to work with financial regulator Ofwat on water company pledges to cut leakage by 17% in the next five years and by 50% by 2050.
- **Smart meters:** Water companies have committed to the vital rollout of ten million more smart meters to help customers understand how much they use – and reveal where wastage may be in their homes and businesses. The average person on a meter uses 122 litres per day, compared to 171 litres without.
- **Efficiency labelling:** Household appliances, such as dishwashers, toilets, and showers, can be more efficient and the EA will continue to work with Government on a mandatory efficiency labelling scheme.
- **Infrastructure:** Water company plans includes nine new desalination schemes, 10 new reservoirs and seven new water recycling schemes by 2050.

Environment Agency Chair, Alan Lovell, said:

"The nation's water resources are under huge and steadily increasing pressure. This deficit threatens not only the water from your tap but also economic growth and food production. Taking water unsustainably from the environment will have a disastrous impact on our rivers and wildlife.

"We need to tackle these challenges head-on and strengthen work on co-ordinated action to preserve this precious resource and our current way of life."

Each region has specific needs related to industry and geography. Since the Environment Agency's last framework was released in 2020, five regional water resources groups have either been established or bolstered to develop plans that identify each area's individual needs.

Between 2030 and 2055, the South East of England will need an additional 2034 ML/d for:

- Drought Resilience: 377 ML/d
- Population change: 424 ML/d
- Environmental improvements: 1350 ML/d
- Climate change: 161 ML/d

An additional 143 ML/d will be required for industry (such as food and drink production, metal production, chemicals industry), agriculture and power generation.

Regional planning is driving positive change in the South East, where water companies collaborate with industries and regulators to share knowledge and take a long-term view of water resources planning through Water Resources South East (WRSE).

WRSE published its regional plan on 11th June for the management of water resources in the area, including how it will address the projected shortfall of 2.7 billion litres of water per day by 2075 if no action is taken. It includes a diverse mix of solutions, such as reducing leakage and customer consumption, new reservoirs, water recycling and regional and inter-regional water transfers, that will increase the region's resilience to drought whilst leaving more water in the environment.

RAPID (Regulators' Alliance for Progressing Infrastructure Development) has also been formed by regulators EA, Ofwat and the DWI (Drinking Water Inspectorate) to accelerate the development of large infrastructure projects.

Ofwat Chief Executive, David Black, said:

"We recognise the unprecedented pressures on our water resources and the ambition to further cut abstraction to improve river health, which we strongly support. This is why we announced £8bn of funding at Price Review 2024 to deliver the required action across the sector to secure our future water supplies. "Boosting supply through building critical water infrastructure is essential to safeguard supplies of drinking water. The way is now clear for the water industry to build on the success of the recently opened £5 billion Thames Tideway project by stepping forward to deliver an expanded pipeline of 30 major projects which we need in England and Wales."

Emerging industries, such as data centres and hydrogen production, require vast amounts of water to cool their systems and the EA wants businesses to explore more options for using non-potable water – perfectly usable but not for human consumption. Additional changes are also needed for some abstraction practices – the taking of water from rivers, lakes, and groundwater for public and business use. The EA wants more sustainable solutions, in some cases, easing the strain on environmentally sensitive sites, such as chalk streams.

The regulator wants homes to become more efficient to support development and the environment. Schemes in Sussex, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk have previously been delayed because of limited water supply. Water shortages can lead to lower crop yields and higher food prices, and the EA is helping groups of farmers to identify how they can improve their supply resilience, for example by sharing water rights and building jointly owned reservoirs

There are also small steps the general public can take. These include:

- Shortening showers
- Turning off taps when brushing teeth
- Using full loads for washing machines and dishwashers
- Collecting rainwater for garden use
- Deleting old emails to reduce pressure on data centre servers



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