

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Last day of summer? Church Street, Twickenham
Photo by Berkley Driscoll

19th September 2025

T&RT

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Deep Patel

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Richmond Shakespeare Society

NHS Blood and Transplant

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St Mary's University

Royal Star & Garter

England Rugby

Brentford Football Club

HM Treasury

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TickerTape - News in Brief

South Western Railway

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the **Twickenham area Saturday 20 and Sunday 21 September**

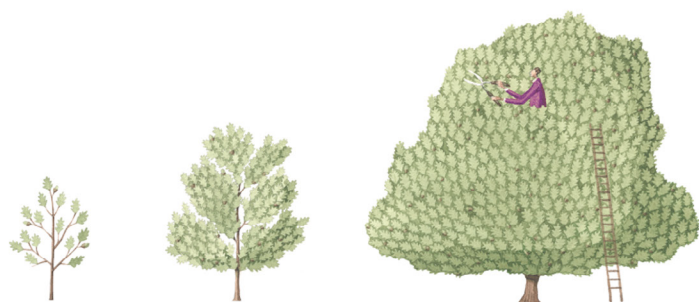
The lines in the **Twickenham** area will be **closed all weekend** due to maintenance work.

Saturday

- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will be **revised** to depart **London Waterloo earlier**. These services will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Feltham** and will call additionally at **Barnes and Hounslow**.
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised**. These services will be diverted between **Barnes and Feltham via Hounslow** calling at all stations.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will be diverted after **Teddington** and will terminate at **Shepperton**.
- A **revised** service will run between **London Waterloo and Richmond**.
- **Buses** will run between **Richmond and Hounslow**.
- **Buses** will run between **Richmond and Teddington**.

Sunday

- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will be **revised** to depart **London Waterloo earlier**. These services will be diverted between **Putney and Feltham** and will call additionally at **Barnes and Hounslow**.
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised**. These services will be diverted between **Barnes and Feltham via Hounslow** and will make additional stops.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will be diverted after **Teddington** and will terminate at **Shepperton**.
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.
- **Buses** will run between **Barnes and Hounslow via Richmond**.
- **Buses** will run between **Barnes and Teddington via Richmond**.



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

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The Tree Agency

Pubs In Bloom

By Doug Goodman

Autumn is well advanced but summer colours can still be seen in Twickenham.

Offices, shops and pubs are looking very colourful decked with flowers. Church Street and many pubs and restaurants in and around the town centre are really attractive thanks to the creativity and hard work of the owners of the properties.

At this time of the year our pubs look particularly welcoming. Anyone for a pint of Flowers bitter?



Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sport Committee Report

By James Knight

The committee covered a full agenda, including the adoption of the borough's long-term Local Plan, a major leisure strategy update, and a quarterly financial report showing an overspend approaching half a million pounds. While the Barnes Green flood scheme dominated the evening and is covered separately, the rest of the meeting proceeded with little of the scrutiny or debate one might expect given the scope of the decisions taken. Councillors approved all items without amendment. Officer presentations were received politely. It was, in form and execution, a meeting that revealed how process can sometimes take the place of politics.



Greggs Bakery

The evening began with a concern raised by Green Party councillor Richard Bennett over development enforcement in South Twickenham, specifically at the site of the former Greggs Bakery. With just three officers managing a borough-wide caseload of more than 400 enforcement files, Bennett questioned whether the council could realistically deliver on its duty to residents facing large-scale construction impacts. He cited dust, noise and vibration from the site, calling the current approach “reactive” and urging the Council to adopt a more assertive model of development management. Officers responded that mitigation measures were in place and within acceptable limits, but there was no commitment to review enforcement capacity. The matter was noted, but not formally acted on. For residents dealing with developer disruption, that may not be enough.

Richmond's New Local Plan

Next came the formal adoption of the borough's 2024–2039 Local Plan. Officers highlighted the positive outcome of the public examination process, and framed the plan as a foundation for resisting speculative development and directing growth on the Council's terms. Yet some concerns emerged during discussion. Residents of Eel Pie Island expressed unease over a reclassification of land as functional floodplain, fearing this could restrict improvement works and depress property values. Although officers assured members that the change merely reflected existing policy, there was evident uncertainty among councillors about what this meant in practice. More broadly, there was little discussion of the plan's housing delivery implications. Especially in light of national targets and no interrogation of how the Council would meet the newly increased targets, considering it's not meeting the current ones and the risk the borough will be forced to accept more overly dense developments.

Barnes Common

The committee then moved to its most contentious topic: the Barnes Common flood scheme, where public frustration over tree felling, consultation, and the perception of “eco-engineering”

without consent flared into sharp exchanges. That debate is covered in a separate article. Here, it is sufficient to note that the Council's strategy of communicating complex environmental schemes through optimistic summaries and technical assurances is increasingly being tested by residents who expect to be involved earlier.

Sports and Leisure Strategy

The tone returned to one of civic achievement during the review of the borough's sport and leisure strategy. Officers reported a 76.8% increase in take-up of the Council's Fairer Access Scheme, now serving over 1,100 residents. Targeted groups included women and girls, those with disabilities, and of particular note sanctuary seekers, who now receive free access to gyms, pools and health clubs under a policy introduced earlier this year. While this initiative was commended for inclusivity and framed as cost-neutral to the local taxpayer, no mention was made of the national political fallout it has provoked.

The council is in the process of withdrawing the universal leisure concession for pensioners and replacing it with a more limited, means-tested offer for those on Pension Credit, which is significantly less generous than Universal Credit, putting senior citizens at a distinct disadvantage. This shift in policy, towards targeting over universality, has been highlighted in the national press as an example of councils breaking the long-standing social contract in the UK, upon which the welfare state had been built, while risking the perception that newer arrivals are receiving benefits long-standing residents do not receive. That was not acknowledged in the report. Nor was it discussed by any member of the committee. Some observers note the committee has become more politically exposed in the absence of regular oversight from the council leader Gareth Roberts, who now spends most of his time at the GLA. With the tectonic plates of British Politics shifting, this may be very risky for the Liberal Democrats in the forthcoming local elections in May 2026.

Another Budget Overspend

Finally, the committee reviewed its Q1 budget position, showing an overspend of £466,000. The figure, attributed primarily to higher waste disposal and recycling costs, was described as manageable, with reserves available if necessary. Yet no councillor queried whether these pressures were predictable, or recurring. There was no discussion of contract performance, contingency planning, or whether similar overspends had occurred in previous years. The report passed without debate. That may suggest confidence in officers' financial stewardship. Or it may simply come down to them not wanting to discuss the matter in public.

Ultimately, all items were approved smoothly, and officer recommendations passed without amendment. The meeting was efficient and respectful, but rarely went beyond what was documented in the reports. Members expressed thanks but did not challenge. When it came to public input, those asking awkward questions were given less time to speak than those offering support. The risk of this approach is that many residents who took time out of their schedules to speak will leave feeling they have not had a fair hearing. The format may have followed procedure, but the lack of substantial discussion on issues as important as planning policy, leisure spending, and departmental finances will leave some questioning whether democratic oversight still plays a meaningful role in this committee.

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



Public Boat Trips

*45-minute round trips from
Twickenham Embankment*

Fri 26 * Sat 27 * Sun 28 Sept.



*Seven trips each day (10 passengers per trip)
along the Thames at Twickenham & Richmond*

Trips leave on the hour:

first trip at 11am, last trip at 5pm

TO BOOK (£8 adults, £5 children/concessions):



Search "Arcadian Thames Boat Trips" on Eventbrite

MORE INFORMATION:

twickenhamriversidetrust@gmail.com

Green Opposition concerned about direction of travel of Richmond Council's Transport Strategy 2040

From Opposition Green Group

The Opposition on Richmond Council welcomes the publication of the Council's plan for its [Transport Strategy 2040](#) and the extensive [public engagement](#) that informed it. However, at the Transport Committee meeting on 8 September 2025, Cllr Andrée Frieze raised concerns that the resulting strategic pillars fail to reflect the priorities and issues raised by residents throughout the consultation process.

Walking and accessibility: an afterthought

Walking is the most common form of travel, yet it is mentioned last in the strategy's pillars. The strategy fails to address key barriers to walking, such as pavement parking, overhanging vehicles from front drives, unsafe crossovers, poorly placed street furniture, and the lack of dropped kerbs. Most concerning is the near-total absence of any reference to disabled access. A truly inclusive transport strategy must prioritise accessibility for all residents, including those with mobility and sensory challenges.

Cycling: a missed opportunity

Despite widespread support for additional connected and protected cycling lanes, the strategy does not include a dedicated cycling pillar. Instead, cycling is folded into general road improvements, which risks diluting its importance. The consultation data is clear: nearly 30 per cent of respondents said "more protected cycle lanes" would encourage them to cycle more. Residents in every ward, bar one, highlighted the lack of safe cycling infrastructure. This is a borough-wide issue, and it deserves a standalone pillar with clear commitments and funding.

Seasonality and safety: lack of practicality

The strategy's reference to walking and cycling on towpaths and in parks overlooks practical realities. Such routes are often unusable in winter or after dark due to poor lighting and safety fears. Cycling infrastructure must be safe, direct, and usable all year - not reliant on leisure routes.

Electric Vehicles: misaligned priorities

Electric Vehicles (EVs) have been given their own pillar, yet they were barely mentioned by residents. Only one ward - South Richmond - raised EVs as a priority. In contrast, "safer and separate cycle lanes" received significantly more attention. EVs are not a mode of transport, they are a type of vehicle. EVs do not address congestion, road safety, or the pedestrian experience, and their environmental benefits are limited compared to walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport. Their inclusion as a pillar in the Transport Strategy, rather than within a traffic reduction pillar, is misplaced.

The Opposition urges the Liberal Democrat administration to revisit the Transport Strategy pillars and align them more closely with the consultation findings, calling for:

- Prioritising walking and accessibility, with specific actions to address barriers.
- A dedicated cycling pillar with clear targets and investment.
- Ensuring all infrastructure is safe, inclusive, and usable in all seasons.
- Considering EVs as part of private car use and adopting measures to reduce this mode of transport.

Opposition leader, Cllr Andrée Frieze says:

"This Transport Strategy is described by the Lib Dem administration as a co-production with residents. Yet, the pillars they have chosen as the framework for the Strategy ignore the overwhelming views of respondents. I continue to push them to reassess the pillars to make them more reflective of residents' wishes."



RICHMOND & TWICKENHAM

Barnes Residents Challenge Council's “Eco-Scheme” on their Green

By James Knight

When is a flood scheme not just a flood scheme? When it becomes a case study in the politics of planning, consent, and elite environmentalism.

Last week, Richmond Council formally approved a divisive flood mitigation project on Barnes Common – a stretch of protected green space treasured by the community for generations. The plan, part of the government-funded Community BlueScapes programme, proposes rerouting Beverley Brook through a newly dug 55-metre meander, creating an artificial island, wetland planting, and has prompted concerns about future restrictions on use, including proposals to require dogs be kept on leads in formerly open areas.

The Council says it will store 300 cubic metres of stormwater, increase biodiversity, and make the green “more resilient” to future floods.

But for many local residents, the project has come to symbolise something far deeper and more troubling than flood resilience. In their eyes, it is the latest example of a council that listens selectively, governs by fiat, and dresses technocratic imposition as public service.

The Appearance of Consultation

Council officers are at pains to insist that the scheme followed due process. Four drop-in events were held. An online consultation drew 76 responses – 55 per cent in favour, 33 per cent against. Local newsletters carried the scheme’s outline, and environmental charities partnered in its delivery.

Yet the democratic façade wears thin under scrutiny. No letters were sent directly to residents, and many only learned of the project after tree felling began unannounced earlier this year. Some trees were saved only after public outcry. Critics argue the “consultation” was less a search for consent than a mechanism for validation.



The Council’s survey, while statistically negligible in a ward of thousands, has since been used as the basis for approval. When residents turned up to challenge the scheme at the

Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sport Committee on 19 September, several were cut short mid-sentence, rigidly held to time limits by the Chair, Cllr Julia Neden-Watts (Liberal Democrat).

Meanwhile, invited supporters, including partners and project officers, were allowed extended responses, clarifications, and multiple interventions. One opponent, who described the process as “managed optics,” drew applause when he remarked: *“You’re all wondering why Nigel Farage and Tommy Robinson are on the rise - this is why. You’ve lost the plot.”* The Chair thanked him curtly and moved on.

Environmentalism Without Consent

The Council’s rationale is not without merit. Beverley Brook is prone to overbanking. Climate change is increasing the frequency of intense rainfall. Nature-based solutions are increasingly favoured by DEFRA, the Environment Agency, and the Greater London Authority. Restoring wetlands and floodplains has technical support in policy circles.

But this is not a debate about drainage. It is a debate about democratic legitimacy.

The most common sentiment among opponents is not climate denial, but civic exclusion. They ask: Why was Barnes Green, a well-used and accessible space, chosen for such a disruptive intervention? Why were no alternative locations presented? Why were cost comparisons – such as decentralised measures like water butts – omitted from public documents? Why are professional officers treated as neutral presenters of “facts,” while residents are cast as agitators or misinformed?

The problem is not just the outcome. It’s the process. And increasingly, it is the **perception** of process, filtered through national politics, social media, and public distrust, that matters most.

A Wider Political Issue

This episode reveals a widening rift in contemporary local politics: between technocratic ambition and community consent. Between climate goals devised in Westminster, and cultural values grounded in place. Between consultation as checklist, and consultation as conversation.

Richmond’s Liberal Democrat administration may believe it is delivering responsible, forward-thinking policy. But their failure to engage the community as equal partners, the tendency to dismiss opposition as misinformed, and the use of bureaucratic choreography to manufacture consent, these carry political risks far beyond Barnes. Residents may support the principle of environmental action. But they bristle at what feels like a top-down moralism that trades access for aesthetics, and local greenspaces for abstract ecological gains.

Work is due to begin this winter. The island will be built, the channel cut, the wetland planted. Officers will log it as a delivery success.

But something else may be lost: the democratic compact between Council and community. In a leafy borough that has long prized civic participation, the Barnes Common saga may prove a turning point, not because the water flows differently, but because trust no longer does.

Centre Stage Festival Ignites Row Over George Street Pedestrianisation

By Michael Jones

The Centre Stage arts festival in Richmond was conceived as both a celebration of local culture and a live experiment to test the pedestrianisation of George Street. While the initiative succeeded in bringing large numbers into the town centre, it also exposed a profound divide among residents about how far Richmond should go in reimagining its public space.

Supporters saw the day as transformative. Chris Diamond declared it *“an absolutely brilliant event.”* For Danusia Trestka, it was *“the best event*

we attended in a very long time. So much creativity, so much passion, so much talent. From live music, to skateboarding, to clay sculpture making, to creating your own orchestra and to all beautiful makers (treated myself to a shirt by the brilliant Dorota Bojanowska). Our family and friends absolutely loved it, more of that please!” For others, the atmosphere was its own justification. *“Had a brilliant time. So many more people in the town centre, and such a lovely atmosphere,”* said Tim Lennon. He continued, *“There’s no good reason why George St shouldn’t focus on people all the time, rather than just special days like this.”*

Yet the festival also provoked fierce opposition, especially from those caught in congestion. Charlotte Clark noted she had met a man *“I bumped into a gentleman in East Sheen who was asking me how to get to Latymer Road and said he had gone all around the houses because of tube and trains also not working and buses on diversion. I think closing George Street has caused a huge amount of traffic elsewhere”* For Nick Dance, the experience was unequivocal: *“It took me an hour to get from Church Road to Richmond Bridge due to the traffic chaos. I will be reconsidering my vote for the council next time!”*

The spatial logic of holding the event on George Street, rather than in one of the town’s established civic spaces, was the most contested point. *“Do it on the green next not in the high street... Absolute chaos never again,”* said Debbie Simmons. Julee Russell pleaded: *“Please use Richmond Green for these events... you are just causing more pollution in the air for kids to breath. Please see the very negative impact you had on the surrounding area.”*

For many critics, the disruption was not incidental but intrinsic. Elena Mikhaylova argued: *“The whole area came to a standstill. Huge negative impact on the local economy and residents. The Council must never do this again. There are much more suitable areas for this such as Richmond Green.”* Julie Hooker was more scathing still: *“Worse street event ever! Interest low, no actual*





theme and not worth the visit or disruption - shocking ! No positive reaction from any locals as total chaos & madness.... Who's paying for this?!!!"

Others understood the trial in more strategic terms. *"I believe the idea was to emphasise the possible plans for the centre of Richmond which are currently being discussed,"* said Siobhan Oktay. *"The reimagining of the town centre as a public space".* In terms of traffic chaos it certainly achieved that.

Liberal Democrat transport chair Cllr Alexander Ehmann has previously argued that pressing ahead in the face of opposition is itself a mark of political leadership on active travel. The council, for its part, has been open about its determination to make driving less attractive in the hope that residents will turn instead to walking, cycling or public transport. Against that backdrop, it seems unlikely the administration has much room to retreat.

Supporters often point to other boroughs as evidence of what could be achieved. Kingston, for example, pedestrianised its central shopping area in 1989. But that scheme relied on building the Kingston Relief Road to divert traffic at enormous cost and disruption. For opponents in Richmond, the lesson is that pedestrianisation may shift problems rather than solve them.

The Richmond Society has taken a characteristically measured approach, acknowledging that *"reaction to the Centre Stage festival has, on the evidence of our previous post, been polarised."* Its willingness to convene public discussion reflects an awareness that the council's vision for Richmond cannot be judged only by a single day's traffic but must be weighed against longer-term questions of identity, commerce and quality of life.



Yet what the festival has already demonstrated is that pedestrianisation will face formidable opposition. A key risk for the Liberal Democrats is that the scheme dominates the May 2026 local elections and could see them lose support in the area if the proposal turns the election into a referendum on the issue. Much will depend on whether residents believe the council is genuinely listening, or whether, as Sarah OL put it, *"they will do what they want irrespective of residents complaints like they always do."*

WOMEN'S RUGBY WORLD CUP 2025 SEMI-FINAL

ENGLAND V FRANCE



ASHTON GATE STADIUM, BRISTOL
SATURDAY 20 SEPTEMBER
15:30 KO | BBC ONE



Dear colleagues,

Centre Stage in Richmond

I've been a journalist for more than half a century, so I'm not going to say "I'll never read you again" or "I'll never subscribe again" - but I was really troubled by the extraordinary rant which took up much of the latest issue, against the joyful and hugely successful Centre Stage day in Richmond.

I can't bear to go through the piece line by line - but a few points. Far from the Little England image of Richmond's heritage which your correspondent claims is being traduced by a one day - one day! - event, when I first lived here in the 1980s Richmond had a very healthy percentage of lefties, contrarians, eccentrics and indeed Guardian readers, one of the things that endeared it to me. Inexorably rising property prices have settled the hash of most of that kind of thing. And the only other point I can make myself address is his suggestion that the disgruntled shop keepers were being destroyed by the loss of one day's through traffic - the street was packed with people having fun, and the shops all along the street were extremely busy.

Sincerely,

Maev Kennedy FSA





greenwood
Community Centre

Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care

Come and join our team of
wonderful car driver volunteers
and give back to your community
- truck and wet nose optional !!

Hampton & Hampton Hill Voluntary Care, Greenwood Community Centre,
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W www.greenwoodcommunity.org.uk T 020 8979 9662 E enquiries@greenwoodcommunity.org.uk
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Adult Social Services, Health and Housing Committee Report

By James Knight

Richmond's Adult Social Services, Health and Housing Committee faced a wide-ranging agenda at its latest meeting, with reports spanning homelessness, housing association performance, sexual health, suicide prevention, safeguarding and the future of care technology.

The most immediate concern was financial. Officers confirmed that the Council is already running a £2 million overspend just three months into the financial year, almost entirely due to the cost of temporary accommodation. Officers did not directly link the early overspend to wider financial consequences. In practice, councils faced with such pressures usually have only three levers: raising council tax, cutting other services, or using reserves – but reserves can only be spent once, and cannot sustain recurring costs.

Numbers of homeless households remain high, with presentations up 15 per cent and first-time placements into temporary accommodation up 26 per cent compared with the previous year. Although unit costs have stabilised, volumes remain well above target.

Members also received the **Homelessness Forecasts and Lettings Plan**, which sets out how social housing will be allocated. The Committee heard that demand from households experiencing domestic abuse is increasing, alongside cases of hidden homelessness and families evicted from the private rented sector. Around 40 per cent of those in temporary accommodation are placed outside the borough or not even in neighbouring areas, creating further challenges for schooling and support networks.

Two major housing associations, **Metropolitan Thames Valley Housing** and **Paragon Asra**, presented their annual updates. Both highlighted efforts to improve repairs, damp and mould responses, and community engagement. Satisfaction scores remain mixed, with complaints handling still an area of weakness. Residents attending as community ambassadors raised practical concerns about delays, lift failures and repeated repairs.

Attention then turned to public health and care services. A new **Care Technology Strategy** was approved, building on the pilot work that has already provided equipment and monitoring to around 1,700 residents. Officers explained that the service will expand to 2,400 users by 2027, ahead of the national analogue switch-off. The programme is expected to deliver savings of around £2 million by 2029/30, while also supporting independence and hospital discharge.

On **sexual health services**, the Committee approved participation in a new joint contract with Wandsworth, Merton and Sutton under the government's Provider Selection Regime. The £50 million, 10-year contract will re-establish an all-ages clinic in Richmond and strengthen primary care provision of long-acting contraception.

The meeting also heard a **sobering update on suicide and self-harm prevention**. Richmond's suicide rate has risen to 9.1 per 100,000, above the London average though below England as a whole. While admissions for self-harm among 10-24 year olds have fallen sharply, Richmond still records the highest rate in London. Officers highlighted progress in schools through the PORTUS toolkit and Mental Health Support Teams, and in primary care through GP training in safety planning.

Finally, the **Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report** showed a 17 per cent rise in safeguarding concerns. Self-neglect and domestic abuse are increasingly common categories of risk. Nevertheless, most cases continue to show positive outcomes under the "Making Safeguarding Personal" approach, with over three-quarters of individuals reporting that they feel safer after intervention.

Taken together, the reports presented a picture of rising demand across housing, social care and health. Officers emphasised the work already under way to mitigate pressures, from property acquisitions to joint contracts and digital technology. But the figures underline the scale of the challenge facing Richmond: higher costs, growing need, and outcomes that remain stubbornly difficult to shift.

Stunning Richmond railway station restored to its Art Deco glory

From South Western Railway

South Western Railway (SWR) has completed a stunning restoration of Richmond station, one of London's most iconic railway buildings.



The multi-year project, which began in late 2023 and is now officially complete, has transformed both the exterior and interior of the station, providing customers and Richmond with a fitting gateway to the area.

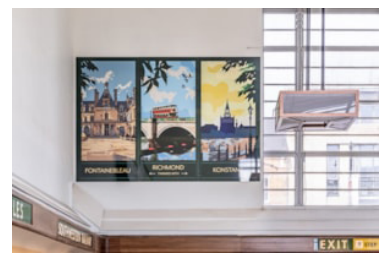
The Art Deco gem first opened in 1937, designed by the Southern Railway team led by chief architect James Robb Scott. In the decades since, alterations and weathering had degraded its elegant appearance and distinctive architectural details.

In partnership with Network Rail, the Railway Heritage Trust, the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, and a range of skilled contractors and craftspeople, SWR has now faithfully and painstakingly reversed that decline.

The two-phase plan to bring the busy South West London station back to life started with the renewal of the station's façade and the deep cleaning of the Portland stone exterior.

This was followed by the repair and polish of the tarnished bronze and mahogany entrance doors and the reinstallation of the high-level station sign; the bronze lettering at the top of the façade.

New flagpoles redeployed to their original position, flying the National Rail Double Arrow, and the use of period-appropriate paint colours, identified through specialist analysis, further enhanced the building's authentic look.



In late 2024, attention turned to the second stage of the project, the entrance canopy and the internal ticket hall.

Bronze fascia panels, handmade to original designs, returned in place of the later cladding, while new rooflights recreated the 1930s “Glasscrete” effect. The bronze will naturally oxidise over time, resulting in a darker finish.

At night, a sympathetic lighting scheme now highlights both the entrance canopy and restored high-level lettering.

Inside the ticket hall, the removal of more cladding revealed the original timber frieze and green glass signage, much of it intact. Missing sections were replaced, while the woodwork was also carefully polished.

To complete the revival, SWR has installed chandelier features inspired by the original Art Deco light fittings, new oak shopfronts for retail units, and retro poster frames with licensed 1930s artwork.

Perimeter LEDs now provide downlighting for the booking hall, while a combination of original and replica green glass signs, such as for enquiries or left luggage, have been brought back into view. An original WH Smith sign has also been preserved.

Speaking at the completion of the project, Chris Gregory, Asset Enhancement Manager for South Western Railway, said:

“We are very proud of what has been achieved, bringing the station back to its original heritage condition and providing a fantastic gateway to Richmond.”



In mid-September 2025, the final elements of the multi-year project were [officially unveiled](#). This includes one of the original metal signs previously displayed outside the station, now in the booking hall, thanks to a loan by the London Transport Museum.

South Western Railway

Early £2m Deficit Exposes Richmond Council's Hollow Scrutiny

By James Knight

This week's meeting of Richmond's Adult Social Services, Health and Housing Committee confronted councillors with a formidable agenda. Officers produced weighty reports, thick with statutory references and data tables. Members asked questions about access for disabled tenants, the trauma of suicide witnesses, and the reliability of care home inspections. At first glance, it looked like the model of local democracy in action.

The reality was less reassuring. For all the sympathetic questions, the meeting revealed structural flaws in governance, weak financial modelling, and a reluctance by Liberal Democrat councillors to test uncomfortable assumptions. The result was scrutiny in name more than in substance, and a borough already sliding into overspend.

Overspends built in from the start

The headline financial story was stark. The Q1 monitoring report showed a £2 million overspend, almost entirely from temporary accommodation. Yet this outcome was effectively pre-programmed. Last year's forecast of 475 households in temporary housing was missed by a huge margin, with the outturn at 679. This year's budget was set on the assumption that numbers would fall to 567, a figure already missed before the year began. In other words, the committee set a budget on assumptions known to be unrealistic, and the overspend was baked in from the start.

Adult Social Care, by contrast, was presented as balanced. But that picture rests on a four per cent rise in caseloads, an eleven per cent jump in mental health demand, and offsetting underspends unlikely to repeat.

Wage and cost pressures are feeding through, while the complexity of care packages grows. The risk of tipping into deficit is real, yet members were content to take comfort in a single break-even line rather than probing the scenarios that might play out over the winter.



Reports throughout the agenda presented single-point forecasts with reassuring certainty, but without ranges or triggers. A robust financial report should show best, central and worst cases, with clear thresholds for action. If nightly-paid placements rise by five per cent, overspend should be projected to climb by £1m. If acquisitions are delayed, savings should be shown to evaporate. None of this was provided, and members did not demand it.

Compassion without rigour

Councillors did raise thoughtful questions on domestic abuse prevention, the accessibility

of the new rough sleeper hub, and the trauma experienced by suicide witnesses. Residents pressed housing associations about damp, mould, repairs and lifts. These were valuable interventions, but they were not the sort of scrutiny that tests the financial assumptions on which services depend. Too often the Liberal Democrat majority used their questions as opportunities to signpost compassion rather than interrogate the numbers.

The imbalance is compounded by the presence of just a single opposition member. Cllr Richard Bennett of the Greens asked the sharpest financial question of the evening, pressing whether the £2m overspend was “just the beginning.” But one voice cannot carry the full burden of challenge across seven major reports.

This lack of challenge is not only cultural but structural. Richmond operates a Modern Committee System in which major decisions are taken collectively, while day-to-day powers rest with the Chair. Crucially, there is no call-in mechanism by which opposition members can force decisions back for scrutiny. Ministers have already announced that committee systems are to be abolished, precisely because they allow decision-makers to hide behind collective structures. Richmond illustrates the problem perfectly: committees receive voluminous reports, but no one stands accountable when forecasts are wrong and budgets collapse.

The risks are obvious. London boroughs collectively expect to overspend by £330 million on homelessness this year. Richmond is already £2m adrift after just three months. Adult Social Care balances today, but rising demand could change that swiftly. Without decision-grade financial information, and without the political will to demand it, the borough risks drifting into the worst of all worlds: ballooning overspends, higher council tax, and worsening outcomes for the very people services are meant to protect.

Officers have been candid about missed targets and sobering trends. But candour without challenge is not accountability. Richmond’s committee system, combined with a culture of reassurance rather than rigour, is leaving the borough financially exposed. Unless scrutiny deepens, the most vulnerable will pay first, and taxpayers will pay next.

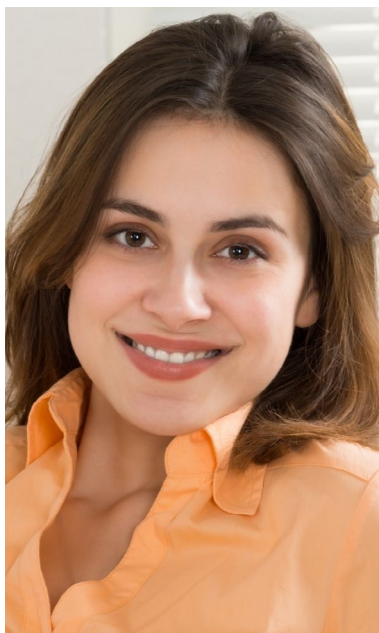
Next week at Richmond Council

On Thursday, 25th September, the **Finance, Policy and Resources Committee** will meet at 7.00 pm in the Salon, York House. The agenda includes 1) the Richmond Growth Plan, 2) proposals for an Accommodation BID to support the visitor economy, 3) a capital programme review covering changes since 2024/25 and new schemes, 4) demolition of the former Clarendon School site on Hanworth Road to make way for temporary housing, 5) the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Phase 4 award, 6) the corporate quarterly monitoring report for Quarter 1, 7) the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2024/25, 8) an update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, 9) additional budget requests for approval, 10) the committee work programme, and 11) a report on the commercial cleaning and associated services contract for Council-managed buildings. For more 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](#)

Trustee Recruitment Evening

Wednesday 15 October 2025, 5pm - 8pm
RHACC, Parkshot, Richmond, TW9 2RE



an event supported by **RC** | Russell Cooke

Trustees Wanted for Local Charities



register for your free place at www.richmond cvs.org.uk

020 8843 7940 Registered charity number 1075259

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Mayor Faces Fire at People's Question Time

The Greater London Authority's statutory People's Question Time in Hammersmith and Fulham was billed as an opportunity for Londoners to hold their Mayor and Assembly Members to account. What unfolded was part democratic exercise, part political theatre, and at times pure pantomime.

Sadiq Khan opened with a familiar list of achievements: more zero-emission buses, reductions in certain categories of violent crime, and over half a million trees planted since 2016. Labour Assembly Members duly backed him up, pointing to cleaner air around schools and more funding for families in temporary accommodation. Yet the defensive tone was clear. On policing, the Mayor struggled to explain why he had pledged to keep front counters open before later closing them. His defence that "when the facts change, I change my mind" convinced few, not least because critics pointed out the facts had not changed.

The issue was taken up by both Conservatives and Liberal Democrats, who argued that closing counters risked deterring victims of serious crimes from coming forward. One Conservative Assembly Member noted that rape victims are disproportionately likely to report in person. Khan countered that new town-centre policing teams were being rolled out, though the reaction in the hall suggested that none of the parties had yet found a fully convincing answer to Londoners' safety concerns.



Tensions rose further when Khan denounced a recent protest as being organised by the far right. The remark prompted audible groans and shouting from parts of the hall, signalling how divisive the issue had become among the audience. Susan Hall responded by producing a small Union Jack, a gesture that drew laughter and a ripple of applause. Gareth Roberts, leader of Richmond Council and representing the Liberal Democrats, (sitting next to Susan Hall) was seen laughing along, apparently more entertained by the spectacle than moved by the Mayor's rebuke.

Roberts himself covered a wide range of issues. He attacked Khan over broken counter pledges, likening them to Titanic lifeboats, rarely used but essential when needed. Yet his party's national stance undermines the point: last year Lib Dem conference voted to abolish prison sentences of under twelve months, a move that would keep many shoplifters and burglars out of jail. For some, that contradiction risked making the rhetoric sound tougher than the reality.

On foreign affairs, Roberts declared that Donald Trump alone could end the Gaza conflict. The remark was not taken up by anyone else on the panel and quickly fell flat, seen by many as posturing rather than a contribution to London's governance debate. On economics, he branded Brexit "*the single biggest act of self-harm*" and urged rejoining the single market, while floating a tourist tax for London. Yet with most hotel nights in Britain booked by UK residents, such a levy would hit families visiting children at university or taking weekend breaks rather than wealthy foreigners. Roberts also warned of looming cuts to children's services, though as Richmond's council leader he presides over some of the highest council tax rates in the capital.

The Greens sought to widen the conversation beyond immediate skirmishes. They spoke of toxic air, poor insulation and rising energy bills, stressing that the poorest Londoners are hit hardest by environmental neglect. But their real shift was political. Zack Polanski argued plainly that "*we should be rejoining the European Union ... and we need to make the case for that.*" In contrast, Roberts had earlier told the hall that full re-entry was "*some way off*," limiting himself to calls for rejoining the single market and customs union. The effect was clear: the Greens sounded keener to press the argument for rejoining now, while the Liberal Democrats struck a more cautious note.

By the end of the evening, Labour looked defensive, the Lib Dems ambitious but contradictory, and the Greens earnest but increasingly calculated in their bid to displace a rival. The Conservatives pressed hardest on crime and trust, themes that found an audience, though their challenge remains to turn criticism into a broader governing vision. People's Question Time revealed not only the Mayor's vulnerabilities but also how each party is manoeuvring for position.

Make a Difference as a Trustee for a Local Charity

From Richmond CVS

The Richmond CVS Trustee Recruitment Evening returns this October, with support from Russell-Cooke solicitors.

The free event has grown once again, in response to the increasing levels of interest every year, and is set to host over 30 charities and not-for-profits at **Richmond and Hillcroft Adult Community College (RHACC), between 5pm and 8pm on Wednesday 15 October 2025.**

As part of Richmond CVS' support for local voluntary and community organisations, this annual information and matching event is for anyone aged 18+ who is interested in learning about volunteering in the strategic role of a trustee.

Trustees are key to the success of any organisation and can come from all kinds of backgrounds, with all kinds of skills. If you've been looking for a really valuable way to 'give back' with your professional experience, trusteeship could be for you. This event is a brilliant way to hear what it can offer from people already in the role, and by talking directly to organisations about their work and opportunities.

A great range of good causes will be under one roof for one night only, and there will be information available about many others. Amongst the stallholders will be those working in areas such as advice, arts, care, children, disability, health, education, history, heritage, neighbourhood support.

Trustee Recruitment Evening

Wednesday 15 October 2025, 5pm - 8pm

RHACC, Parkshot, Richmond, TW9 2RE



The event is organised by the Richmond Volunteer Service, a team within Richmond CVS, who are here to guide you in learning about local groups that could be looking for the skills you offer.

It is again supported by Russell-Cooke - a leading top 100 legal firm which works with commercial, not-for-profit and private clients. They have a longstanding relationship with Richmond CVS and have worked

in formal partnership to assist with legal advice since 2018.

Registration for the event is highly encouraged. Your free ticket includes access to a scheduled presentation session in the early part of the evening, informal talks with stallholders at your leisure, and a glass of wine or soft drink to help you enjoy yourself! You can select a preferred time for the presentation when you book, if you'd like to, and you can join as little or as much of the evening as is convenient for you. If you're passing and decide to drop-in on the day, you'll be equally warmly welcomed.

Why not come along to find out more from some of the amazing groups that support Richmond borough's communities. Take the first step to join the 2025 Trustee Recruitment Evening on Wednesday 15 October by registering now at www.richmondcv.org.uk



English Pride vs Lib Dem Identity Politics

By James Knight

The row over St George's flags in Teddington has become a lightning rod for deeper cultural tensions, as residents accuse council leader Gareth Roberts of treating national pride as extremism while Conservatives say English identity should be embraced, not policed.

The appearance of St George's flags along Broad Street might have been expected to pass as a fleeting burst of local patriotism. Instead, their removal has ignited a furious row and sharpened claims that Richmond Council leader Gareth Roberts is fuelling culture wars by casting English pride as a problem to be managed.

Council officials insist the decision was a matter of procedure under the Highways Act 1980, stressing a policy of removing all unauthorised attachments to street furniture. Yet what might have been a routine act of enforcement has been transformed into a political flashpoint by Cllr Roberts' decision to amplify the crackdown, drawing accusations that the Liberal Democrats are using identity politics to reframe national symbols as suspect.

Cllr Alexander Ehmann, the Liberal Democrat chair of transport, posted on social media that the flags would be dealt with *"just as with any previous unlicensed flag or decoration."* But it was the decision of Roberts, Council Leader and now London Assembly Member for South West London, to amplify the message that has raised eyebrows.

Roberts has made his name as a left-leaning voice on policing and race at City Hall. His endorsement of flag removals is being read not as an apolitical housekeeping decision, but as part of a wider political posture: casting displays of the English flag as suspicious, even dangerous.

That impression was reinforced by an earlier incident in Whitton, where St George's crosses were sprayed onto road markings. Local coverage linked the graffiti to the far-right, citing campaigners' claims of English Defence League associations.



Critics argue this is the problem: the deliberate blurring of lines between agitation and the ordinary impulse to fly the national flag. *"When councils leap to talk about extremism every time the Cross of St George appears, they alienate ordinary residents,"* Mark from St Margarets told the Tribune. *"It looks like identity politics masquerading as public safety."*

Nationally, the row has already reached Westminster. Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch has described it as “shameful” that councils scramble to remove English flags while leaving banners of other nations untouched. Writing recently, she argued that the Cross of St George should be *“welcomed rather than seen as an act of rebellion,”* accusing councils of applying rules selectively and fuelling division by suppressing symbols of shared national identity.

Her comments could hardly be more different from the tone adopted in Richmond. Where Badenoch speaks of unity and optimism, Roberts and his allies have chosen to emphasise the threat of extremism, presenting even small acts of local pride through the lens of suspicion. The contrast is stark: one leader framing the Cross of St George as a symbol of cohesion, the other as a potential marker of division.



The sense of unfairness has been sharpened by comparisons with other displays, from EU to Pride and Ukrainian flags, which are celebrated on civic buildings while the English flag is removed on sight.

Public reaction has been fierce. On social media, Teddington residents expressed anger at what they saw as double standards. *“Why? Are they offended by their own country?”* asked Gary Stubbings. *“So when they put up their pathetic EU flags in High Street, I’ll take them down.”* Another resident, YCMIU, was more defiant: *“I live in Teddington and I hope they put them up. I hope every time they take them down, the people put them up again.”* Others called for common sense. *“Just leave them alone. Ignore them. They’re not hurting anyone,”* wrote one contributor. Another local, SJ, struck a note of bemusement: *“I thought it was for the rugby!?”*

Roberts insists the policy is neutral and rooted in safety. But in politics, perception is as powerful as procedure. By consistently

framing flag incidents through the prism of extremism, the Council risks turning a technical matter of street management into a symbol of cultural antagonism. With passions already running high, the danger is not only that Richmond looks out of touch with the people it represents, but that its leaders are handing extremists exactly the grievance narrative they crave.

For many in Richmond, the question is whether their leaders will stand with ordinary residents in celebrating English identity, or continue to police it as a problem.

Middlesex Yeomanry Autumn Band concert

From Middlesex Yeomanry Concert Band

The Middlesex Yeomanry Autumn Concert is coming to St James' Church in Hampton Hill on Sunday 12 October 2025.

From 3pm the full concert band will be playing your favourites, which this time include:

- A selection from the long-running musical, Les Mis
- The Prince of Wales March written for King Charles III before he became King
- The stirring naval overture, the Windjammer
- Procol Harlem's A Whiter Shade of Pale
- A selection of Benny Goodman hits
- The Fantasia on British Sea Songs

Tickets cost £15 on the door (£12.50 if they are reserved ahead of time) and include both a programme and homemade refreshments.



[Find out more and book tickets](#)

Autumn litter-pick of Sheen's Palewell Common

From Habitats and Heritage

Join Habitats and Heritage from 9.30 to 11.30am on Sunday 21 September to give this much-loved green space a fresh clean after summer.

Bring family and friends! Litter-picking tools and bags will be provided.

Please register by emailing cleansheen@habitatsandheritage.org.uk.

Organised by Habitats & Heritage together with the Friends of Palewell Common.

[Find out more.](#)



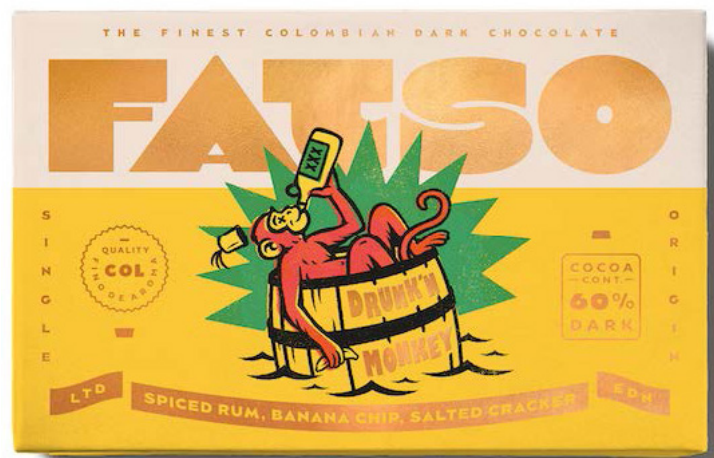
September Food and Drink News

One of the easiest pasta suppers ever, must be with a good dollop of pesto (either red or green, depending on your personal preference). So I have some news for pesto lovers: **Barilla's Pesto Rosso** has just won a **Great Taste Award** star - with judges calling it "an excellent product" for its creamy texture and gentle tomato aroma. Made with juicy Italian sun-ripened tomatoes, fresh basil, Grana Padano DOP, and a splash of Modena PGI Balsamic Vinegar, the pesto is gluten-free, vegetarian, and ready straight from the jar for instant pasta upgrades, toastie spreads, pizza swirls, traybake drizzles - you name it. Packed in a handy 190g jar (keeps for five days in the fridge once open) and available at Co-op, Morrisons, Ocado, Amazon, and selected independents for around £3.



In a playful twist, **Heinz** has teamed up with **Mr. Men Little Miss** to unveil its newest family-friendly pasta sauce. Made with 100% natural ingredients, no added sugar, and packed with three hidden vegetables, **Mr. Ridiculously Good's Smooth Tomato Bolognese** is smooth-textured, tasty and tailored specifically for children's palates, helping parents get more goodness into their kids with less of the struggle. Heinz and Mr. Men Little Miss have created a brand-new character: Mr. Ridiculously Good, a tomato-fuelled spin on the existing Mr. Good. The Mr. Ridiculously Good book officially launches this month for back-to-school season. The new pasta sauce will be available nationwide in Tesco with an RRP of £3.00.

One of our favourite chocolate brands - **FATSO** - has launched a limited edition new flavour, possibly the most dangerously moreish flavour yet. **Drunk'n**



Monkey is truly tropical and tipsy with crisped up banana chips, a glug of rum and a sprinkling of salted crackers in dark Colombian chocolate. The bars are made only with the best cocoa from family-run Luker's Farm in Colombia. The chocolate is true single origin with Fino de Aroma accreditation (just 8% of cocoa growers are awarded this globally!) and grown with the fair and sustainable future of the local community and the planet in mind. £7.25 per 150g bar from sofatso.com, Delli Market, Holly & Co and select retailers, whilst stocks last.



Gloucestershire-based cheesemaker and distiller, **Charles Martell & Son** won the Best Soft Cheese trophy at the **Artisan Cheese Awards 2025**, with its full fat pasteurised cow's milk cheese, **Slack-ma-Girdle**. And having had the chance to taste it, I can seriously recommend it. It's a natural rinded soft cheese, with oozing texture and a delicate flavour profile, including buttery and lemony tasting notes. Well-known as producers of the iconic **Stinking Bishop** – the cheese that initiated a resurgence in washed rind cheesemaking in the UK – Charles Martell & Son collected a host of awards for its other cheeses, including Gold for Stinking Bishop, Single Gloucester and Hereford Hop. Slack-ma-Girdle is available from www.charlesmartell.com, at £35 for a whole 700g wheel, (which will be fab as a party centrepiece) as well as from independent cheese retailers across the UK.

And still on a dairy theme, Welsh butter brand, **Castle Dairies** has teamed up with Halen Môn sea salt (hand-harvested from the clean clear waters around the Isle of Anglesey) to create two new delicious products.

Castle Dairies Salted Halen Môn Butter and Castle Dairies Salted Halen Môn Spreadable Butter are perfect for butter lovers looking for a traditional block butter or convenient spreadable format. Castle Dairies salted Halen Môn butter contains British butter, Halen Môn Sea Salt Crystals and Halen Môn Fine Salt to deliver a wonderfully crunchy texture and authentic salted taste. Castle Dairies salted Halen Môn spreadable butter combines British butter, British rapeseed oil, water and Halen Môn Sea Salt to create a creamy salty spreadable butter packed with flavour, with the added convenience of being able to use straight from the fridge. Castle Dairies salted Halen Môn butter block 250g (£3.25) and Salted Halen Môn spreadable 250g (£3) are both available from Waitrose.



And when it comes to spreading that butter, do try it on the delicious, newly launched crumpets from **Jason's**, the UK's No.1 sourdough brand. It is expanding beyond bread with its first-ever **Proper Sourdough Crumpets**, now in 700 Tesco stores (RRP £1.60 for 6). Made from just flour, water, salt and fermented wheat flour, they're naturally leavened with Jason's Sourdough starter - no preservatives, seed oils, added yeast or artificial additives. It's always refreshing to find a widely available, mainstream brand that uses just 'proper' ingredients, and no 'nasties'.

If you're someone who likes to have a freezer packed with handy, go-to meals, I must introduce you to science-backed, dietitian-designed, chef-made, ready meal provider, **Field Doctor**. This company has just released (in perfect timing for **Breast Cancer Awareness month in October**) a new range in partnership with **Perci Health** (the UK's leading virtual cancer clinic) as part of the UK's fully integrated nutrition and education programme specifically designed to support breast cancer patients to eat well during and after breast cancer treatment. The programme is co-created with leading dietitians Jo Cunningham and Dr. Clare Shaw, based on the latest research, and offers over 30 chef-made Mediterranean-style frozen meals combined with an on-demand educational video series from Perci Health's multidisciplinary experts. This new range includes meals such as: [Teriyaki Salmon + Whole Grain Rice](#) [Chicken Tikka Masala](#) [3 Bean](#) + [Smoked Tofu Chilli](#). They are ideal for anyone who likes to buy healthy, easy and very delicious ready meals, but they also make a lovely and really thoughtful gift.



Last, but by no means least...a delicious Thai whisky! Thailand has always been a land of intrigue. Now it's the birthplace of **PRAKAAN**. This remarkable new whisky is crafted at PRAKAAN Distillery in Kamphaeng Phet, within Thailand's northerly Western Forest Complex - part of a UNESCO World heritage site. The area's abundance of natural resources and hot, humid climate, provide the perfect conditions to make premium whisky with a distinctive Thai character. PRAKAAN has three expressions named 'The Tribura Series'. They represent a pride in Thai heritage. Each whisky is distinctively different in taste, but collectively share the same characteristically Thai 'house style', of tropical fruit notes and sweet, vanilla notes. Each bottle, whether it's the Single Cask (**Aged in Ex-Bourbon Oak casks** £65 rrp), Peated (£70 rrp) or Double Cask (aged in ex-bourbon and sherry oak casks £80 rrp), reflects character and complexity. Available from selected whisky distributors such as The Whisky Exchange.



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Traveller's Tales 177

Exploring The Garden of England

Doug Goodman enjoys a week in a cottage In Kent



A bottle of Ortega wine from the local vineyard along with a very well stocked hamper awaited us on arrival at the cottage. Seventy miles from Twickenham near the village of Biddenden we found our home for a week at the beginning of this month in The Birchley House Farm. The former stables and coach house were well appointed, spotless and joined to a former oast house. A sunny patio, extensive views over the fields and lots of local sites to visit ensured an enjoyable end of summer holiday.



Birchley House Farm



Harvest Time at
Biddenden Vineyard



Nathan of Biddenden Vineyard

ENGLISH WINE

The wine left for us came from the nearby Biddenden vineyard and was rapidly consumed. A visit there was well timed as it was the first day of grape picking and a tour of the 25 acres of south-facing vines by Nathan, followed by a tasting, was fascinating. I had tried English wine before but was unaware of the range and styles produced from grapes grown in Kent. A guide to the wine gardens of Kent shows around ten establishments open to visitors. Most are small or family-run but some like Chapel Down and Domaine Evremond, founded in 2015 by the French House of Taittinger, are much larger and internationally acclaimed. WineGB, the industry's promoter, says that there are over 1,100 vineyards in the UK, an increase of 500% in 20 years. Biddenden Vineyard was set up in 1969 and is run by the third generation of the Barnes family. Eighty thousand bottles made from twelve grape varieties are produced annually comprising red, white, rose and sparkling. The grapes are predominately of a German variety: the soil is sandy with clay and ideal for cultivating Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier – from which the Champagne Region in France makes its famous drink. Biddenden uses the same method to produce its own sparkling wine. I sampled the Ortega 55th bottled in 2023 and released 55 years after the first vine was planted. It was dryish and my favourite. The white pinot noir was a good alternative to chardonnay and had a creamy, baked apple taste. The red from the German Dornfelder grape was light, strawberry in colour and taste. If you choose to have a guided tour or an independent walk and tasting try to be there at lunchtime to enjoy a very satisfying charcuterie platter for two at £29. Prices for Biddenden wines are from £15.40 for the traditional Ortega to £120 for a half bottle of 2018 late harvest. Award winning cider is also produced from local apples. In the shop I 'discovered' New Romney bitter. It's fruity, hoppy at 4.8% and was amongst the best beers I've drunk.



Great Dixter



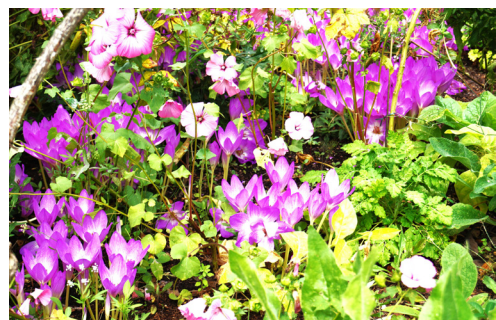
Sunken Garden Great Dixter



Sissinghurst

TWO BEAUTIFUL GARDENS

Great Dixter has extensive gardens in beds raised above the narrow footpaths so you have to look up to admire the colourful plants. The sunken garden was particularly pretty. The house, built in the mid-15th century and much enlarged by Lutyens in 1910, has a magnificent great hall. It is used for educational purposes and offers free training for young and aspiring gardeners. Woodland walks, a nursery and snack bar mean you can spend a day appreciating the skills of estate gardeners. Entrance is £17. Sissinghurst Castle and gardens is another top spot for horticulturists. The gardens are set out in different 'rooms' with specific colours, trees and shrubs. The site began as a Saxon pig farm, became a magnificent stately home visited by Elizabeth 1 in 1573, was a prison for French sailors in the Seven Years War and ended as the home for writer Vita Sackville – West and her husband Harold Nicolson in 1930. Another attraction is Leeds Castle near Maidstone. It contains 500 acres of parklands and gardens surrounding the 900 year old fortified home. Lived in by seven English queens its elegant furnishings testify to a luxury style of living. There's much for children including play areas, an encounter with birds of prey and a rather complicated maze. Concerts, fireworks and Christmas lights are regular events.



Sissinghurst Garden



Tenterden Railway Museum



Kent and East Sussex Railway

FOR RAILWAY LOVERS

Tenterden is a pretty village with many Elizabethan houses. The Lemon Tree, restaurant and tea room dates from the 15th century and is a good spot for a traditional lunch. On 28th of August 1538 Henry V111 called in for refreshments on the way to Small Hythe to see the construction of his new galley. Before walking to the railway station stop at Tenterden museum for a view of local life over the centuries. A highlight for me was the Kent and East Sussex Railway. Steam trains run regularly to Bodiam through the pretty Wealden countryside with regular special events: Santa trips and New Year steaming are very popular while fish and chip suppers are available during the summer as well as silver service dining. For anyone who can remember steam trains before Dr. Beeching's report on the state of our railways caused the closure of so many branch lines and was followed by the demise of steam locomotives, the railway museum

will bring back memories. Displays of uniforms, tickets, signs, timetables and model trains are there to attract the enthusiast. If you collect railway books there are literally thousands of them at a cost of from £1 each. The museum is dedicated to Colonel Stevens who designed and built the, now preserved, K&ESR line. When waiting for a train ride spend time in this free museum or relax in the adjacent tap room with a glass of Romney Bitter.



Tenterden Station

Biddenden is a tiny village with a general store, a bakery, tea room and two pubs. The Three Chimneys has a good choice of dishes made from local produce and of course accompanied with wines from Biddenden. The name derives from 'Les trois chemins', which was as far as the French prisoners incarcerated at nearby Sissinghurst during the 1756-1763 five years' war, were allowed to travel. At Headcorn you can visit an aviation museum, fly in a Spitfire or helicopter and do a parachute jump. The sound of a Spitfire's Merlin engine as the historic fighter flew over the fields was magical. A week in Kent was far too short: no time to visit Canterbury Cathedral, Dover Castle, Romney Marsh or delightful Rye.



Leeds Castle



Leeds Castle

The Cottage: www.birchleyhousefarm.co.uk. Biddenden Vineyards: www.biddendenvineyards.com.
Wine Gardens: www.winegardenofengland.co.uk Good beer: www.romneymarshbrewery.com
Great Dixter: www.greatdixter.co.uk Sissinghurst: www.sissinghurst@nationaltrust.org.uk T
enterden Museum: www.tenterdenmuseum.co.uk. Leeds Castle: www.leeds-castle.com.
Three Chimneys restaurant: www.thethreechimneys.co.uk.

The Great River Race 2025

Photos from Bruce Lyons

The Great River Race starts at 10.15 on Saturday, 20th September.

The Great River Race is London's River Marathon. It's a spectacular boat race covering 21.6 miles from Millwall in the East to Richmond in the West, travelling under London's famous bridges.

It appeals to every level of competitor, from dedicated athletes who come every year to beat their records to those who simply enjoy laughter, fancy dress and making money for their charity. It's a great fun day out for both competitors and spectators.



Find more information [HERE](#)

About ready for it...

By Deep Patel

~Life through the eyes of a Twickenham shopkeeper~

This past week we have felt a real change in the weather...I have had to put on the long sleeves and one morning whilst opening the shop up early, I even had to put on some long-johns (don't laugh, but comfort has to come first for me and my legs were feeling a lot more cosy after). Across the road from my shop (for those of you who have visited it before) is a mature tree-lined street named Walpole Road, and there is a very mature conker tree...it is generously scattering its shiny-beauties all over, just as the maple tree is posting its huge spent, crisp leaves through my shop door. These things for me at least are the first signs that winter is on the way (for those reading this right now saying "it's autumn first silly", it isn't... there are only two seasons...hot season and cold season...and there are varying degrees of each! Makes life simpler that way I think...life is complicated enough as it is isn't it?).

So I was preparing myself for winter...cracking out the longer socks, hoodies and yes, donning the long-johns too to keep my legs nice and toasty...but the oddest thing happened yesterday... after a week of cold, rain and wind, Friday in Twickenham was a sharp and sudden blast of heat, enough to make me fold away the long-johns and put them back in my drawer. Customers were coming in with full summer gear on and my shop door was swung wide open with a bag of cat-litter to prop it in open position so it doesn't close...it had gone from winter all week to suddenly being summer again...but for the first time ever, I noticed something very strange... practically all of my customers were not really that excited about the "glorious warm weather" on Friday that we all just had in Twickenham...in fact some were even complaining about it...as in "why is it hot again, it's meant to be autumn?"...usually my customers were excited, grateful, super-happy about hot days...not this time...but as well as slightly peculiar (ok more than slightly) I found this at the same time be incredibly reassuring...

It was as though those around me were saying "it doesn't matter how the weather is, it's what is in our minds that makes a day lovely or not"...it was exactly as though my customers had accepted a few days prior that summer had come to an end and that colder, wetter, windier times were here...but they accepted it...and so even having that one sudden glorious shorts and tee-shirt day of Friday just gone didn't really excite or bother them...they were almost disappointed with the "glorious warm day" as if to say to the heat "hey, what are you doing back, you've had your time, you are meant to be gone now"...It was most peculiar and I had never noticed this in my customers before...but my customers were showing an attitude of being non-dependent on the heat or good weather to feel happy, they simply were happy being present, in the moment, almost just accepting whatever life was giving them and choosing to be completely at peace with that, like they were "about ready for it" when it came to the cooler weather...they were just happy to go on about their lives with their work, friends and family and just live. It was beautiful. Flags are featuring heavily in the news at the moment, but it was the attitude of resilience, acceptance and "just carry on" relating to the weather that I witnessed in my customers this week that both inspired me and at the same time made me remember what we are like here in the UK...when it comes to the weather...we just adapt and carry on...and that is what makes me proud to be a British shopkeeper in Twickenham.



Remember...

“...At the end of the day, it is what it is right?...”

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP OF THE WEEK...
REMEMBER...IF YOU ARE THIRSTY...SO ARE THEY

During these extra hot days, remember to leave a shallow bowl of water out in full easy view (perhaps on the lawn) so that severely dehydrated wildlife from insects to birds to hedgehogs and foxes (and all in-between) can keep living happy...go on... spread a little love, good karma, kindness and compassion in a world that so desperately needs it today...you never know when the karma will bless you back.

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

Sixtieth Anniversary in Music: Preview

Donovan coming to Richmond Theatre, 12th October

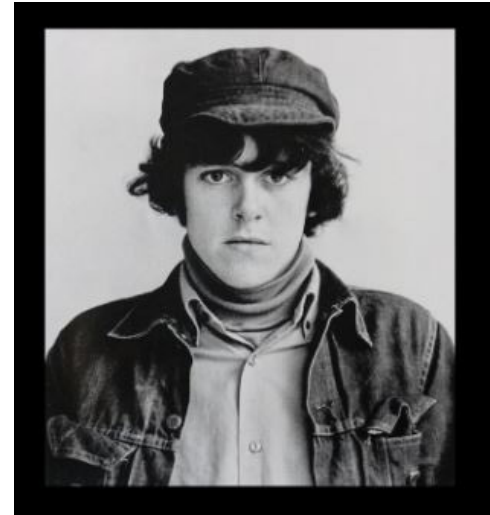
Our music critic Vince Francis was up with the lark last week, intercepting the District's first post-strike service. The objective: rendezvous with icon of the musical, and social, revolution of the 1960's, Donovan. Meeting in his hotel bar, Donovan proved to be a generous raconteur.

Vince reports: our conversation explored a rich life in music, from his birthplace in Glasgow in 1946, to the 1960s Hertfordshire hotbed of folk; then the ashram of Maharishi Yogi and transcendental meditation in India, where he taught John Lennon; American tours, and on to today.

Donovan's album work is markedly distinct from the records he is more famous for. Yet his enduring image to the wider public is the archetypal guy-and-guitar (and harmonica) folk singer.

Donovan's first musical ambition was to play drums. A drum kit, bought for him by his father, on the "never-never", enabled him to explore the instrument, but also brought him to the realisation that he really only wanted to understand percussionists' techniques. This discovery improved relations with the neighbours, who had been sharing his musical development with varying degrees of enthusiasm.

A significant meeting in his period in Hertfordshire was with the sculptor Peckham, born Dave Mills, known as Gyp, who became a trusted friend and mentor supporting Donovan's emerging musical influence, whilst shielding him from the notorious excesses of the musical scene. The net effect was seen in the expansion of song writing styles used by the Beatles such as Lennon's acoustic fingerpicking styles following Donovan's tuition in India.



Donovan's [current activities](#) include a film essay, *The Tale of the Gæil*, a contemplation of the impact of Gaelic traditions of music, poetry and storytelling on western culture.

Donovan has launched a tour to celebrate his Sixtieth Anniversary in the business, starting at [Richmond Theatre next month](#), performing all his popular songs, and early acoustic gems. He has great affection for Richmond, recalling the Crawdaddy Club in the Station Hotel, and the proximity to Twickenham, with its history of Eel Pie Island, together a veritable Mecca of music.

After two hours, our chat warranted a second "cup of tea and biscuits". It was a genuine privilege to have the opportunity to meet one of the iconic figures of my youth. Donovan is delightful company, and I left the hotel with a spring in my step and I'm sure he will have the same effect on the audiences he will undoubtedly attract.

Read Vince Francis' preview at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/14/sixty-donovan-preview

Photography by Jaume Caldentey and Donovan Private Archive

BINGO : Scenes of Money and Death - by Edward Bond

The Mary Wallace Theatre - 13th-20th September

From Richmond Shakespeare Society

Review by Steven Mackerell

Deep, dark and disturbing – and that’s only the first few minutes of Edward Bond’s 1973 play *Bingo*, now being revived by Richmond Shakespeare Society at the Mary Wallace Theatre. Bond, who died last year, wrote some 50 plays and first gained notoriety for his edgy violent plays back in the 1960’s as an emerging playwright with the Royal Court Theatre.

Bingo is a strange title for a strange play which conveys little clue to its content. The full title, *Bingo - Scenes of Money and Death*, sheds more light on the play’s themes but still fails to allude to the actual subject matter. We are, in fact, in seventeenth century England witnessing the last few years of Shakespeare’s life.



Bond’s Shakespeare, far from being revered as the imaginative master of drama, appears as a brooding and disillusioned old man looking back on his career with doubt and disappointment. Rather than celebrating his achievements, Bond imagines an ageing Shakespeare as a broken character contemplating the cruelties and injustices of society while being motivated by financial greed. It is a canvas created by Bond on which to paint his Marxist ideas of money, wealth and power, and highlighting a political system favouring the rich while keeping the poor in misery. Indeed, it is implied that the social and political issues of the sixteenth century resonate with modern parallels.



Bingo opens with Shakespeare, now a forlorn old man, reminiscing in his garden at home in Stratford. He is depressed, introspective and, with advancing age, bereft of creativity. While he reflects in the garden, events around him multiply. His gardener is having sex with a beggar, a landowner is seeking support to throw tenants off their lands, a religious zealot is hysterical, and the beggar woman is taken to be publicly whipped for prostitution. And that’s just the first scene.

Fighting the somewhat complex and dense text, directors John Buckingham and Cath Messum have ensured the action flows smoothly from scene to scene and have tried hard to ensure the complex plot is digestible, even if we don’t fully understand the laws of seventeenth century land ownership and tenancy. Yes, at times this sombre production can be hard going and, with occasional dull patches, the audience need to remain alert. Indeed, the opening scenes demand much of the audience in understanding who is who and their relationships. The cast list is unhelpful by using generic labels like “old man” and “first old woman.” To help the audience focus, the cast work hard to relieve possible confusion and breathe believability into their characters.

In bringing Bond's vision of Shakespeare to life, John Buckingham has directed the ageing bard as flawed and selfish, encouraging the audience to dislike him and to have little empathy for the character. In the role, Chris Haddock displays a cold, dispassionate and world-weary Shakespeare, who appears menacing even in his moments of brooding sullen silence.

Other characters we meet on Shakespeare's way to dusty death include his bitter daughter Judith, whom he's ignored for many years. Éireann McKeon's performance fully captures the essence of this cold-hearted woman, resentful of her father's treatment of her mother. Good performances also from Shakespeare's mentally impaired gardener (Colin Rogal), Shakespeare's loyally concerned housekeeper who is also the gardener's wife (Susan Reoch) and their son (Nathan Hall), a puritanical radical in conflict with the repressive landowner.

One of the most dramatic images of the play that lingers in the mind is the depiction of the beggar woman's body hanging from the gallows. Amber Celeste Nixon, as the beggar woman/prostitute, gave a touching performance and carved out a disturbing picture of a vulnerable and exploited woman resigned to her fate.

The "villain" of the play is a wealthy landowner, William Coombe, played with an aloof arrogance by Jeremy Gill. The introduction of this character seems to be a device by Bond as a test of Shakespeare's loyalty and social conscience; will he side with the poor tenant farmers facing eviction from their lands, or side with the landowner in enclosing the common lands, so benefiting Shakespeare financially? Hardly a spoiler alert, but he chooses to follow the money.



Then, in the second act, a much-needed drop of light comic relief as the unremitting bleakness of the production is shattered by the introduction of a boisterous, bawdy and drunken tavern scene. Shakespeare is drinking with his theatrical friend and rival Ben Jonson, played with exquisite timing and conviction by Daniel Wain. Jonson announces that the Globe Theatre has burnt down to which a now disinterested Shakespeare hardly raises an eyebrow. Fuelled by drink, Jonson baits Shakespeare by asking "What was *The Winter's Tale* all about?" As the drink is steadily consumed, so their drunken ramblings grow. "I hate writing" bellows Jonson, "fat white fingers excreting dirty black ink." A compelling and well-judged caricature of Jonson by Daniel Wain who manages to restrain his performance to within an inch of farce.

Thereafter, bleakness returns, and after an inexplicable snowball fight, the final melodramatic death scene arrives with hysterical female screaming offstage (an unseen Anne Hathaway) and his daughter searching desperately to find Will's will.

All in all, a provocative imagining of Shakespeare's possible personality and attitudes in his declining final years. It paints a grim and unflattering caricature of Shakespeare which borders on heresy about our greatest playwright. But then, could that unfavourable view be the whole point of the play? *Bingo!!*

Photo Credit: Pete Messum

Calling all Londoners – 27,000 blood donation appointments which need to be filled

From NHS Blood and Transplant



Right now, there is an urgent need for Londoners to help fill available blood donation appointments across the capital, including over 27,000 appointments available at our city donor centres (West End, Stratford, Shepherds Bush, Brixton, Tooting, Edgware and Twickenham) over the next six weeks – around 4,500 per week.

Currently, there is a particular need for more O negative and B negative donors, as well as more donors of Black heritage to help treat patients with sickle cell.

O negative is the blood type used to treat patients in emergencies, including accidents and childbirth, and is therefore in constant high demand.

If you have one of these much-needed blood types and are able to donate, please go online at www.blood.co.uk or call 0300 123 23 23 to book an appointment.

By giving an hour of your time, you could save up to three lives.
With thanks: Gerry Gogarty, Director of Blood Supply,
NHS Blood and Transplant



Blood and Transplant

Body-worn video cameras to help South Western Railway tackle daily assaults against colleagues

South Western Railway (SWR) has warned of an unacceptable rise in assaults and abuse against its colleagues, as the train operator expands the use of body-worn video cameras to help tackle the issue.



So far this year, SWR has recorded more than two assaults every day against colleagues across its network. These include violent attacks and verbal threats.

The number of reported incidents of violent and public order offences have doubled between 2020-21 and 2024-25, according to British Transport Police (BTP).

While improved reporting might explain some of the rise, the worrying upward trend is in line with similar increases seen in other public services and industries, such as in the NHS and retail.

These incidents can have a significant impact on colleagues' physical and mental wellbeing, even affecting railway operations as colleagues take time off to recover.

They can also result in serious consequences for the perpetrator as SWR supports BTP with investigations and criminal prosecutions.

Following an initial trial in 2021, SWR has introduced body-worn video cameras for colleagues in customer-facing roles, such as train guards and gateline assistants.

The cameras, which are activated by the wearer and capture 30 seconds of footage prior to activation, can deter assaults and other anti-social behaviour as well as collect video and audio

evidence for use in legal proceedings.

To warn potential perpetrators of the impact that abusing colleagues can have, both for them and the colleague, SWR has launched a striking new poster campaign.

Three posters depict intimidating incidents of abuse from the perspective of a colleague, captured on a body-worn video camera.



While it is hoped the posters will instil empathy for colleagues who face abuse, they also show the perpetrators facing police custody, trial and ultimately prison.

The campaign aims to prevent incidents by alerting potential perpetrators to the use of body-worn video cameras and reminding them of the consequences of abuse.

A [study](#) published by the University of Cambridge, commissioned by the Rail Delivery Group and BTP, suggested that body-worn video cameras can reduce the likelihood of assault against the wearer by 47%.

Jane Lupson, Safety and Security Director for South Western Railway, commented:

“The rise in abuse directed against our colleagues, including daily assaults, is totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Keeping people safe on our railway is always our number one priority, not least our colleagues who serve our customers with care every day.

“The introduction of body-worn video cameras will help deter anyone thinking of abusing a colleague and help prosecute those who do.

“We hope this striking new campaign will remind potential perpetrators of the consequences of abuse, for colleagues and for them.”

SWR is an industry leader in safeguarding, achieving the [highest possible score](#) of 100% for BTP’s Safeguarding on Rail scheme for two years running, demonstrating its commitment to looking after customers and colleagues.

Reporting incidents has been made easier for SWR colleagues thanks to the development of a new colleague app, which shares the information with BTP.

The new campaign follows another striking [campaign](#) SWR launched last year, highlighting the impact that thoughtless abuse of colleagues can have.

**South Western
Railway**

St Mary's University

St Mary's London School of Medicine to Open in September 2026

St Mary's University, London is proud to announce it will open a new School of Medicine in 2026, with [applications now open](#).



Driven by scientific and digital excellence, human values and social purpose, the School is set to be one of the UK's first socially accountable medical schools. It will focus on preparing the next generation of doctors to address 21st Century health and health system challenges and inequalities locally and globally, nurturing a new generation of socially engaged doctors.

Following rigorous assessment, the General Medical Council (GMC) has confirmed that it is assured of St Mary's progress in the early planning and development of the programme and that the university is on track to welcome its first cohort in 2026. Medical students will be based in the University's new Centenary Building in Twickenham, featuring state-of-the-art digital and simulation facilities, alongside community placements from their first year.

St Mary's Vice-Chancellor Professor Anthony McClaran said, "This is a landmark moment for St Mary's. Our new School of Medicine reflects

our commitment, as an inclusive Catholic university, to combining academic excellence with social purpose. We are creating a medical school that will help shape the future of healthcare in the UK and beyond."

Founding Executive Dean of the St Mary's School of Medicine Professor Sonia Kumar added, "We are deeply grateful to the staff at St Mary's, local and global partners, donors and the GMC for their support and commitment in getting us to this key milestone. We look forward to working with you all over the coming years realising our mission and vision to align our School to the 10-year NHS plan, addressing the priorities of our population, the needs of our health system and the skills and attributes needed by our health workforce".

Students will learn both on campus and on placements from year 1, learning through care and service to those who need it most. From year 1, students will experience being at the centre of their learning and local communities, actively learning through social action projects, health coaching, patient advocacy and music therapy,

Through collaboration with local and international partners from across Australia, Canada, India, Europe, and the United States, the School will strive to advance its innovation and research, reinforcing its commitment to being both locally engaged and globally oriented.

[Applications for 2026 are now open.](#)



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Open Days for veterans and their partners at Surbiton care home

Royal Star & Garter is holding two open days at its Surbiton Home.

They will take place on 7 and 9 October, and showcase the exceptional nursing and dementia care it provides for veterans and their partners, alongside its Day Care and Lunch Clubs.

The open days will run from 11am-1pm on 7 October and 2-4pm on 9 October, and those wishing to attend are asked to register in advance.

The Home provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia. Day Care and Lunch Clubs are among newer services reaching out into the community which have also been launched at the Home.

Those attending the open days will be given a snapshot of everyday life at the Upper Brighton Road Home, and the chance to speak to the Home Manager and other senior staff. They will be offered a tour of the Home, which will include the in-house physiotherapy room and hair salon, gardens, activities rooms and lounges. Visitors will also have the chance to join in with the activities organised by the dedicated Wellbeing team, and chat to residents.



Helena Maher, Home Manager at Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton, said: *“We understand that choosing a care home can feel like a big decision, which is why we’d love to welcome you for a visit. Our Home is like a family, dedicated to caring for veterans and their partners with warmth and compassion. Open days are a great chance to have a look around, see the fantastic facilities and activities on offer, and have a friendly chat with our team.”*

The open days are for veterans – including reservists and those who completed National Service – and/or their partners, as well as two accompanying relatives or friends. Those wishing to attend are asked to register interest online through Eventbrite, with places limited to three per booking. To register interest, please go to bit.ly/SRB-Open-Days

If you are unable to register online, please call 0808 281 5068. If you are unable to attend the open days but would like a tour of the Home or to speak to staff about becoming a resident or a short break, please email enquiries@starandgarter.org or call 0808 281 5068.



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

Red Roses Team to Play France



Head coach John Mitchell had made four changes to his Red Roses side to play France in the Women's Rugby World Cup semi-final at Ashton Gate, Bristol on Saturday (KO 3.30pm).

Full-back Ellie Kildunne and prop Hannah Botterman return to the starting XV after missing the quarter-final victory over Scotland, while fly-half Zoe Harrison and lock Abbie Ward are promoted from the replacements.

With six tries in the tournament to date, Jess Breach remains an ever present on the wing with Megan Jones, the only other England player to start every game to date, named at outside centre.

Abby Dow hit 50 England tries on the weekend and continues on the wing. Scrum-half Natasha Hunt and inside centre Tatyana Heard complete the backline.

Botterman's inclusion in the front row sees her link up with hooker Amy Cokayne and tighthead prop Maud Muir for the third time in the tournament.

Player-of-the-match against Scotland, Morwenna Talling packs down in the second row alongside Ward. Captain Zoe Aldcroft, Sadia Kabeya and Alex Matthews make up a familiar back row partnership.

Mitchell said: *"Ashton Gate set the stage for a strong performance in tough conditions last weekend, and the girls are eager to get back out there for the semi-final."*

"We've earned this stage, and now we've got another chance to earn the right. Our game is working and is the right way; by working together we'll keep getting better."

"France have faced challenges, and that will drive them - we expect it. We don't need to be perfect, just effective, focused, and ready for the fight. We're excited and ready to hunt them."

Red Roses team to play France

15 Ellie Kildunne (Harlequins, 55 caps)
14 Abby Dow (Unattached, 57 caps)
13 Megan Jones (Trailfinders Women, 31 caps)
12 Tatyana Heard (Gloucester-Hartpury, 34 caps)
11 Jess Breach (Saracens, 51 caps)
10 Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 63 caps)
9 Natasha Hunt (Gloucester-Hartpury, 85 caps)

1 Hannah Botterman (Bristol Bears, 60 caps)
2 Amy Cokayne (Sale Sharks, 87 caps)
3 Maud Muir (Gloucester-Hartpury, 46 caps)
4 Morwenna Talling (Sale Sharks, 26 caps)
5 Abbie Ward (Bristol Bears, 79 caps)
6 Zoe Aldcroft (Gloucester-Hartpury, 67 caps) - captain
7 Sadia Kabeya (Loughborough Lightning, 26 caps)
8 Alex Matthews (Gloucester-Hartpury, 79 caps)

Replacements

16 Lark Atkin-Davies (Bristol Bears, 72 caps)
17 Kelsey Clifford (Saracens, 19 caps)
18 Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 77 caps)
19 Rosie Galligan (Saracens, 29 caps)

20 Maddie Feaunati (Exeter Chiefs, 21 caps)
21 Lucy Packer (Harlequins, 37 caps)
22 Holly Aitchison (Sale Sharks, 42 caps)
23 Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 44 caps)

Match Preview: Fulham v Brentford

Written by Brentford Football Club

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of Brentford's Premier League game against Fulham at Craven Cottage on Saturday, which will be broadcast live on Sky Sports (8pm kick-off BST)

Brentford face west London rivals Fulham at Craven Cottage in the Premier League on Saturday evening (8pm kick-off BST), live on *Sky Sports*.

The Bees claimed a late 2-2 draw against Chelsea last weekend before progressing to round four of the Carabao Cup with a 4-2 penalty shoot-out victory over Aston Villa in midweek.

A stoppage-time Gabriel Gudmundsson own goal saw the Cottagers defeat Leeds United 1-0 at home in their last outing.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know before kick-off.

Pre-match analysis

Stephen Gillett, *Playmaker Stats*: Expect early and late drama

Brentford were defeated by a Harry Wilson double last time they made the short trip to Craven Cottage - and the Bees need to keep their guard up this weekend when they take on Fulham under the lights.



Leading through a [Vitaly Janelt](#) strike, Brentford were on course for a 1-0 away win in that game, only for Welsh winger Wilson to conjure up two injury-time strikes to snatch a 2-1 win for Marco Silva's side.

Fresh from landing a late sucker punch of their own against Chelsea last weekend, Brentford will be out for revenge in their latest west London derby and they enter Saturday's contest buoyed by a [dramatic penalty shoot-out triumph over Aston Villa](#) in the Carabao Cup in midweek.

The hosts will be a tough nut to crack, however, and last season's data clearly shows that the Cottagers possess an enviable knack of turning games on their head.

No team came from behind to win more Premier League games last season than Fulham (6) and their strength in depth off the bench was a considerable factor.

Last term, the Cottagers scored more goals via substitutes (17) than any team in the top flight and, in Rodrigo Muniz, they have arguably the league's stand-out 'game changer'.

Muniz impressively netted six of his eight Premier League goals last season as a sub, and the Brazilian notched off the bench to salvage a point against Brighton in Fulham's opening game of the current campaign.

Last term, only Bournemouth (9) scored more stoppage-time goals than Fulham (7) and that trend has

continued this season with two of the Cottagers' three Premier League strikes coming after 90 minutes.

Interestingly, though, the early-season statistics suggest the Bees are adding fresh layers to their game under Andrews.

The contrast between Brentford's dribbling statistics this season and last offers one such example. Last season, Brentford ranked among the bottom five clubs in the Premier League for successful dribbles, but a snapshot of their statistics this term shows that only three clubs in the division (Arsenal, Tottenham and Man City) have averaged more than the Bees (8.5) per game.

It is telling that both [Michael Kayode](#) (8) and [Rico Henry](#) (6) rank in the Premier League's top 20 for successful take-ons in 2025/26, and, with midweek goal hero [Aaron Hickey](#) also back in the frame, Brentford have progressive options at full-back.

Given the Bees' penchant for early goals last season and Fulham's fancy for late drama, Saturday's clash is definitely one to watch from beginning to end!

Scout Report

Dan Long, *Sky Sports*: Fulham have "exciting new look"

Even though Fulham completed a west London derby double over Brentford with a 3-2 win on the penultimate weekend of 2024/25, a final day defeat to Manchester City scuppered their hopes of a top-half finish and a club-record 16th Premier League win of the season.

"It was definitely not the way we wanted to end the season at all," said Marco Silva afterwards. "It hurts a little bit to not finish in the top half of the table."

His disappointment was easy to understand, given the Whites had been sat in eighth, ninth or 10th for the bulk of the season, even in spite of the fact they failed to record back-to-back wins after 15 February.

There was one huge positive, though; one that the Portuguese will have looked back on with pride after that initial emotion had worn off - the fact his side collected 54 points. No Fulham side had ever picked up as many across 18 seasons in the competition.

A simple fact about football supporters is that summer signings keep them happy - and a touch of the Fulham fans' contentment from last term no doubt waned when the 2025/26 season started and the only addition was 34-year-old goalkeeper Benjamin Lecomte, who joined on a two-year deal for a modest fee.

There was no sign of movement after Rodrigo Muniz scored a 97th-minute equaliser to secure a 1-1 draw at Brighton on the opening day, nor after Emile Smith Rowe earned a draw by the same scoreline against Manchester United eight days later, nor after the comprehensive 2-0 win over Bristol City in the Carabao Cup second round.

But after a 2-0 west London derby defeat to Chelsea just before the international break - during which VAR decisions took centre stage - on Deadline Day, the recruitment drive got into full swing.

Winger Samuel Chukwueze arrived from AC Milan and striker Jonah Kusi-Asare joined from Bayern Munich, both on season-long loans. And the pair were joined by Brazilian winger Kevin, who signed from Shakhtar Donetsk for a club-record fee.

Marco Silva's team has an exciting new look now - and any discontent from the summer seems to have evaporated as a result.

The period between the September and October international breaks can almost be treated as a new start.

On another note, Fulham have competed in Europe before. They reached the third round of the UEFA Cup under Jean Tigana in 2002/03, finished as runners-up in the Europa League under Roy Hodgson in 2009/10, then exited at the group stages of the same competition under Martin Jol in 2011/12.

Since then, they have been relegated three times and bounced back three times. But having now re-established themselves as a mid-table Premier League side, the natural next step surely has to be aiming for a return to European competition in 2026.

In the Dugout

Marco Silva

Marco Silva passed 13 years in management earlier this month and has now taken charge of over 500 matches in Portugal, Greece and the UK.

After a playing career as a right-back in his home country, the Portuguese was appointed director of football at Estoril in 2011, but was quickly thrust into his first role as leading man when the club endured an unfavourable start to the campaign and Vinícius Eutrópio was sacked.

Silva managed to turn the club's fortunes around, winning the Liga de Honra - Portugal's second tier - and cementing a return to the Primeira Liga after a seven-year exile.

In 2014, Silva signed a four-year deal at Sporting CP and went on to win the Taça de Portugal – the Portuguese Cup - but he lasted just over a year in charge.

Shortly after the cup win, the club produced a 400-page document where they detailed the reasoning for his dismissal, with one section claiming his failure to wear a club suit during a match partly justified the decision.

A title-winning season at Olympiacos came next, before he took on a fire-fighting job at relegation-threatened Hull in January 2017.

Silva galvanised a Tigers team that included Harry Maguire and Andy Robertson, but ultimately could not prevent the club from dropping back into the Championship, and he resigned just under five months later.

That preceded time at Watford and Everton, before he joined Fulham as their new head coach in July 2021. He won the Championship title with the club in 2021/22, before guiding them to their first top-half Premier League finish since 2011/12 in 2022/23.

Silva reached four years in the job two months ago, and is now the club's longest-serving manager since Alec Stock, who left the role in December 1976.

He is also currently the sixth-longest serving manager in the top four divisions of English football.



Chancellor meets European finance ministers in Copenhagen to unlock economic growth

- Chancellor Rachel Reeves will today [Friday 19 September] attend the EU finance ministers meeting for the second time
- UK set to deepen ties in defence and trade, to create a safer, more prosperous Europe
- Chancellor will push for trade rules to help British business and the international investment needed to deliver growth and higher living standards for working people

Chancellor Rachel Reeves is meeting finance ministers from European countries, Canada and Ukraine in Copenhagen to talk about defence, trade and investment. Building on the hard work done to reset relationships with EU countries and the May UK-EU Summit, the Chancellor will take a seat at the table with the finance ministers responsible for economies within the UK's biggest trading partner. She will represent the UK as a sovereign nation acting in the national interest.

Chancellor Rachel Reeves said: *"The EU remains our biggest trading partner. Our economic future is tied to Europe's and we want to do more. More trade. More investment. More partnerships with countries that share our interests. Economic growth and UK security cannot be separated. Together, we are creating a safer, and more prosperous Europe."*

The Chancellor will recognise that the global economy has changed since last year's meeting in Brussels. She will push for fair, enforceable trade rules and renewed shared action, noting that growth, productivity and higher living standards are collective goals.

Security challenges across Europe—including Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine and ongoing tensions in the Middle East—make deeper defence partnerships more vital than ever. The UK-EU Security Partnership agreed in May will help create the preconditions for a safer, and more prosperous Europe. Reeves will also reiterate that the UK remains committed to securing a just and lasting peace in Ukraine, with £4.5 billion being spent on military support to Ukraine this year – the UK's highest ever level. She will call for better coordinated action against Russian aggression by using UK and EU advantages in the global financial system to provide more support to Ukraine.

The EU is the UK's closest partner and biggest market. In 2024, almost half (46%) of the UK's total trade was with the EU. Around 94,500 UK businesses exported goods to the EU, and around 157,000 businesses imported goods.

The UK-EU deal, announced on 19 May this year, follows a programme of reforms by the UK Government, which has made economic growth its number one mission. Reforms include backing a third runway at Heathrow Airport, greenlighting Europe's largest theme park, ending a ban on onshore wind, and setting a target to build 1.5 million new homes.

Through the growth mission, the UK is delivering stability, reform, and investment, making the UK one of the most attractive destinations for international investment.



HM Treasury

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