

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Contents

TickerTape

WOMENS' RUGBY WORLD CUP FINALS

The Tree Agency

Residents React to Twickenham Riverside Redevelopment

Greens in the room make a difference

Poundland to Shut Twickenham Branch as Retail Exodus Deepens

Zog and sell-out Halloween light trail promise a spectacular spooky season at Kew

Update on the Teddington Launch Lock refurbishment project

Richmond Faces SEND Cliff Edge as Costs Spiral

Letters

Hampton Choral Society

Richmond's Local Plan Diluted Under Pressure

Next week at Richmond Council

West London Postcard Fair

Twickers Foodie: Home Products Autumn Focus

Gibraltar Rocks Package

Traveller's Tales 178: Twenty- Four Hours in York

Your best place to live...

Mark Aspen Review: God of Carnage

Mark Aspen Review: A Number

Mark Aspen Review: Creditors

Sir Ed Davey MP and Munira Wilson MP visit their local children's hospice

St Mary's University Trains with Royal Artillery Ahead of Remembrance Rugby Match

Richmond upon Thames College Celebrates Students Achievement and Success at Awards Ceremony

Red Roses Quotes Ahead of RWC Final

Match Preview: Brentford v Manchester United

Pig news! Waitrose goes the whole hog

New Revolut HQ caps £110 billion week of investment in UK financial services sector

Chancellor response to the OECD's Interim Economic Outlook

LGA responds to Nuffield Trust report on access to Continuing Healthcare

London named among UK's best cities for live music

Michael Jones

Chas Warlow

Michael Jones

Kew Gardens

The Environment Agency

James Knight

Michael Jones

Alan Winter

Alison Jee

Sunborn

Doug Goodman

Deep Patel

Steve Mackrell

Andrew Lawston

Patrick Shorrocks

Shooting Star Children's Hospices

St Mary's University

Richmond upon Thames College

RFU

Brentford Football Club

Waitrose

HM Treasury

HM Treasury

Local Government Association

SeatPick

Editors: Berkley Driscoll, Teresa Read

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TickerTape - News in Brief

WOMENS' RUGBY WORLD CUP FINALS

Saturday 27th September

New Zealand v France Bronze Final: 1230

England v Canada Final: 1600

Attendance: 82,000.

The CPZ will be in place from 1100-2300.

Whitton, Rugby & London Roads may close from 1000-1200 and will definitely close from 1730-2000.



The Tree Agency

darryl parkin

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The Tree Agency

Residents React to Twickenham Riverside Redevelopment

By Michael Jones

When Richmond Council announced on Facebook that the long-promised regeneration of Twickenham Riverside was finally under way, officials described it as a major step forward. The post set out how the scheme would “transform a key part of Twickenham’s town centre” with “new public spaces, improved river access, and 45 new homes.” Early works such as site clearance, utility connections and “heritage safeguarding” were said to be progressing smoothly.

Yet the public response told a rather different story. The council’s upbeat message on one hand attracted around 40 likes (at the time of writing) also attracted an even larger number of comments from residents that mixed nostalgia, frustration and outright hostility. The thread is instructive: while the council frames the project as civic renewal, many locals see only the loss of facilities, the erosion of community life, and a town centre losing its character.



Memories of the Pool and Cinema

The most-liked comment came from Kris Partridge, who wrote: *“Please can we have our outside swimming pool back. It was also a good place for children to learn. A requirement with the Thames so nearby.”* Others echoed the sentiment. Vince Wright recalled: *“I would love that, memories with mum and dad in the 70’s.”* Keith B Atkins remembered *“the hot orange juice after the school swimming lessons.”* Gary Thatcher added: *“learnt to swim in that pool.. Many years ago I hasn’t to add..”*



The cinema also loomed large in the collective memory. Gary Thatcher wrote: *“Saturday morning cinema was great too...”* while Clare Head added: *“And a cinema in Twickenham please.”* Louise Johnstone-Watts drew a parallel with the loss of Richmond ice rink: *“It’s important for us all to exercise, but let’s diminish the facilities so opportunities are reduced.”*

Concerns Over Parking and Access

Parking and accessibility dominated many of the exchanges. Mick Roberts warned of *“the loss of a lot of parking spaces for shoppers and residents on the island.”* Jeremy Voysey was blunter: *“The shops will close if no parking - it’s not rocket science! Who works for these councils and why do they follow their own decisions and not listen to the residents. Liberals are as bad as Labour for waging war on motorists and damaging livelihoods and trades. !”*

Chrissy Hayward-Anderson pointed out: *“no point as nowhere to park especially for disabled people, they seem rest of the shops will soon be gone.”* Simon Ridley added: *“Just makes it harder for people with disabilities to park. Just 1 space by coopers greengrocer. Yet another death blow to what’s left of the high street shops.”*

Several said they had stopped coming into town altogether. Chris Thompson wrote: *"I stopped visiting Twickenham years ago when parking became so difficult."* Neil Chapman concluded: *"Even less reason to venture into Twickenham now."*

Housing and Affordability

The promise of 45 new homes also failed to win residents over. Alan Dormer dismissed them as *"Lots of unaffordable housing too."* Elanna Webster admitted: *"I would live to move back to Twickenham but even with affordable housing can't afford it."* For some, the issue was deeper. Sarah Jane Meagher argued: *"New expensive private homes built on public land stolen from the people. How very Lib Dem."*



Heritage and Trust in the Council

Heritage safeguards claimed by the council drew sharp criticism. Rob Millis wrote: *"Heritage safeguarding my a***. The bloody site was bequeathed to the borough on the proviso that an atrocity like this development wouldn't happen. Of course, this was when Richmond wasn't a ventriloquist's dummy with Wandsworth's hand up its j*****."* Others followed the same line. Steven Rogers said: *"Disgusting....what a waste, just to build houses, heritage protection...what a joke as digging up and then storing and probably never seen again....."*

Simon Whitehead questioned the scheme's design and flood planning: *"Who gave permission for the road to be closed that was used when the tide cut off the bottom? And will there be tidal defences built if the top road gets blocked off by the whole development? Did anybody think this through or was it a council money making exercise and sod the locals?"* Some turned their fire on local politics. Richard E Hollis asked: *"Why do people keep voting for these dreadful liberals. Conservative run Richmond was good, happy and solvent."*



A Sense of Loss

Above all, many residents expressed sorrow at how much Twickenham has changed. Martina Gomez wrote: *"I feel this so all so sad. Lived in Twick my whole life and rarely visit the town now ... nothing there that's worth travelling in for... I am a local who used the pool, and went to the cinema. Visited the sunshine cafe. Took my kids to the play park. Loved Superdrug. It's history and landscape changed forever."* Others were more resigned. David A. Thatcher observed: *"Been closed as long as I remember this sounds very unimpressive. Expensive housing and no amenities. Literally nothing to head in to the town for."*

Simmering Discontentment

The balance of the Facebook thread leaves little doubt: while the council presents Twickenham Riverside as a flagship investment, most residents responding online view it as a costly missed opportunity. Their comments reveal not only dissatisfaction with the project itself but also a broader unease about what Twickenham is becoming, a place where housing replaces heritage, parking disappears, and the memory of lost amenities lingers longer than the promise of new ones.

For the council, the challenge is not simply to deliver bricks and mortar but to convince its own residents that the redevelopment restores, rather than diminishes, the town's appeal. On the evidence of this debate, that will be the hardest work of all.

Greens in the room make a difference

From Chas Warlow

Councillor for South Richmond, Richmond & Twickenham Green Party

Tribune 453 (published on 11th July) included an article on the Full Council meeting of 8th July. It was a balanced and fair assessment of the current dynamics of local politics, concluding with the paragraph: *“The Liberal Democrats remain dominant, but their appetite for bold decisions is visibly limited. The Greens, though small in number, continue to press them on transparency, environmental issues, and public accountability. For a Council that often discusses ambition, it is time to demonstrate it through actions as well as words.”*

As the Opposition on Richmond Council, the Green Group of councillors know from experience that the main weakness in the Liberal Democrat administration is its unwillingness to match its many laudable ambitions with direct action.

However, this article is really intended to illustrate the fact that – unknown to most residents – a small revolution has taken place in Richmond. While out campaigning for the last Council elections in 2022, Green candidates and campaigners heard residents talking about how fed up they were with politics as usual – the ding-dong battles, the fake antagonism and name-calling. They wanted grown-up, collaborative politics, rather than the same old rubbish.

And I’m immensely proud that we have taken them at their word and, since becoming the Opposition on Richmond Council, we have acted exactly in that way – taking each issue on its merits and treating it with conviction. We have sometimes agreed with the administration and supported them – and vice-versa.

We have always proposed changes that would improve the Council’s work: for instance, we brought a debate on the topic of housing to a Full Council meeting – a debate which resulted in acknowledgment of the need for the Liberal Democrat administration to do more to provide affordable housing for residents in the borough. We’ve also instigated important work on removing obstacles for residents who want to make their homes more energy-efficient and reduce their carbon emissions through installing low-carbon technologies like solar photovoltaics and heat pumps.

The Opposition has challenged the administration where it has ignored residents’ voices or made decisions that were lacking in transparency. Every administration that has a large majority (in Richmond, 49 Liberal Democrats to 5 Greens) will be tempted to act with impunity and retrospectively justify its actions. We have asked hard questions, as in the Pensford Field saga referred to in the Tribune 453 article and the Pools on the Park health suite debacle.

We’ve pressed the administration hard to make good on its commitments on climate action and transport. We’ve also listened to residents who have complained about the problems associated with Lime bikes and called for tougher action to control them. We’ve supported some of the most vulnerable people in our society by pushing for a change in how the Council acts when collecting Council Tax arrears. Typically the Council takes legal action against residents who have fallen into Council Tax arrears where, in almost all cases, this has happened

because of bureaucratic processes.

We've persuaded the administration to declare a Climate Emergency; to pay staff and contractors a fair wage; to improve waste and recycling collection. We've intervened in hundreds of cases where residents asked for our help: whether they were having problems with their landlords or their neighbours or their street was full of litter.

Greens on your Council are making a difference. We are not whipped into line. When this term of office ends next May, I know I will be proud to say that we have left the Council in a better state than it would have been without us there. There is no other party in Richmond borough holding the Liberal Democrats to account or putting in the effort to win in next year's local elections. Your choice in May 2026 is between the Greens and the Liberal Democrats.

The Green Party is on the rise in the polls, and we now have more members across Great Britain than the Liberal Democrats. Come and join us to keep the Greens as the Opposition in Richmond. We are holding a "Meet the Greens" event on Tuesday 21st October at The Exchange in Twickenham. Sign up here: <https://www.rtgp.org.uk/2025/09/turning-richmond-green-meet-councillors-and-campaigners-at-the-exchange-on-tue-21-oct-7pm/>.

I heartily invite readers to come along and be part of the Green wave in Richmond!

TURNING RICHMOND GREEN

[RTGP.ORG.UK/MEET](https://www.rtgp.org.uk/MEET)

TUESDAY 21 OCTOBER: 7-9PM
STUDIO 2 AT THE EXCHANGE, 75 LONDON ROAD, TW1 1BE

- Meet local Green councillors and community campaigners.
- Find out how **you can get involved** and help us elect more Green councillors in May 2026.

↙ SIGN UP TO THIS EVENT AND MORE AT: [RTGP.ORG.UK/MEET](https://www.rtgp.org.uk/MEET)





Green Party



CLLR CHAS WARLOW



CLLR ANDREE FRIEZE

The Greens now have over 72,000 members nationwide. Join us to mobilise our growing power and transform Richmond Council!

Promoted by Alexis Hatto on behalf of RTGP
c/o 37 Lock Road, Richmond, TW10 7LQ

Poundland to Shut Twickenham Branch as Retail Exodus Deepens

By Michael Jones

Poundland is planning to close its store on King Street later this year, following a court-approved restructuring plan aimed at saving the discount chain from collapse. The agreement, approved in August, helped the company avoid administration and secure its future under new owners. However, the cost of survival has been high: around 70 underperforming branches are set to close nationwide as the business reduces its estate to restore stability profitability.



The Twickenham branch has struggled to stay viable for a long time. It has been making losses for some time and, like many of the chain's outlets, has faced ongoing issues with retail crime. In 2024 alone, Poundland reported £44 million in stock losses due to shoplifting - a nearly 30 per cent rise in just two years, despite significant investment in new security technology. For a discount retailer operating on tight margins, such losses are devastating.

Broader economic pressures have intensified the challenge. Higher business rates, sharply rising energy bills, and the recent rise in National Insurance contributions have all squeezed margins for high street businesses. Meanwhile, competition from online platforms and rival discount chains has made it more difficult to maintain footfall in town centres like Twickenham.

For the local community, the closure is more than just losing a single store. It is part of a wider exodus of national chains from Twickenham's town centre, reshaping the balance between traditional retail, cafés, and service outlets. The fate of the Poundland site has not yet been announced, but its departure is likely to leave a noticeable gap on King Street, highlighting the challenges facing high streets caught between rising costs and changing consumer habits.

Parking Policy Under Scrutiny

At the same time, questions are mounting about whether local parking policies are unintentionally accelerating the town centre's difficulties. At Holly Road surface car park, a one-hour stay costs £2 and two hours nearly £4. In the Arragon Road multistorey, four hours is £7.05 and six hours almost £12, while a special events tariff can climb to £25.50.

Richmond Council's Transport and Air Quality Committee has adopted a strategy of setting charges higher than the cost of public transport (£3.50), in an effort to discourage short car trips and encourage greener travel choices. Yet critics argue that the policy is poorly aligned with economic reality. Instead of leaving their cars at home, many shoppers may respond by driving further afield to centres with cheaper or free parking, or by bypassing the high street altogether in favour of online retail; neither of which delivers the environmental or economic benefits the council intends.



The concern is not over the principle of reducing unnecessary car use, something many residents support, but over whether the blunt use of pricing, without a wider plan to support high street vitality, risks undermining both environmental and economic goals. A strategy that alienates local businesses and shoppers could erode the very communities that sustainable transport policies are meant to serve. Whether Twickenham can reinvent its high street in the face of such pressures remains to be seen.

ENGLAND V CANADA

WOMEN'S RUGBY WORLD CUP FINAL



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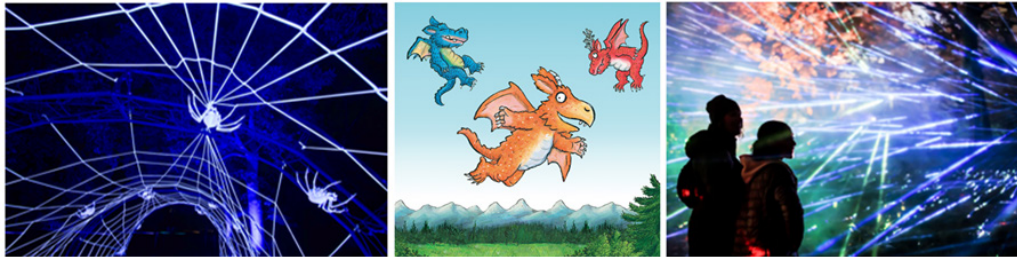
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Zog and sell-out Halloween light trail promise a spectacular spooky season at Kew

This October, Kew Gardens invites visitors of all ages to enjoy two enchanting autumn experiences. Following the hugely popular launch of Halloween at Kew in 2024, the spine-tingling light trail is back with even more eerie surprises (17 Oct – 2 Nov). By day, families can step into the world of Zog (18 Oct – 2 Nov), Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's beloved dragon, brought to life through an interactive outdoor trail designed to spark curiosity, adventure and discovery. These seasonal highlights promise plenty of thrills, fun, and unforgettable memories in the gardens' beautiful autumnal landscape.



Zog

This October half-term at Kew, families are invited to set off on an outdoor adventure inspired by Zog, the bestselling picture book by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler.

Set against the stunning autumnal backdrop of Kew Gardens in London, the interactive trail brings the much-loved story to life through themes of perseverance, friendship, and teamwork. Children will embark on a series of five activities hidden among the trees, echoing key lessons from dragon school—learning to fly, roar, breathe fire, and more. Each challenge combines playful interaction with sensory elements and games, encouraging curiosity, discovery, and plenty of muddy memories.

Zog runs from Saturday 18 October to Sunday 2 November during daytime opening hours (10am-3.30pm) and is free with day Gardens admission. The trail is developed in partnership with Magic Light Pictures.

Halloween at Kew

Following a hugely popular debut in 2024, Halloween at Kew is back for a second year, promising more eerie enchantment than ever before. From Friday 17 October – Sunday 2 November, Kew Gardens in London will once again be transformed after dark with an immersive Halloween light trail featuring bewitched trees, ghostly installations, and spellbinding live performers.

The trail returns with spine-tingling favourites and new surprises, from giant spiders to a mycelium-inspired laser display. Visitors will journey through an abandoned fairground, a mausoleum and even the underworld during the 1.5km trail. Keep your eyes peeled – a ringmaster, Dr Frankenstein and his monster, and even a headless horseman may be lurking just out of sight. From freaky fries to toasted monster marshmallows and hot toddies, there are also wickedly delicious treats available along the route to fuel your Halloween stroll.

There are three sessions to choose from - Daylight, Moonlight and Twilight. Each session will have a slightly different feel, with the ghostly goings on gradually increasing as the evening progresses. The darker it gets, the spookier it gets!

Adam Thow, Director of Commercial & Visitor Operations at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, says: “We were thrilled with the incredible response to the launch of Halloween at Kew last year, and we’re excited to introduce new spooky installations for 2025. It’s a fantastic way for families and friends to enjoy the Gardens in a new light and make magical Halloween memories together.”

The Halloween at Kew trail is produced in partnership with RG Live and Sony Music, and created by Culture Creative who design the ever-popular Christmas at Kew.

Tickets can be purchased at [Halloween at Kew | Kew](#) and prices are:

- Adults £22 peak, £18.50 off peak
- Children £16 peak, £13 off peak
- Family £72 peak, £59 off peak

Royal
Botanic
Gardens **Kew**

Update on the Teddington Launch Lock refurbishment project

From The Environment Agency

The Environment Agency (EA) and its construction partner, Bam Nuttal, mobilised to site on Monday 15 September to begin the refurbishment works at Teddington Launch Lock.

The project team are currently installing site compounds and welfare facilities at Ham Street Car Park and Teddington Lock.



Over the coming weeks, you will see further progress at site as the EA begin to put up temporary fencing and have equipment delivered. They will also be building floating barges and pontoons in the river to support the construction work from the water.

The Thames Path at Teddington Lock and Ham Street car park will be diverted for short periods of time throughout the works. These minor diversions are due to commence over the next few weeks and will be clearly marked on site.

At all other times, the Thames Path remains open as usual and diversions will not impact Teddington Lock footbridges which will remain open throughout the EA works.

The project anticipates to be on site for approximately one year, with ongoing construction work throughout this period. The project will deliver improvements that enhance the safety, functionality and resilience of Teddington Lock.

Further updates on the work will be available on the EA's [Thames Area Asset Page](#).

If you have any questions about the works, please email the project team on enquiries_thm@environment-agency.gov.uk.



Richmond Faces SEND Cliff Edge as Costs Spiral

By James Knight

Richmond councillors have been warned that the borough's Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) budget is nearing a crisis point, with a projected deficit of over £30m by 2028. Unless the government extends financial protections or offers new funding, the council could face effective bankruptcy within three years.

The warning was issued at last week's Education and Children's Services Committee, where members examined reports on safeguarding, children in care, SEND provision, complaints, and budgets. Officers stressed Richmond's strong record, citing Ofsted's recent "outstanding" grading and noting that children in care locally perform better than the national average. However, behind the praise, councillors were presented with a more concerning picture: rising costs, ongoing weaknesses, and increased scrutiny.

Underlying Weaknesses

The council's reports highlighted several issues. Only 22% of initial health checks for children entering care were completed on time, and fewer than half of statutory complaints met deadlines. A chronic shortage of local foster carers has compelled the borough to rely heavily on independent agencies and residential homes, resulting in an average annual cost of £279,000 per placement. While this shortage is not unique to Richmond, the financial impact is still significant.

Overspends are also increasing in support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people (UASC) once they turn 18. Richmond spends about £30,000 annually on each young person, but the government only provides £24,000. With 82 young asylum seekers under 18 in the borough's care, the funding shortfall is around £500,000 a year and continues to grow.

Safeguarding arrangements are also under strain. Operation Encompass, the police scheme intended to share information on domestic abuse with schools, remains ineffective three years after concerns were first raised. The delay is more than just a bureaucratic inconvenience: it leaves teachers often unaware when a child has witnessed violence at home. Without prompt alerts, schools cannot provide the support and vigilance needed to protect their most vulnerable pupils. Leaving a number of children at increased risk.

Scrutiny Under Strain

While weaknesses were identified, the analysis of the issues was inconsistent. Liberal Democrat councillors, who dominate the committee, mainly asked clarifying questions and praised officers. The sole opposition member, Green councillor Niki Crookdake, challenged more assertively, questioning whether Richmond's SEND strategy had truly reduced dependence on costly placements and pointing out inconsistencies in the financial tables.

Several of Crookdake's questions were postponed for written answers, leaving less space for open scrutiny. For parents and residents watching the webcast, the exchange might have felt less like rigorous oversight and more like routine administration matters being simply approved.

The 2028 Cliff Edge

The SEND budget is currently protected by a statutory override introduced in 2020, allowing councils to keep SEND overspends off their main accounts. That protection expires in March 2028.

Without it, Richmond would need to cover an estimated £30m SEND deficit from its main budget. The consequences would be serious: the council might have to issue a Section 114 notice, effectively declaring bankruptcy. In practice, this would involve halting all discretionary expenditure and reducing services to only the statutory minimum. Youth centres, branch libraries, and community halls - the very services that connect communities - would be at risk of immediate closure. Core functions such as adult social care and safeguarding would continue, but only at the most basic level required to meet legal obligations.

A Question of Priorities

The looming financial risks also raise questions about the council's broader spending decisions. Richmond has recently approved significant borrowing, including funding for the refurbishment of Civic Centre offices and the £67.2m Twickenham Riverside redevelopment. The cost of the riverside scheme has increased substantially from initial estimates, with construction not yet started and completion not expected until 2027.

Critics argue that although such projects may have value, committing large sums at a time when the council's financial stability is uncertain is a real gamble. If SEND deficits are not managed, Richmond might end up reducing important frontline services while still carrying debt linked to discretionary regeneration.

Excellence Under Strain

Committee chair Councillor Julia Cambridge praised officers and welcomed Ofsted's endorsement, urging members to "keep the focus on maintaining excellence." There is no doubt Richmond's staff deserve credit: the Ofsted judgment is a mark of real dedication. However, parents scrutinising the budget figures will pose a tougher question. Can excellence truly be maintained if the borough is facing a £30m black hole by 2028?

Richmond's model, which delivers children's services through the not-for-profit organisation Achieving for Children, is clearly effective. Originally established under a Conservative government and, after some opposition, later supported by the Liberal Democrats, the model has gained national recognition. Yet, its vulnerability under current financial pressures is equally apparent: rising deficits, overstretched foster care services, and incomplete reforms highlight the limits of even the most successful structures. Without significant national funding reform or a more open local debate about priorities, the borough risks a future where glowing inspection reports mask a declining reality of everyday services.

Ultimately, the choice is stark. Either Richmond finds a credible way to manage rising SEND costs, or the community may face cuts that leave the borough with little more than the statutory minimum. Excellence is achievable, but only if the council is honest about the risks and prepared to confront them directly. With children's services facing a £30m black hole, pressing ahead with an increasingly blank cheque project on the riverside looks less like prudence and more like a serious misjudgement.

Dear Tribune,

The New Battle for Britain

Last Sunday I was a guest of the Royal Air Force at Westminster Abbey for the 85th Anniversary Commemoration of the Battle of Britain.

www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-news/abbey-marks-85th-anniversary-of-the-battle-of-britain

All of the RAF personnel whom I met there were absolutely inspiring as were the lessons read by the Dean of Westminster, the Chief of the Air Staff, and others.

As a pilot myself, I was thinking of those young men, utterly alone in the sky, fighting and dying for this country and for our freedom.

Equally inspiring is the way in which all our military personnel work together with dignity, pride and self-sacrifice towards an honourable common goal, unlike civilian life in which so many people just work for their own selfish ends.

Amazingly, a 2025 poll found that almost two in three people under 40 in Britain were unaware of the Battle of Britain, the decisive 1940 air campaign in which the Royal Air Force defended the UK against the might of Nazi Germany's air force, ensuring the survival of Britain. Even worse was that some, when asked about their knowledge of Churchill, thought he was a bulldog who advertised an insurance company!

So for any of those who are reading this, perhaps I should add that the fascist Nazi hordes were bent on dominating the free world, i.e., you. Incredibly, some British politicians now seem to be following in their footsteps, albeit in rather more petty ways.

Cllr Ehmann, chairman of Richmond Council's transport committee, was recently reported as having said: *'Pressing ahead in the face of opposition is itself a mark of political leadership.'*

Such incredibly appalling arrogance explains why so many residents of Richmond are saying that, however valid anyone's objections, Richmond Council will ignore them and press on regardless with its own misguided tyranny. That is not a 'mark of political leadership', it is the mark of the dictator, the very epitome of evil against whom our brave pilots fought to the death.

Such self-aggrandising so-called leadership is but a paltry bullying imitation compared to the real leadership shown by wartime prime minister Winston Churchill who united this country and led it to victory against incredible odds.

In spite of Richmond Council's professed Liberal Democrat principles, such dictatorial behaviour is neither liberal nor democratic. Perhaps that is why their party leader, Ed Davey, a so-called Knight of the Realm, finds it necessary to make an embarrassing spectacle of himself by prancing like a five-year-old in front of a marching band in order to gain votes.

Winston Churchill said of the Battle of Britain pilots:

"Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few."

How sad that nowadays his wonderful words should be:

Never in the field of human politics have so many been so oppressed by so few.

Michael Jay
Hampton



HAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY

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Solemn Vespers de Confessore
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Requiem in D Minor
Gabriel Fauré

Musical Director Emma Warren
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Richmond's Local Plan Diluted Under Pressure

By Michael Jones

Six years after it began, Richmond's Local Plan is nearing adoption. Once hailed as a bold community blueprint, it now emerges as a document shaped more by constraint than conviction. Substantially rewritten at the instruction of government inspectors, the final plan reflects not only Whitehall's priorities but also the internal ambivalence of a borough unsure whether to protect its past or accommodate its future.

Council officers have defended the changes imposed during examination, describing them as modest, necessary and within the bounds of legal compliance. They point to the plan's overall structure and argue that it remains a sound basis for future development. Yet this characterisation does not stand up to scrutiny. Key sections have been softened. Policy targets have been postponed. Ambitious pledges on affordable housing and biodiversity have been reworded or removed. What remains is a strategy marked by hesitancy, a settlement of contradictions rather than a clear course of action.

A Retreat from Local Exceptionalism

The original draft plan was unmistakably assertive in tone. It proposed a 20% biodiversity net gain, double the national requirement. It promised a borough-wide prohibition on tall buildings, set a 50% affordable housing target and committed to protecting all back gardens from infill development. Its language was unambiguous. Richmond would be greener, stricter and more self-governing than Westminster dared to be.

That ambition did not survive. Government examiners ordered substantial revisions, particularly in relation to housing supply, which they found lacking in realism and delivery. The annual housing target has now been replaced with a "stepped" model. For the remainder of the decade, new homes will be delivered at a level well below identified need, rising only in later years. Meanwhile, previously rigid policies on building height and ecological enhancement have been softened, in the interests of viability and flexibility.

Officers maintain that such alterations are technical rather than ideological, adjustments necessary to secure legal adoption. But the shift is more profound. It reflects the narrowing space for local discretion within national planning frameworks, and the growing difficulty councils face when they attempt to reconcile environmental commitments with the pressure for more housing.

The Politics of Preservation

To their credit, councillors have designated new Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, notably in Whitton and the Kneller Hall playing fields. They continue to present Richmond as a green haven, a refuge from the urban pressures encroaching from central London. Yet this instinct for preservation has consequences. Mid-rise buildings, defined in the plan as five to seven storeys, will be permitted only in narrowly defined areas. Policies on intensification are couched in cautious language. The default posture remains one of protection, not growth. For older residents, this approach may appear prudent. For younger families, renters and key workers, it often feels like exclusion by design. Richmond's housing market is among the most expensive in outer London. Local data reveals a sharp rise in demand. Yet, planning policy continues to strongly constrain supply. Modest infill is resisted. Density is treated with

suspicion. The result is a borough that welcomes people in principle, but makes little room for them in practice. The *Financial Times* recently described Richmond as “the most NIMBYest place in London,” a label the council disputes but has struggled to disprove.

This contradiction is not unique to Richmond. Nationally, the Liberal Democrats adopt a posture of openness, championing immigration, social inclusion and sanctuary values. Locally, Richmond mirrors this stance. It has declared itself a “Borough of Sanctuary” and extended benefits to asylum seekers and marginalised groups. But its planning framework tells a different story. Housing policies systematically restrict the development of new homes, particularly those that are affordable or suitable for families. Critics ask, with increasing sharpness, where such new residents are supposed to live.

Reform UK has quickly capitalised on this contradiction. The party contends that councils like Richmond promote policies of openness and sanctuary while at the same time limiting the housing and infrastructure necessary for population growth. By framing this discrepancy as proof of political hypocrisy, Reform aims to harness rising public frustration over planning shortcomings and overstretched local services. For boroughs such as Richmond, the divide between rhetoric and action is not just a policy concern; it is increasingly a vulnerability. Nigel Farage has frequently mocked the ‘Richmond Greens,’ citing the borough as emblematic of a wealthy political class that welcomes immigration while blocking the homes and infrastructure needed to accommodate it. He has become, in many ways, the Liberal Democrats’ *bête noire*, a convenient foil, but one whose critiques they struggle increasingly to answer.

Delayed Tools, Delayed Impact

Alongside the plan itself, the committee approved updates to the local validation checklist and a suite of supplementary planning documents. These documents provide the detailed guidance necessary to implement policy effectively. However, they remain at an early stage. Officers confirmed that consultation will begin no earlier than November. Several documents must be redrafted from scratch. A full rollout is likely to take many months.

In the meantime, applicants will face ambiguity and delay. Without up-to-date guidance, even a legally adopted plan may prove difficult to enforce consistently. Policy is only as strong as the tools available to deliver it.

The Cost of Delay

The impact is already visible. More families are in emergency accommodation. Fewer young people can afford to remain in the borough where they were raised. Local services are stretched. GP appointments, school places and children’s services are under strain. The Local Plan, long in the making, will be adopted next month. But its legacy is uncertain.

It is a plan that preserves the past rather than prepares for the future. And in a borough long admired for its quality of life, the price of caution is becoming difficult to ignore.

Next week at Richmond Council

On Tuesday, 30th September, the **Licensing Committee** will hear the opposed application for Allianz Stadium (formerly Twickenham Stadium) to amend its licence. The meeting will start at 7 p.m. in Clarendon Hall, York House. For more details, click [HERE](#).

On Friday, 3rd October the **Orleans House Trustees** will meet to discuss 1) Richmond Arts Service annual report, 2) report of the Trustees for the year ended 31 March 2025, 3) Statement of accounts. 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](#).

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Home Products Autumn Focus

My mother had an old metal grater (aluminium I think) that was really useful and so easy to use. I'm delighted to report that a new version has recently been launched - and it's fab. And as it's made by Microplane, you can be assured that it will be top quality. The **NEW Microplane Rotary Fine Blade Grater** provides maximum results with minimal effort. Crafted from just three essential parts, this grater is lightweight, yet robust construction makes it quick to assemble, easy to clean, and reliable for everyday use. The funnel-shaped, fine, ultra-sharp, photo-etched stainless-steel blade (made in the USA), paired with a generously sized chamber, allows for clean, efficient grating - perfect for large quantities of hard or soft cheeses, chocolate, or nuts like almonds, walnuts, and hazelnuts. Simply insert chocolate squares or cheese into the hopper, squeeze the handle, and turn the crank for effortless results. Available from John Lewis (£39.95 rrp) this will last you a lifetime of grating.



Renowned cast iron specialist, **STAUB** has introduced a new [Sorbet Rose](#) colourway to its premium collection of cookware - a soft, elegant shade reflecting the popularity of pink in the kitchen. With homeowners continuing to embrace pink-toned cabinetry, small appliances and accessories, Sorbet Rose is a natural addition to STAUB's colour range. STAUB's Cast Iron Cookware can withstand temperatures up to 250°C and are freezer-safe down to -20°C. [Sorbet Rose](#) collection is exclusively available at [ZWILLING.com](#)

Although tap water is subject to strict controls, it may still contain chlorine, heavy metals and other unwanted substances. **LAICA** filtration reduces these substances from the water, making it healthier and tastier, without reducing the mineral salts. With LAICA filter jugs, drinking water is a better experience, improving personal well-being and offering an environmentally friendly alternative to single-use plastics. PFAS, called "forever chemicals" persist in the environment and water for years. With the healthexpert filter, it is possible to reduce PFAS by up to 92%** along with other contaminants, if present in tap water. Unlike many other filters, bi-flux® healthexpert increases the concentration of naturally occurring Magnesium in the water. Magnesium is an important mineral for heart and brain health and supports the overall well-being of the body. And the filters are compatible with Brita filter jugs if you already use one of those. More info at [Laica.com](#) and available on Amazon.



From sun-kissed split ends in your brush to our furry friends moulting, shedding season is in full swing and it's leaving its mark on our laundry. Enter: **Vamoosh** – the laundry hero you never knew you needed for both human and animal hair. Vamoosh is tackling the cleaning problems most people have just accepted and solving them with science-backed solutions. At the heart of their range is the Vamoosh Pet Hair Dissolver, the world's first and only patented laundry additive that completely dissolves pet and human hair in the wash. That's right, no more pulling hair out of the machine filter, no more re-washing hairy bedding, and no more hiding blankets before guests arrive. Vamoosh uses a powerful active oxygen reaction to break down keratin, the protein that makes up hair. Instead of hair clumping in your washer or clinging to fabrics, it simply disappears. The result? Clean laundry, clear machines, and a solution to summer shedding. £4.50 for a pack of three sachets from Ocado.



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Traveller's Tales 178

Twenty- Four Hours in York

Doug Goodman Visits the Historic City



My short visit to York lasted 30 hours, in fact, arriving from Kings Cross at midday and departing the following day at 18.00 for London on the two hour journey. If you walk a lot and start early after one night's stay you can see most of the city's amazing sights. It's worth visiting York just to tour the magnificent Minster but with a map and guide book or with an organised group you can see much more. Hotels in the centre tend to be old and full of character but pricey; stay outside the walls at one of the popular hotel chains like Premier Inn or Travel Lodge – both close to the station and you'll find a comfy room for well under £100 for two.



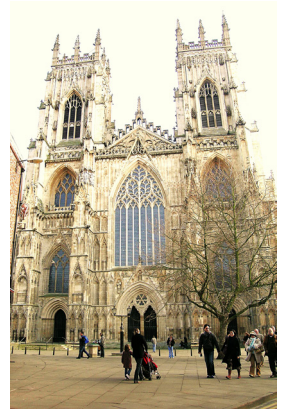
City Gateway



City Walls



View of The Minster from the Walls



The Minster

CITY WALLS

My first visit was to the tourist office in Parliament Street to gather literature, maps and to collect a York Pass. This provides access to over 30 attractions for one, two or three days. Viewing York from 'above' when walking the two miles of the restored city walls is a good way to get a feel of the city which, on two occasions, was England's Capital. Walk up the steps at Peter Gate for a view from the walls of The Minster across Dean's Park and some of the 2,000 listed buildings and 22 ancient monuments. The city walls, said to be the best preserved in the UK, date from AD 71 when The Romans built a fort to defend the city. In AD 866 the invading Vikings destroyed all the towers apart from one. In the 18th century York became a social and cultural centre for the wealthy, elite Yorkshire people and a century later the railway revolution transformed the city. York Minster, one of the world's most impressive Cathedrals is the most visited of the city sites. Two thousand years of history can be explored in this beautiful building of stone and stained glass. Time your visit to hear the famous choir and to enjoy music from the great organ.



National Railway Museum



Clifford's Tower



Castle Museum Victorian Era

TRAINS

Near York's huge main-line station is The National Railway Museum. Entrance is free to the collection of steam engines, carriages, model train sets, signals, signs and enough railway memorabilia to keep everyone occupied. You'll see the very first locomotives, The Flying Scotsman and the modern Japanese Bullet Train and Eurostar all of which celebrate rail's past and present. Allow two or three hours for your visit or all day if you take children.

CITY HISTORY

You shouldn't miss Clifford's Tower atop a grassy hill opposite the Castle Museum. A former Royal stronghold, it gives an insight to York's history as well as providing a great viewpoint over the city. The City Museum is a treasure trove of things from the past 400 years. Several rooms display the style of furnishing, costumes and shops from earlier times to the Victorian era filled with long-forgotten items. A 1960's section brings back memories of more recent events. The Yorkshire Museum contains objects found during excavations including many Roman artefacts. The Jorvic Viking Centre is on the site of the 1976 excavations which uncovered the remains of a 1000 year old settlement. Experience life in an ancient street complete with smells, sounds and material discovered in the excavations. Booking is essential



The Castle Museum. Swinging 60s



Gift Shops



Relax by the Waterside

SHOP AND RELAX

York is famous for its quirky, independent shops and businesses. Walk along The Shambles through narrow, cobbled streets with timber-framed medieval buildings leaning over the pavements. Drop into the gift shops, chocolatiers, tea rooms, restaurants and pubs. The Fat Badger, one of York's 235 pubs, has a fine beer garden where traditional Yorkshire ales are served. There are many companies selling bus, walking and specialist tours in and around York. One of the most fascinating is the night-time ghost tour. This is spooky but family-friendly and with 500 reputed hauntings in the city chances are good for spotting a ghost or two. But for me the most enjoyable way of experiencing the delights of York is to wander independently: to cross the nine bridges over the River Ouse, to sit by the waterside with a glass of wine and simply people watch. Thirty hours was too little time to see some of the other major historic sites: Fairfax House, The Merchant Adventurers Hall and further afield The North Yorkshire Moors, The Aviation Museum and so much more.

TRAVEL SHOWS

Travel fairs worth visiting for getting up to date holiday information, collect brochures, meeting tour operators and booking your next trip are the Luxury Travel Fair at Olympia from November 6-9 and Destinations also at Olympia in January

Information: Tourist Office: www.visitcityofyork.org www.yorkpass.com

Railway Museum: www.railwaymuseum.org Castle Museum: www.yorkcastlemuseum.org.uk

Holiday shows: Luxury Travel Show: www.luxurytravelfair.com Destinations: www.destinationsshow.com

Your best place to live...

By Deep Patel

~ Life Through the Eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



If I was to ask you where would be your ideal place to live in the world, you may say the Maldives, the Caribbean, Dubai or perhaps even Venice? So I asked my customers this past week where would be their ideal place to live in the world...the places I just mentioned were actually the most popular, with Australia and Thailand closely behind them...but why? What was it that made those places that my customers mentioned their ideal to live at I wondered? Well obviously, the weather and the blue warm seas as well as the cuisine and the general way of life were all a big part of the reason that my customers mentioned these places, but what was it really that they were seeking?

I wanted to find out, so I dug a little deeper to delve into this more...after numerous conversations on the topic, I realised that one thing all of my customers talked about as reasons for liking somewhere to live was the notion of being around nice people, it seemed it wasn't only about the weather and the food, it was on a deeper level about the people and the lifestyle...customers talked about the relaxed way of life and safety of places, the gardens and houses in those places and the facilities of the towns there...and there was me being shallow thinking that the only thing they would be thinking about when talking about a place to live that is the best for them would be exotic countries with fantastic weather...but my customers were obviously higher level thinkers...they were considering much more important things, they were talking about lifestyle and amenities and facilities and most important to them was being around "good people"...

So I was pretty amazed to hear this about if given a choice, the ideal place customers at Meet & Deep newsagent would choose to live at...and then as if the universe wanted me to see it, this very week I was glancing at the news headlines that come onto my smart phone automatically everyday and this article came up from the Local Guardian talking about the best places to live...and the place mentioned as one of the best places to live in London was...TWICKENHAM!!!! I literally couldn't believe my eyes...I mean what were the chances of that happening after I had spent all week talking to customers about the best places to live in the world...there we were, myself and my customers talking about places from every corner of the globe when we had to look no further than our very own Twickenham...right here...right now...the ground beneath my feet...voted as one of the BEST places to live in the whole of London...I sat back down on the stool behind my counter and smiled to myself before looking out through my shop door and saying out loud..."I love you Twickenham"...ahhh Twickenham folk...how lucky are we to be here...

Remember...

"Sometimes the thing we seek most is right under our noses..."

MY CREATURE-KINDNESS TIP

If you are finding silverfish insects in your home, consider eliminating sources of moisture and clutter...they love dark damp conditions...also sprinkle fine pepper powder in gaps where they come and they will soon cease to plague you!

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

God of Carnage

by Yasmina Reza

TTC at the Coward Studio, Hampton Hill Theatre until 27th September

We are in North London, serious bourgeoisie territory, with four fully paid-up members of the Camden chattering classes, married couples, who have met to discuss a reconciliation following a school playground incident, where one's son knocked out the front teeth of the other's son. Civilised conversation starts, and remains so calm and rational that one might ask, where's the drama?

However, the scene is set for black comedy as the veneer of politeness progressively evaporates when exchanges become increasingly blunt. After binging on vodka, all sense of reconciliation vanishes. We are in the world of Edward Albee, with characters at war, spitting verbal venom in the style of a bizarre "Who's Afraid of Yasmina Reza".



The quartet of actors, playing the hosts, Veronica and Michael with the bullied child, and the aggressive boy's parents Anna and Alan, all give pitch-perfect performances. The ratcheting-up of tension is captured in Sally Halsey's riveting direction, creating a fluid mosaic as they circle each other in the intimate space, adding to a sense of unease.



Melanie Richardson, as Veronica, creates an idealistic character, keeping her performance under control despite moods ranging from passive calm to assertive anger. Her intellect outshines that of her self-made business owner husband. Peter Hill captures the essence of this down-to-earth character, flummoxed by the bullying of his son. With eyes darting, mouth flinching and facial expressions reflecting every twist and turn of the plot, his is a mesmerising performance.

Lucinda Springett plays Anna, a wealth-fund manager. Apparently downtrodden and obliging, her frustrations give her a strong voice to express her true feelings. As Alan, Dave Brickwood fleshes out the curt, laconic lawyer, who struggles to deal with his son's aggression. He exudes a world-weariness with the discussion, irritatingly cutting conversations to pursue his legal work on his mobile.



In spite of Anna vomiting (realistically!) over Veronica's prized rare art catalogue, there's touching chemistry between the two women as allegiances change and they side against the men, and cracks in both marriages are exposed.

What is skilfully revealed is how civilised behaviour can easily give way to the darker side of human behaviour. Despite all their accumulated experience, are adults wiser in problem solving than children. Who indeed is in the playground?

Read Steve Mackrell's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/23/god-carnage-ttc

Photography by Sarah J Carter

A Number

by Caryl Churchill

Questors at the Studio, Ealing, until 27th September

Cloning is a subject of endless fascination to creators of sci-fi, but is less commonly explored in theatre, which traditionally prefers to use twins to tell similar stories. *A Number* provides rich dramatic pickings as a man meets with several clones of his son.

Salter works his way through a decanter of whisky as he talks with various iterations of his son: Bernard 1, Bernard 2, and Michael, some of possibly nineteen clones created to give Salter another chance at fatherhood. Events escalate, but the structure remains the same, as each scene shows Salter talking to one of the clones, each time wearing subtly different clothes (by costume designer Nichola Thomas). Bernard 2 wears a t-shirt, tending to look quite vulnerable next to his jacketed father, while Bernard 1's aggression is emphasised by his leather jacket. And what is the audience to make of Michael, a maths teacher, the final clone who dresses in a style not dissimilar to his father?



Both Robert Gordon Clark, as Salter, and James Burgess as all the clones, have a daunting task in conveying the play's huge ideas through a series of strained family conversations, and both succeed admirably. Their delivery ranges from thoughtful and philosophical to stilted and awkward, sometimes talking over each other in their confusion, while at other times leaving lengthy and uncomfortable pauses as they reflect.

Truths emerge about the clones' past, and about their father. Neglect and alcoholism are mentioned, if not dwelt on, with hints of even more unpleasant abuse left hanging. Much is unsaid, and understated, between the two men, across all three versions of Salter's son.



"Nature vs nurture" is the most obvious question that the play raises. The hostile Bernard 1 was sent away to a children's home following his mother's suicide. Bernard 2 grew up with Salter, who tried to make up for his failings as a father with Bernard 1.

Lucy Aley-Parker's brisk production conveys the big emotional beats. The play, and the issues it raises, are serious, but there are also funny lines, which get big laughs from the audience, as they are often perfectly timed to break the growing tension.

A Number is an engrossing production of an excellent modern play, which makes for a rewarding and thought-provoking evening.

Read Andrew Lawston's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/20/number-q

Photography by Kanako Hata

Creditors

by August Strindberg adapted by Howard Brenton

OT Productions at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond until 11th October

Strindberg may have a reputation for making his audiences suffer while his characters tear one another apart, but *Creditors* is unexpectedly funny and prompts a good deal of laughter in Howard Brenton's witty and vivid translation. These characters are older and tougher than in *Miss Julie*, harder to wound, with less to live for, which lowers the emotional stakes.

The cast are all in their seventies and this acknowledgement of the sexual activity of older generations is wonderfully refreshing. The references to the dangers to health of sex make a lot more sense when played by older actors who have more than enough glamour and charisma to make their attractiveness plausible.



It begins with two men talking in a late 19th Century lakeside hotel during one of those glorious summers when everyone is wearing elegant white linen (gorgeous costumes and discreetly appropriate set from Louie Whitmore). Adolf is sharing his marital insecurities, while his wife Tekla is away, with Gustaf, a fellow guest at the hotel, who is revealed as increasingly manipulative and Iago-esque. This is succeeded by two further dialogues: Tekla and Adolf, followed by Gustaf and Tekla.

The elegance of the play's construction makes it seem more like Marivaux than Ibsen, with lots of implausible eavesdropping, and an abundance of game playing. One cannot for sure believe in these paranoia powered robots, although this superb cast does a marvellous job of giving them the appearance of life. Nicholas Farrell's Adolf is vulnerable and in declining health, but more than capable of lashing out; Charles Dance's Gustaf is elegantly menacing, his delivery as crisp and immaculate as his wardrobe; Geraldine James's Tekla is fabulously glamorous, but addicted to admiration and doesn't really know her own mind.



Tom Littler's immaculate production of *Creditors* premiered in 2019 at the Theatre by the Lake in Derwentwater. It is well worth the current revival, concentrated to ninety minutes with no interval, and, unsurprisingly, sold out before it opened. The Orange Tree is a marvellous theatre with a wonderful feeling of intimacy in the round and, as this show illustrates, seems to be on something of a roll at the moment.

Read Patrick Shorrock's review at www.markaspen.com/2025/09/13/creditors

Photography by Ellie Kurttz

Kingston and Surbiton MP and Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Sir Ed Davey MP and Liberal Democrat Munira Wilson MP visit their local children's hospice

MP for Kingston and Surbiton and Leader of the Liberal Democrats, Ed Davey MP and the MP for Twickenham and Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Education, Children and Families, Munira Wilson MP were welcomed to Shooting Star House in Hampton on Thursday 18 September, to find out about the important care and support Shooting Star Children's Hospices provides to families in their constituencies.



Shooting Star supports families who have a baby, child or young person with a life-limiting condition, or who have been bereaved, across south-west London, north-west London and Surrey, offering a breadth of services to support the whole family, including grandparents.

The visit began with a guided tour of the facilities, which include a hydrotherapy pool, therapeutic spaces such as counselling rooms and a memory garden offering a peaceful space for bereaved families to visit and reflect.

During the visit, Ed Davey and Munira Wilson, whose constituencies fall within the charity's catchment area, met with families to hear first-hand about their experiences of using Shooting Star's services and the vital lifeline they provide. This included a family who has benefited from the charity's trailblazing bereavement service, which supports families whose child was cared for by the hospice as well as those who have experienced the sudden death of their child.

They also took time to speak to members of Shooting Star team to understand the care they provide, and to the charity's Chief Executive, Paul Farthing, who shared the policy and funding challenges Shooting Star faces. Specifically, Shooting Star shared how they, like other children's hospices, need a commitment from the government to protect NHS funding for children's hospices, and increase current funding from £26 million to £30 million by 2030 and renew the capital funding support received in 2025/26.

Following the visit, Kingston and Surbiton MP, Ed Davey, said, *"Shooting Star do amazing work supporting families who have a child with a life-limiting condition, or who are coping with the heartbreaking loss of a child. Getting to talk to some of the parents about their experiences with Shooting Star really brought home how crucial it is that children's hospices get secure funding. Hospices like Shooting Star can do incredible things with the right support; over the last year alone, Shooting Star has supported over 1,000 families, reducing the impact on NHS services. That is why a fair funding model and a dedicated workforce plan for the hospice sector is vital."*

Munira Wilson shared, *"Our visit comes just before the Liberal Democrat autumn conference, where a motion has been tabled by our colleague Alison Bennet MP, the Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Care and Carers. It argues for a fair, sustainable funding deal for hospices, and recognises the incredible care they provide and the money they save in terms of hospital admissions."*

Paul Farthing added, *"Shooting Star were very pleased to welcome Sir Ed Davey MP and Munira Wilson MP to our Hampton site, to share our vital work. It is vital that policymakers appreciate the real impact our support has on families. We are very grateful to the local MPs, like Ed and Munira, who are backing our campaign for fair and sustainable funding, creating a partnership between the NHS and our amazing supporters."*



St Mary's University

St Mary's University Trains with Royal Artillery Ahead of Remembrance Rugby Match

St Mary's University, London, welcomed [The Royal Artillery](#) rugby squad to campus for a special training day ahead of their upcoming match on 5 November, which will coincide with Remembrance commemorations and the University's 175th Anniversary.

Members of the public are welcome to watch the matches, with further details soon to follow.

[Andrew Reid Smith](#), Head of Sport at St Mary's, said: "We're proud to welcome the Royal Artillery to St Mary's. This is a unique opportunity for our students to learn from their leadership and teamwork, while sharing our own expertise. It's not only great preparation for the match in November, but also a chance to strengthen the bond between our community and the Armed Forces."



The event brought together student players and the Royal Artillery's "Gunners" to share expertise and strengthen links between the two sides. The day included a strength and conditioning session in the University's [Performance Education Centre](#), led by St Mary's coach [Dave Gordon](#), where players tested themselves in a competitive lift-off.

This was followed by a keynote on resilience delivered by [Fiona Ford](#), a coach for St Mary's Endurance Performance Centre. The Royal Artillery then led a training session, giving St Mary's students a taste of military rugby preparation.

The training day offered a glimpse of what's to come on 5 November, when both the men's and women's teams will take to the field. Match day will also feature a bugler performing the Last Post in homage to Remembrance to honour those in the armed forces who have died in conflict.

The Royal Artillery - known as the "[Gunners](#)" - play a central role in the British Army, providing surveillance and firepower support on operations worldwide. Their rugby programme reflects the same values of discipline, teamwork and resilience.

St Mary's University is internationally recognised for its sporting excellence and world-class facilities. Its state-of-the-art strength and conditioning suite support both elite athletes and students, and the University's renowned degree programmes have produced graduates who have gone on to represent their country at the highest level, including rugby.

Alumni include England internationals Ellie Kildunne, Jess Breach, Rosie Galligan and Abi Burton, who all [shined in this year's Women's Rugby World Cup squad](#).



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

Richmond upon Thames College Celebrates Students Achievement and Success at Awards Ceremony

On Thursday 18 September, Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) celebrated the exceptional achievements and successes of twenty-four of its students at the annual Student Awards ceremony, held at the college campus in Twickenham.

Over 100 guests attended the event, hosted by RuTC Principal, Gavin Hughes, including the Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, Councillor Penny Frost and the Leader of Richmond Council, Councillor Gareth Roberts, as well as students, parents, staff and members of the local community.

Stay curious

We were delighted to welcome special guest speaker, Fran Scott, Neuroscientist, Presenter and Pyrotechnician, who entertained and inspired the audience as she spoke about her career journey and the benefits of not putting yourself in a box, where staying curious allows for professional growth and exploration.

The award ceremony began with RuTC Level 3 Acting student, O'shai Linton, performing the poem, 'If' by Rudyard Kipling. Level 3 Dance students then showcased their talents with a lively routine to 'Jump' by The Pointer Sisters. Music award winner, Luka Brajovic, also provided entertainment during the awards ceremony with his own song, 'Out of All These People', performed on guitar and vocals.

And the winners are....

- Award winners included A-Level student, **Charlotte Jones**, who received Distinction in her recent examinations and is now going on to study Criminology and Psychology at university.
- The Science award was won by **Noah Davel**, who studied BTEC Level 3 National Extended Diploma in Biomedical Science and impressively completed work experience at The Cell Science Centre at Queen Mary's University during his time at RuTC.
- Foundation Learning student, **Daim Javed**, won the award for his department, being praised for committing to a great level and maturity in his learning.
- The Apprenticeship award was won by **Ario Zonouzi**, who is in the process of completing his Level 3 IT Solutions Technician apprenticeship at IT company, Shadowserve, and will be continuing on at the company in full time employment.



RuTC Principal, Gavin Hughes, selected Early Years & Childcare student, **Sian Elliott**, as the 'Student of the Year', praising her kindness, work ethic and involvement in college enrichment activities.

Sian commented: "I'm truly honoured to have received the Student of the Year Award. It was a memorable and joyful evening, and I am grateful for this recognition. I would like to extend my thanks to all the teachers and staff for their guidance and encouragement throughout my time at college. This achievement would not have been possible without their belief in me."

Celebrating as a community

Gavin reflected on the evening: "Last night was a special night where we came together as a community to celebrate another tremendous and exciting year at Richmond Upon Thames College. We not only celebrated the academic excellence of our students but also honoured their dedication, perseverance and remarkable achievements throughout the year. It is my pleasure to continue to support our students to pursue their endeavours through and beyond their time at College."

[Learn more about studying at RuTC and the courses on offer here.](#)

Red Roses Quotes Ahead of RWC Final

Alex Matthews, Gloucester-Hartpury



Winning the 2014 tournament was an amazing feeling. It was a pinch yourself moment and I was so fortunate to achieve that with a great bunch of girls so early in my career. This tournament feels different because of the amount of coverage, the number of fans supporting us each week, messages of support we receive daily and with it being at home in England. The support has been on another level and it's only going to continue to rise beyond the conclusion of this World Cup. We can't thank the supporters enough for their incredible backing and we know they will be cheering us on loud and proud at Allianz Stadium on Saturday.

Morwenna Talling, Sale Sharks

When England last won the World Cup in 2014, I was 12. Although the coverage of the tournament wasn't like it is now, it was so inspirational to see female rugby players achieving something with their country. We are now in that spotlight and hold a responsibility as Red Roses to inspire young girls and boys to take an interest in our sport, whether watching or playing, and we hope that our sport continues to raise its profile following on from this World Cup. It has been an awesome experience, but we have to earn the right to an even better experience this weekend at Allianz Stadium.

Jess Breach, Saracens

To have scored my 50th try and had my 50th cap in this tournament has been a dream come true. The levels of support, not only I have received but all the girls, has been phenomenal and extremely special. We love interacting with our supporters up and down the country and to have played in almost every region has really shone a light on what women's rugby can offer so many people. From day one for us it's been about earning the right to reach the final, doing it for the girls and enjoying every moment along the way. It's been an exciting journey to this point and we're relishing the chance to run out at Allianz Stadium on Saturday in front of a sell-out crowd.

Lucy Packer, Harlequins

I have really enjoyed the past few weeks with the girls. We have really bonded as a group and embraced every moment of the tournament together. We obviously have had our goals as a team but wider to on the field, it has been awesome to see how much people have enjoyed this World Cup – not only following the Red Roses but all the other nations too. It feels like the start of our sport growing exponentially. For us, we have our job to do, and we'll stick to our process ahead of Saturday. We appreciate everyone for supporting us the whole way.

Maddie Feaunati, Exeter Chiefs

I've made so many memories throughout this tournament and it's not over yet. The bonds we have made as a squad have been incredibly special, and they will last with me for a long, long time. Having a home World Cup has meant we have been closer than ever to the supporters who have backed us immensely from Sunderland down to Brighton across to Bristol and across social media too. It's an experience I've relished but we have one more memory to make as a group. We will stick to our process and look to enjoy every moment of the week ahead of a sold-out Allianz Stadium which will be bouncing with thousands of England fans!

Lark Atkin-Davies, Bristol Bears

I remember in 2014 watching the Red Roses win the World Cup and aspiring to earn my first England cap and start my international journey. We have had so many amazing moments as a group that have bonded us and to be heading into another World Cup final is an incredible achievement we are all proud of. This group has earned the right to be at this stage of the tournament. A world record crowd at Allianz Stadium is going to be special – it shows how far the women's game has come. It's something we're going to relish and embrace.

Sadia Kabeya, Loughborough Lightning

This World Cup has been a showcase of the growth of our game, and being part of it feels like a privilege. It has been a massive effort by everyone involved – staff and players – to get this point. We have had to earn the right to reach the final and every match has tested us in its own unique way, demanding the best from us. It's first versus second in the world so it will be a fantastic occasion at Allianz Stadium. We can't wait to see the thousands of white shirts, red cowboy hats and faces painted with Red Roses next week.

Megan Jones, Trailfinders Women

This World Cup has meant more than just rugby. It's about visibility, identity, and showing up fully – on and off the pitch. We've had to fight for every second of game time in this tournament. We've earned the right to be here – not just as a team, but as individuals who bring everything we are into this squad. To run out at Allianz Stadium, knowing the stories we all carry, the communities we represent, and the history we're creating – that's massive. That's what makes this final week so powerful.



Photo courtesy RFU

Match Preview: Brentford v Manchester United

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 Manchester United at Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday, which will be broadcast live on TNT Sports (12.30pm kick-off BST)

Brentford face Manchester United at Gtech Community Stadium in the Premier League on Saturday lunchtime (12.30pm kick-off BST), live on *TNT Sports*.

The Bees lost 3-1 to Fulham last weekend; United beat another west London side, Chelsea, at Old Trafford.

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

Pre-match analysis

Stephen Gillett, *Playmaker Stats*: Reasons to be positive for United

The storm predicted by Ruben Amorim shortly after his appointment as Manchester United manager duly arrived. However, the Red Devils' early season stats suggest a brighter dawn could be on the horizon ahead of their clash against Brentford this weekend.

United's head coach copped plenty of flak after a first season bookmarked by a 15th-place finish in the [Premier League](#) and a Europa League final defeat to Tottenham.

Flux and change have been the norm during the Portuguese's tenure to date, but there has been one constant throughout: his tactics.

Amorim and United are wedded to their 3-4-2-1 formation, for better or worse, and Brentford's challenge in the Premier League's early kick-off this Saturday is to exploit the system's weaknesses.

Critics of the approach have been quick to point out its limitations: the ponderous build-up play of the centre-back trio, a 'soft centre' in midfield and an over-reliance, creatively speaking, on captain Bruno Fernandes, chief among them.

United's inability to handle Brentford's intensity was patently obvious back in May when a Luke Shaw own goal, a brace from [Kevin Schade](#) and a close-range effort from Yoane Wissa earned the Bees a 4-3 win over their illustrious opponents.

An opening day defeat to Arsenal, a second round exit to Grimsby in the Carabao Cup and the recent loss to arch-rivals Manchester City have heaped fresh scrutiny upon United and Amorim. Yet, the numbers tell a more nuanced story.



The expected goals metric is very much open to interpretation, and United's under-performance of -5.98 xG this season looks unimpressive at first glance. However, the fact that the Mancunians have generated more expected goals (9.98 xG) than any other side in the Premier League this season speaks to the quality of the chances they are creating.

With a new-look front three of Matheus Cunha, Benjamin Šeško and Bryan Mbeumo bedding in, the Red Devils average more shots-per-90 (16.2) than any team in the top flight - the former Brentford winger currently leading the division for touches taken (144) in the attacking third.

A sub-plot to track on Saturday will be both sides' use of long balls. Brentford have been one of the Premier League's most effective teams, in terms of knowing when and how to play directly, but teams have started to cotton on and bypass their opposition's press by going long.

Amorim's side embodies this growing trend, and United currently rank top in the Premier League for accurate long balls, the majority of which stem from goalkeeper Altay Bayındır, Shaw, the suspended Casemiro and Fernandes.

As Fulham manager Marco Silva noted after facing United last month, opponents who bypass Amorim's back five and create overloads in midfield can find joy.

Brentford may look to [Mikkel Damsgaard](#) and/or [Fábio Carvalho](#) in those half-spaces to test that theory.

Scout report

Dan Long, *Sky Sports*: Summer signings to help Amorim kickstart season

It is hard to spin a positive from the 2024/25 season for Manchester United. They will want to forget about it - and it is as simple as that.

Erik ten Hag had banked some credit in May 2024 after delivering a first FA Cup win since 2015/16, so he remained in the managerial hotseat despite overseeing what was, at the time, the club's lowest Premier League finish on record - 8th.

But before the end of October, there was a parting of ways after United started with just three wins from the first nine league games.

Amorim was brought in as his replacement on 11 November, but he, too, struggled. The weight of expectation at the club is so great - particularly after several testing years - so there was pressure after a run of nine league defeats in 12 between December and February, and more came when his side took only five points from the final nine games.

Those streaks helped set another new record low finish (15th) and the club's lowest points total since 1977/78.

The Europa League provided welcome relief. They won nine of their 15 games on the way to the final, but it perhaps summed up their season that they were beaten 1-0 in the final by a Tottenham team that had suffered similarly throughout the campaign.

"In this moment, I need a little bit of faith," said Amorim afterwards. *"If the board and the fans feel I'm not the right guy, I will go in the next day. But I will not quit again. I am confident in my job."*

There was a general feeling that the slate would be wiped clean for Amorim, to an extent, given he

had come in mid-season and this was not 'his' squad, so to speak.

He was duly backed in the summer transfer window, with Mbeumo, Cunha and Šeško the key acquisitions.

As yet, however, there has been little to shift the mood. United have lost to Arsenal and Manchester City already and drawn 1-1 at Fulham.

A 97th-minute Fernandes penalty spared their blushes in a 3-2 win over Burnley, while they exited the Carabao Cup at the second round stage for the first time in 12 seasons with a shock penalty shoot-out defeat to League Two Grimsby.

A 2-1 win over Chelsea at Old Trafford was their most recent result, providing some positivity for the club.

Earlier this month, Sky Sports' Rob Dorsett reported: "There will be no knee-jerk reaction or regular reassessment of the head coach's future after every defeat - however loud the noise grows from outside..."

In the Dugout

Ruben Amorim

Lisbon-born Ruben Amorim started out in the academy of Benfica as a youngster, but was released as a 17-year-old, without having found a way to the first team.

He then moved on to Belenenses, in the same city, and made his senior debut against Alverca in the Primeira Liga in December 2003.

Over the next four-and-a-half seasons, he played more than 100 games for O Belem, and progressed through the age groups for Portugal, earning the first of 10 Under-21s caps. When his contract expired there, he signed a four-year deal to return to Benfica in 2008, where he was a regular for the first two seasons.

During his nine years there - which included two spells on loan at Braga and one at Al-Wakrah in Qatar - he was part of the squads that won three league titles, one Portuguese Cup, five Portuguese League Cups and one Portuguese Super Cup. He also progressed to the senior Portugal team during that time and earned 14 caps between 2010 and 2014 - and was part of the squads for both the South Africa and Brazil World Cups.

Amorim retired at the age of 32 in April 2017 and started in management the following season with Casa Pia in the Portuguese third tier until January 2019. He then returned to Braga to take charge of the B team, then the first team, but moved on to Sporting CP in March 2020.

In his second season, Sporting won the Primeira Liga for the first time in two decades and completed a double by lifting the Portuguese League Cup, a trophy they retained in 2021/22.

Spearheaded by Viktor Gyökeres, Amorim's side won the league title again in 2023/24, and they were top when he left to replace Ten Hag at Manchester United in November. The 40-year-old's contract at Old Trafford runs until the summer of 2027.



Pig news! Waitrose goes the whole hog with industry-first investment in free range pork and signs 10-year deal with British farmers

Today, [Waitrose](#) has once again made a significant leap in animal welfare with a global supermarket first by committing to 100% free range own-label British pork by 2027. This means everything from your morning bacon and sausages to the pork in your favourite ready meals and lunchtime sandwiches will come from pigs raised outdoors, living happy and natural lives. This commitment guarantees exceptional quality and taste for Waitrose customers, all while supporting British farmers.

From 15th October 2025, all pork mince, steaks, chops and joints will be free range and available to purchase online and in Waitrose shops, with an intention for all own brand products to be free range by 2027. The new free range products will include a tiered welfare label, similar to the recently launched welfare label on [Waitrose chicken](#), to help guide customers to better choices.



"We believe that happy pigs make the best pork. Our commitment to 100% British free range across all our Waitrose products reflects our dedication to providing our customers with unbeatable quality, taste, and value with values. When you choose Waitrose pork, you're not just choosing a meal; you're choosing ethically raised, delicious British produce and truly backing British farmers who share our values." comments Charlotte Di Cello, Chief Commercial Officer at Waitrose. *"This isn't just about happy pigs; it's about happy customers and farmers too. Waitrose is investing in British pig farming over the next decade, ensuring top-tier animal welfare standards and delivering tasty, high-quality pork at great value."*

The new 10-year deal builds on over 30 years of partnership with Pilgrim's Europe and British Pig farmers which have seen the retailer continually set the benchmark for the UK pork industry.

"Pilgrim's Europe is proud to extend our partnership with Waitrose for another decade," said Nick Robinson, Chief Commercial Officer at Pilgrim's Europe. *"This new agreement is a testament to the progress we've made together in driving positive change within the industry. We remain fully committed to providing consumers with the highest quality pork while ensuring the welfare of animals, supporting British pig farmers and contributing to a more sustainable future for the industry."*

Waitrose is already a leader in free range pork, representing 55% of the UK market. This new commitment solidifies Waitrose's position at the forefront of animal welfare and quality. The succulent, flavourful free range pork available at Waitrose has come from pigs that have spent all their days outdoors, roaming freely and enjoying a natural lifestyle. That's the Waitrose difference.

"We're proud to work with dedicated British farmers who share our passion for animal welfare," adds Jake Pickering, Head of Agriculture for Waitrose. *"These farmers are the heart of our business, and*



we're committed to supporting them in delivering exceptional pork. We're thrilled to say that if you pass a field and see pigs being reared outside, they are likely to be happy Waitrose pigs, raised and cared for by our brilliant farmers."

What does free range pork mean?

It means that a pig will spend its entire life outdoors, and can enjoy wallows and fresh air to encourage

natural social behaviour and a happy life.

Todd Baker, whose family have been Waitrose free range pork farmers for over 30 years shares, "Seeing our pigs thriving outdoors, enjoying the fresh air and space to roam, is what makes farming worthwhile. We're delighted that Waitrose is making this significant investment in free range pork, ensuring that more customers can enjoy the superior taste and quality that comes from ethically raised animals."

Louise Valducci, Head of Food Business, Europe at Compassion in World Farming adds, "*We're delighted that Waitrose is setting a new benchmark for pig welfare with this commitment to free range production across its UK-sourced pork. We applaud Waitrose's dedication to ethical sourcing, as well as its transparency - exemplified in the new tiered welfare labels that already appear on its entire chicken range and will also be on the free range pork products.*"

Welfare Labelling

In a recent YouGov poll carried out for RSPCA Assured, it was revealed that the majority (62%)* of UK shoppers would spend more and buy British higher-welfare labelled products - such as free range - rather than settle for cheaper alternatives.

Waitrose believes in transparency and empowering consumers to make informed choices. They continue to advocate for strengthened labeling legislation, including establishing a legal definition for "free range pork", tightening up on the application of country of origin rules for products containing meat ingredients and introducing mandatory method of production labelling to help shoppers be guided by their values regardless of where they shop. All our free range pork will include a tiered welfare label on the packaging, such as - Organic, Free Range, Outdoor Bred, Enhanced Indoor and Standard Indoor - the lower three will be absent from all Waitrose own brand pork products by 2027.

This commitment to 100% free range pork follows Waitrose's previous industry-leading animal welfare initiatives, including being the first supermarket to ban farrowing crates for pigs nearly 20 years ago, ensuring all piglets are born outdoors and most recently the introduction of a higher animal [welfare labelling scheme](#) across all Waitrose chicken and meeting the [Better Chicken Commitment](#) early.

If you're a landowner or land manager and are interested in partnering with Waitrose and our pork farmers to introduce free range pigs into your rotation, please contact agriculture@waitrose.co.uk

New Revolut HQ caps £110 billion week of investment in UK financial services sector

From HM Treasury

Global fintech leader Revolut will today open its new global headquarters in Canary Wharf, setting out plans to invest £3 billion in the UK and create 1,000 high-skilled jobs over the next five years.

This comes on the heels of last week's £100 billion investment from asset manager Blackstone, £7 billion from BlackRock and £1.25 billion in inward investment from leading US financial firms including PayPal and Bank of America - generating 1,800 new jobs in major cities including London, Edinburgh, Belfast, and Manchester.

The wave of investment from financial services companies comes just months after the Chancellor cut needless financial red tape to ensure the UK wins the global race for financial services investment as part of the modern industrial strategy.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves, said:

"The UK is well and truly open for business under this Government. Through our Leeds Reforms we're making Britain the best place for financial services companies to do business, pushing us ahead in the global race for investment and putting more money in people's pockets through the Plan for Change."

Nik Storonsky, CEO & Co-founder of Revolut, commented:

"Our mission has always been to simplify money for our customers, and our vision to become the world's first truly global bank is the ultimate expression of that. From our roots here in the UK, we've grown to serve over 65 million customers globally, and today's opening of our new Global HQ in London is the launchpad for our future. This HQ will be central to driving our growth towards our next milestone of 100 million customers."

"To power that journey from our home market, we are investing £3 billion in the UK over the next five years. This commitment will not only create 1,000 new jobs but will also fuel the innovation from our London hub that will help us deliver on our global ambitions."

The major investments from financial services firms over the past week include:

- Blackstone is aiming to invest in excess of £100 billion of assets in the UK over the next decade. This includes their £10 billion investment in a data centre in Blyth.
- BlackRock expects to allocate over £7 billion to the UK market next year on behalf of its clients and is investing £500 million into enterprise data centres across the country.
- Bank of America is set to create up to 1,000 new jobs in Belfast, marking its first-ever operation in Northern Ireland – a major milestone that underscores the region's growing role in global financial services.
- Citi Group today confirms it is investing £1.1 billion across its UK operations, including a further commitment to growing its presence in Northern Ireland where the bank is already

one of the top employers in Belfast now employing over 4,000 people – firmly establishing Belfast as a major technology powerhouse.

- In Manchester, S&P Global are investing over £4 million into their Manchester offices which will support 200 permanent jobs boosting their nearly 3,000-strong UK workforce.
- As part of the UK's expanding fintech and digital innovation sector, PayPal is announcing a £150m investment in product innovations and growth that will benefit customers throughout the UK, reinforcing Britain's position as a key market for the brand globally.

These investments in the UK are a vote of confidence in the UK's economic plan, built on stability, investment and reform.

The Leeds Reforms set out the widest ranging reforms to financial regulation in over a decade, making the UK more attractive to global financial services firms.

This includes new support for fintech introducing tailored support to help FinTechs, with new start-ups getting a single regulatory point of contact to help them through the scale-up phase. The contact will be able to provide technical support to help them understand the regulatory requirements they need to meet in order to grow.

Revolut's investment marks its commitment to the UK, where it has grown to become a global fintech leader with more than 10,000 employees and revenues of over £3 billion.

The company now serves over 65 million customers worldwide, including 12 million in the UK, and has set its sights on reaching 100 million customers globally by mid-2027. Revolut's success exemplifies the strength of the UK's fintech sector, which boasts around 3,000 firms supporting tens of thousands of skilled jobs nationwide.



HM Treasury

Chancellor response to the OECD's Interim Economic Outlook

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rachel Reeves said:

"These figures confirm that the British economy is stronger than forecast – it has been the fastest growing of any G7 economy in the first half of the year."

"But I know there is more to do to build an economy that works for working people – and rewards working people. That is what I'm determined we deliver through our Plan for Change."



HM Treasury

LGA responds to Nuffield Trust report on access to Continuing Healthcare

From Local Government Association

Responding to a report from the Nuffield Trust about access to NHS Continuing Healthcare, Cllr Dr Wendy Taylor, Chair of the LGA's Health and Wellbeing Committee, said:

"Issues with Continuing Healthcare are not a new problem for councils. Financial pressures on the NHS are making it increasingly difficult for councils to deliver essential services, particularly Continuing Healthcare, but also SEND and complex care.

"Cost-shunting behaviours create local tensions and offer no net benefit to the public purse. Ultimately, they make it harder for people who draw on care and support to access the services they need, and to live the independent and dignified lives they want to lead.

"Efforts to examine how Continuing Healthcare is working in practice and the interface between health and care is something we would encourage the Casey Commission to consider. But ultimately, this must be matched with sustainable funding if we are to improve services for people who draw on care and support."



London named among UK's best cities for live music

Brighton has been named the best city in the UK for live music fans, according to new research.

Trusted tickets comparison site [SeatPick](#) examined the UK's biggest towns and cities to find the top spots for gig-goers based on both venue numbers and scheduled events per 100,000 residents in each location.

Brighton claimed the top spot with an impressive **89.06 out of 100** in the index study, based on the city being home to 40.14 venues per 100,000 people, combined with 117.42 upcoming music events per 100,000 residents. The seaside city's mix of venue density and regular gigs created an unbeatable combination for music lovers seeking regular live performances.

Cambridge narrowly missed the top position with a score of **88.46** despite having substantially fewer venues at just 23.57 per 100,000 residents. The university town compensated with the highest number of scheduled music events across all locations in the study, boasting a massive 360.09 events per 100,000 people, which is triple Brighton's figure.

Glasgow took third place with **78.04 points**, offering 21.52 venues and 129.89 events per 100,000 people. The Scottish city's rich musical heritage has been home to numerous famous bands and artists over the decades, while its current scene continues to draw talent from across the UK.

Manchester, birthplace of legendary bands Oasis and The Smiths, grabbed fourth spot, scoring **76.83**, with 20.45 venues and 124.76 events per 100,000 residents.

London ranked just fifth despite its reputation as the entertainment capital of the UK, with a score of **72.19**. The capital city provides 14.26 venues and 142.26 events per 100,000 people, which equates to fewer venues per resident than any of the top four cities when scaled by population.

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