

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



Contents

TickerTape

The lines in the Teddington area will be closed from Saturday 14 to Tuesday 17 February South Western Railway

The Tree Agency

Crusader Travel

Council Tax at the Limit as Richmond Draws £15m from Reserves

James Knight

Save The Rifleman Revue

Is it all over for public service broadcasting?

The Richmond Society

Give your items a second life at next weekend's Twickenham Repair Café

Twickenham Repair Café

Environment Committee Report

James Knight

Richmond Park: AA Ranger's Story

Mortlake with East Sheen Society

Exceptional volunteer receives a Thames rivers environmental award

Thames Rivers Trust

London's first Thames bathing site proposed - feasibility study launched on Ham-side access

Richmond Council

Regal Spice Twickenham

Local Open Water Swimmers Donate to Teddington RNLI

Teddington RNLI

Support our Campaign for Affordable Homes in Richmond

Twickenham Labour Party

Heathfield Cut, Richmond Boosted

James Knight

Bushy Park - amphibian-friendly grit

The Royal Parks

Richmond Park - Roehampton Restored project

The Royal Parks

Richmond's Centre Stage Festival to Return This Summer

Michael Jones

Barnes Music Festival

Next week at Richmond Council

Twickers Foodie: A Flipping Good Pancake Recipe

Alison Jee

Gibraltar Sunborn Sail Into Romance

Sunborn Gibraltar

Traveller's Tales 179: Guidance - Doug Goodman reviews some travel books

Doug Goodman

LOVE YOU?

Deep Patel

Mark Aspen Review: Dance of Death

Patrick Shorrock

Mark Aspen Review: Practically Imperfect

Claire Alexander

Mark Aspen Review: Così Fan Tutte

Patrick Shorrock

Free talks and creative workshops to celebrate the opening of Teddington's Ellera Centre

Ellera Community Association

Grand Mass in Eflat Major - Amy Beach

Hampton Choral Society

Richmond upon Thames College Celebrates Win at the Richmond Business Awards 2025

Richmond upon Thames College

Jack Petchey Foundation recognises young people from Richmond upon Thames

Jack Petchey Foundation

Michelin Star retained for seventh year

The Dysart Petersham

Another year in the MICHELIN Guide

Mignonette Bistro

England Team To Play Scotland

RFU

Macclesfield v Brentford in the FA Cup

Ron Brand

Match Preview: Macclesfield v Brentford

Brentford Football Club

Have you spotted this taxi around Twickenham?

Regtransfers

Mayor sets out new licensing plans to boost capital's hospitality and nightlife industries

The Mayor of London

Editors: Teresa Read, Berkley Driscoll

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TickerTape - News in Brief

South Western Railway

The lines in the **Teddington** area will be **closed from Saturday 14 to Tuesday 17 February, all days inclusive** due to maintenance work.

Saturday

- **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will **not** run.
- **Buses** will run between **New Malden and Shepperton via Kingston.**
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will be diverted after **New Malden** and will terminate at **Hampton Court**, calling additionally at **Surbiton.**
- A **revised** service will run between **London Waterloo and Twickenham.**
- **Buses** will run between **New Malden and Twickenham via Kingston.**

Sunday

- **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will be diverted after **New Malden** and will terminate at **Hampton Court**, calling additionally at **Surbiton.**
- **Buses** will run between **New Malden and Shepperton via Kingston.**
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will be diverted after **New Malden** and will terminate at **Hampton Court**, calling additionally at **Surbiton.**
- **Buses** will run between **New Malden and Twickenham via Kingston.**
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will terminate at **Hounslow.**
- Some **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised** to leave **London Waterloo earlier** and will make additional stops between **London Waterloo and Twickenham.**

Monday and Tuesday

- **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will be **revised** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Fulwell via Richmond** calling at all stations.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will be diverted after **New Malden** and will terminate at **Hampton Court**, calling additionally at **Surbiton.**
- A **revised** service will run between **London Waterloo and Hampton Court.**
- **Buses** will run between **New Malden and Twickenham via Kingston.**



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darryl parkin

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Council Tax at the Limit as Richmond Draws £15m from Reserves

By James Knight

Council Tax is rising to the threshold while £15 million is drawn from reserves, even as the borough carries a red pothole rating.



Richmond's Finance, Policy and Resources Committee has recommended a Council Tax increase that takes the borough to the effective legal ceiling. The proposed rise of 2.99% for general services, plus a 2% Adult Social Care precept, brings Richmond's own increase to 4.99% just beneath the referendum threshold. Including the Greater London Authority element, the total Band D bill will rise to £2,486.10, an overall increase of 4.81%.

Deputy Leader and Finance Lead Member Cllr Jim Millard framed the moment starkly. "The context for this is the most significant financial challenge this council has faced for many years, if not in the entirety of its existence," he told members. Under the Government's Fair Funding Review 2.0 settlement, Richmond faces a projected £29 million reduction in funding by year three, "approximately £10 million a year until we reach year three," he said.

Yet what was less emphasised in the room is that even this near-maximum Council Tax rise does not come close to offsetting that structural loss. The increase is not a choice made in comfortable circumstances; it is a necessary lever pulled at the edge of what is legally permitted without public vote.

Reserves: a warning light

To balance the 2026/27 budget, the Council will draw £15 million from reserves. That is not routine smoothing. It is a significant depletion of accumulated buffers.

Cllr Millard was candid, perhaps more so than intended. “Reserves are a bridge, they’re not a permanent solution,” he said, before adding that “by the end of two years we will have run out of reserves with which to plug this gap.” In the chamber, the line passed without dramatic reaction. Outside, the implications are stark. If reserves are exhausted within two years, the structural deficit could remain, and the council would be facing Section 114 territory.

The Quarter 3 monitoring report reinforces the fragility of the position. The Council is projecting a £2.7 million overspend in the current year. Homelessness alone accounts for just over £2 million of that. A one-off VAT refund masks some of the pressure, but the underlying pattern is persistent overspend in demand-led services. The budget, in other words, is being held together by reserves and optimism about transformation savings that have yet to materialise.

“All options” on Council Tax

The sensitivity of the Council Tax decision is heightened by remarks made at January’s Full Council meeting. Asked by the Green Group whether residents could be reassured that Council Tax would not exceed 4.99% in future years, Cllr Millard replied: “We’ll consider all options. I can’t rule anything out at this point.” He added that if government protection were not extended, “we’ll have to cross that bridge.”

Crossing that bridge would mean either a local referendum or seeking central government dispensation to exceed the cap. No formal proposal exists today. But the refusal to rule it out is politically significant, particularly with local elections scheduled for May 2026. Council Tax is the clearest and most visible measure of a council’s priorities. To be at the threshold this year and, potentially, to consider going beyond it next year is not a trivial development and will inevitably become a live issue at the polls.

Highways: self-congratulation meets a red rating

The sharpest contrast of the evening came during the discussion of highway spending. As the capital programme concluded, Cllr Millard interjected: “We are continuing our record investment in roads and pavements.” Around the table, councillors were visibly pleased. It was the only moment of unqualified self-congratulation in an otherwise sombre financial discussion. There was back-slapping satisfaction, nodding, and what could fairly be described as beaming approval. It was the most upbeat moment of the night.

In nominal cash terms, highway allocations are indeed higher than in previous years. But the claim of “record investment” requires context. The uplift was introduced recently and forms part of a three-year catch-up programme. Adjusted for inflation, real-terms highway spending remains below levels seen under earlier administrations. Rising materials and labour costs mean higher cash figures do not automatically equate to greater output.

More awkwardly, Richmond has been rated “red” in the Government’s new pothole transparency tables, placing it among eight London boroughs with the weakest pothole management

performance. The Department for Transport described councils as being “named and shamed.” Against that backdrop, the celebratory tone in the chamber felt at odds with the external assessment. If spending is at a record, why is performance rated in the bottom tier? The more plausible explanation is that the current spending is corrective rather than exceptional – an attempt to recover from deterioration rather than evidence of historic ambition. Whether three years of higher nominal allocations are sufficient to lift Richmond out of the red category remains to be demonstrated.

Capital ambition under financial strain

The wider capital programme exceeds £300 million over six years, with borrowing expected to fund more than £140 million of that. Cllr Millard acknowledged that the Fair Funding Review “puts additional constraints and very significant constraints on our ability to borrow.” That tension, between ambition and constraint, runs through the programme.

New projects are now filtered through a “development pool” process, with emphasis on invest-to-save. Some smaller schemes have been removed or deferred. In the Heathfield ward, shopfront improvements and related public realm projects have been removed from the immediate programme. Cllr Millard sought to soften the blow, telling members, “It’s not never, say never.” Nonetheless, reprioritisation is happening. A separate article will examine the Heathfield changes in detail.

Growth plans and hard arithmetic

The Committee also endorsed Richmond’s ten-year Growth Plan. Cllr Phil Giesler described it as “a really important statement of ambition for Richmond as a borough.” The plan aims to increase jobs, businesses and lower-end incomes.

The ambition is clear. The arithmetic is harder. Growth may improve the tax base over time, but it does not close a £29 million structural funding gap in the short term. That gap is being bridged by reserves that will not last indefinitely.

A confident tone, a fragile base

Taken together, the meeting revealed a Council projecting confidence as it navigates increasingly narrow financial headroom. Council Tax sits at the legal threshold. Reserves are being depleted to balance the books. Borrowing is set to increase. Demand-led services remain volatile. Yet members closed on a note of pride over highway investment, despite the borough carrying a red pothole rating and having been publicly “named and shamed” by the Government.

The budget papers themselves leave little room for ambiguity. Taxes are rising to the limit permitted without a referendum. Financial buffers are shrinking. Future stability rests heavily on transformation savings that have yet to be realised. Whether that assured tone proves warranted will become clear over the next two years, or whether this budget marks the beginning of a more difficult financial correction.

To see the committee papers and the webcast click [HERE](#)

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Is it all over for public service broadcasting?

From The Richmond Society

Roger Mosey, a trustee of the Richmond Society and a former BBC executive, writes with an invitation to our next event:

We could wake up in a few years' time and find that the BBC has disappeared, and with it more than a century of public service broadcasting in this country. It's increasingly easy to see how this might happen. Consent for a compulsory licence fee is declining; competition from global streaming companies is intense; hostile governments wait in the wings; and the BBC has made mistakes of its own.

You may worry about this outcome, or you may think it's inevitable or even a good thing. What would be a shame, in my view, is if this happened without us fully understanding what the implications would be. How would it affect what we watch? How might it change the news we consume - and what could it mean for wider society?

Richmond happens to be a place with strong ties to broadcasting - not least because Television Centre was just down the road - and so it's the perfect venue to bring together a panel of media industry leaders to discuss the big topic: is it all over for public service broadcasting? And we very much want to hear from you in our audience to help shape this vital debate. I do hope we'll see you in central Richmond on **Wednesday February 18th**. - Roger Mosey



Roger Mosey



Details and tickets, free to Richmond Society members, are [HERE](#)

Give your items a second life at next weekend's Twickenham Repair Café

From Twickenham Repair Café

The next Twickenham Repair Café will be open on Saturday 21 February, for the repair of household items. The café does not charge for repairs, but ask for a donation based on what you think our time and expertise is worth. There's no need to book ahead, just drop in.

While you wait, you can enjoy the café inside the Repair Café, serving tea, coffee and a selection of homemade cakes.

Event details:

- **Date:** Saturday 21 February 2026
- **Time:** 10.30am to 12.30pm
- **Location:** St Margaret's Church Hall, Twickenham, TW1 1RL

The café takes place on the third Saturday of every month. Find out more about the [Twickenham Repair Café](#).



Environment Committee Report

James Knight

Richmond's Environment Committee was calm, procedural and confident. Yet beneath the steady tone lie harder questions on housing, planning costs and the true state of biodiversity on our streets.



A measured evening at York House

The meeting opened without friction. Apologies were recorded from Councillor Dalton, no declarations of interest were made, the previous minutes were approved, and there were no ward concerns or petitions to consider. The absence of public challenge lent the evening an orderly, almost insulated feel. Business moved swiftly to the substantive items: climate, finance, fees and the work programme.

Climate strategy: “not universally popular”

The update on delivery of the Richmond Climate and Nature Strategy dominated proceedings. Members were asked to note organisational carbon emissions, borough wide progress and the Statutory Biodiversity Report submitted to DEFRA, and to approve recommendations on highway grass verge management.

Officers outlined reductions in organisational emissions and highlighted ongoing environmental initiatives. The committee also formally requested that future work consider “the interaction between affordability and climate goals” and provide guidance for residents on resilience at household level. That request was telling. It recognises that environmental ambition must coexist with household pressure.

Green councillor Andrée Frieze spoke candidly about public reaction to verge management, acknowledging that the approach is “not universally popular.” She pressed officers to ensure that climate risk mapping and biodiversity information are genuinely accessible to residents rather than buried in technical reports. Her tone was constructive, but the subtext was clear: public consent cannot be assumed.

There is, however, a deeper tension rarely stated plainly. Across the borough, the vast majority of so-called verges are not meadows waiting to bloom. They are strips of tarmac. Entire lengths of street edge have been paved over in past decades for crossovers, hard standing and parking. If biodiversity is the goal, the more radical question is whether some of these sealed surfaces should be removed and returned to soil. A verge cannot host wildflowers if it is asphalt. If biodiversity is to move beyond symbolism, land restoration will have to sit alongside mowing regimes. That structural issue was not debated. Yet it sits at the heart of any serious conversation about urban biodiversity.

The overspend: “a lot of smaller movements”

Turning to finance, members noted a projected revenue overspend of £566,000 in the Quarter Three monitoring report. Officers described the position as being “made up by a lot of smaller movements,” citing waste disposal inflation and service specific pressures. The latest capital programme position was also noted.

There was no visible alarm. The explanation was calm and technocratic. Yet in local government, small movements accumulate. Waste costs are rising. Income is finite. An overspend may be manageable this year, but patterns matter. The committee did not press the point. It accepted the framing. That composure is reassuring, but it should not dull scrutiny.

Fees approved, context unspoken

The Directorate Budget Report and revised Fees and Charges for 2026 to 2027 were approved, with new charges to apply from 1 April 2026. The approach was presented as largely inflationary and rooted in cost recovery. In isolation, that is sensible.

However, planning related charges sit within a far more consequential backdrop. Richmond’s 60 per cent Housing Delivery Test result has placed the borough under the presumption in favour of sustainable development, alongside a compulsory 20 per cent land supply buffer. The effect is not symbolic. It alters the decision-making framework itself. Where delivery has faltered, the planning balance tilts decisively towards approval, narrowing the council’s discretion in contested cases. That presumption is live. It governs applications being determined now. In appeals, it places greater weight on national policy and narrows the council’s room for manoeuvre when refusing applications. Housing was not formally on the agenda that evening, but it still shapes the planning environment.

The council’s own consultation with developers records that “Planning e.g. discharging conditions” is seen as a key staller of development locally. One respondent described the department as “blinkered and non-collaborative.” Another called for “a positive attitude” and less of a “barrier against the delivery of housing.” Those words are not editorial embellishment. They appear in the council’s own Action Plan documentation.

To raise planning related charges in that climate may be justified on cost grounds. It would, however, be optimistic to assume they carry no behavioural consequence. In a borough already struggling to meet delivery targets, additional friction, however modest in isolation, can slow marginal schemes even further.

What was agreed, and what was not

The Committee Work Programme was agreed, subject to the amendments discussed. The formal business was completed efficiently. The meeting was civil. Officers were fluent. Councillors were measured. Green councillor Andrée Frieze’s contributions were pragmatic rather than theatrical. There was little sense of political rancour.

Yet calm chambers can sometimes mask harder structural realities. Richmond is serious about climate. It is right to be. But if large parts of the borough’s roadside landscape remain sealed under tarmac, biodiversity policy must move beyond mowing regimes to land restoration. If housing delivery remains fragile, the planning environment must be examined not only for fairness but for speed and confidence. Stewardship is rarely about grand gestures. More often it is about small, cumulative decisions. Last week’s meeting felt steady. The structural pressures shaping the borough’s planning and financial landscape are anything but.

The committee papers and the webcast can be accessed by clicking [HERE](#)

RICHMOND PARK: A RANGER'S STORY



by Duncan MacCallum
Rangers' Spokesman & Mentor

**Illustrated talk about the deer, other
wildlife and the ranger service that
helps to manage and enhance their
habitat**



Photo: Diana Loch

Monday 23 February • 7.30pm

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Exceptional volunteer receives a Thames rivers environmental award

From Thames Rivers Trust

A volunteer in the Crane Valley who has been volunteering for more than 30 years to improve his local river has been awarded the prestigious Thames Rivers Trust Peter Spillett Award. Ian Mc Kinnon a regular volunteer for Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) said it had come as a 'Complete surprise' when he was told he was to receive the environmental award from Thames River Trust (TRT).

Miles Morgan, TRT CEO met Ian this week at Crane Park, Twickenham during a FORCE conservation task for water vole habitat improvements that Ian has been spearheading. Miles Morgan said, *'Ian is hugely deserving of this award. He is an inspiration and a valuable asset to the Crane, its wildlife and the community. Committed volunteers such as Ian are making a real and sustained difference, particularly with projects like this for endangered species.'*



Presentation of the prestigious environmental accolade, the Thames Rivers Trust Peter Spillett Award 2026 to Ian McKinnon Friends of the River Crane Environment (FORCE) volunteer. Pictured left to right: Thames Rivers Trust CEO Miles Morgan, Ian McKinnon, Yvette de Garis and Rob Gray.

The award was created by Thames Rivers Trust (TRT) to celebrate the late Peter Spillett, a Trustee for more than 10 years, who cared passionately about improving the Thames rivers and the wildlife that they sustain. His widow Yvette de Garis joined TRT's Miles Morgan on the banks of the Crane and presented winner Ian with the engraved silver salver award. Yvette said, *'It's a real privilege to honour someone who has put so much into the Crane and delivered such amazing results.'* She expressed how important wildlife and the Thames rivers were to Peter; and the projects that groups like FORCE undertake.

Ian's voluntary work has enhanced the biodiversity value of the lower Crane valley, from leading the water vole restoration programme which has resulted in a new colony of water voles being released and establishing themselves in and around Crane Park Island, to producing kingfisher nesting banks to help this iconic river bird have increased opportunities to breed successfully. He has also actively contributed to restoring meadows, hedgerows and woodlands.

Rob Gray, Director at Crane Valley Community Interest Company who nominated Ian said, *'He is highly skilled and motivated, as well as being intensely practical and reliable. Most visits in and around Crane Park you will find him doing his thing, everyone knows and respects him, and the place would look very different without his care and attention.'*

The annual award opens for nomination for this year's entries on 1st April and will again be seeking nominations for an outstanding individual who works or volunteers with a Rivers Trust or another NGO delivering projects for the environmental good of rivers in the Thames River Basin. More details can be found on the Thames Rivers Trust website.



London's first Thames bathing site proposed - feasibility study launched on Ham-side access

From Richmond Council

The government's proposal to designate 'Riverside at Ham and Kingston' as one of England's newest official bathing sites has today been welcomed by Richmond Council – launching a feasibility study to strengthen infrastructure and accessibility on the Ham side of the river.

The move forms part of a nationwide programme that could see London join 464 bathing locations across the country.

Councillor Gareth Roberts, Leader of Richmond Council, said: *"The Thames is one of Richmond's defining features, with communities living and working on both sides of the river."*

"While the proposed bathing site sits within Kingston's boundary, the opportunity is shared. We've already committed to improving our towpaths and riverside access - this feasibility study builds on that work and looks at how Ham can be ready for increased use of the river."

The Council will now explore options to upgrade Burnell Open Space and the adjacent towpath, improving access to the river and supporting Ham's long-term potential as a Thames-side destination.

Councillor Jim Millard, Lead Member for Finance, said: *"This is about planning ahead. If Ham is to become part of London's first official Thames bathing offer, we need the right infrastructure in place."*

"By exploring improvements to Burnell Open Space and the Ham riverside now, we are positioning the borough to respond confidently and responsibly to growing interest in river swimming and recreation."

Detailed feasibility work will now begin, with further updates to follow later this year.



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Local Open Water Swimmers Donate to Teddington RNLI

From Teddington RNLI

Teddington RNLI volunteer crew was delighted to welcome five members of a local Teddington swimming group who have raised over £14,000 for the lifeboat station over the past four years.



Chris Fraser, Marlene Lawrence, Alexandra Rufferi, Matt Allchurch, Cressida Barrett and Claire Wilmot
Photo ©RNLI/Grace Palmieri

Marlene Lawrence, Claire Wilmot, Alexandra Ruffer, Chris Fraser and Cressida Barrett met some of the crew to present a cheque for £3,737. The donation was raised by a silent auction run by Marlene, which took place in December and offered prizes such as a holiday on the Mull of Kintyre, a stay in a Geneva ski apartment and a visit to McLaren headquarters. Also on offer was an exquisite handmade quilt made by a New Malden resident called Frances, the successful bid coming from Chris Fraser.

Frances said, *'this quilt is a pattern called Mariners' Compass and is very intricate. I thought it was very appropriate for the RNLI.'*

Marlene Lawrence spoke of the donation, *'The work of Teddington RNLI is vital to people like us who use the Thames. We are delighted to be part of helping this charity to support our community.'*

Matt Allchurch, Lifeboat Operations Manager at Teddington RNLI said, *'we are grateful to this group of swimmers for this generous donation. It is important for us to meet others who share an interest in the Thames and river safety. Donations like these allow us to continue to work to save lives on the river.'*



Lifeboats

Support our Campaign for Affordable Homes in Richmond

Protest outside Twickenham Town Hall 3rd March

From John Edmonds, Twickenham Labour Party Campaign Coordinator

Richmond upon Thames has an acute shortage of affordable homes with over 3,000 households on the waiting list.

House prices and rents are so high that young people, key staff like teachers, police officers and workers in local businesses, cannot afford to live here.

Richmond Council should be working hard to end this crisis - but it is doing next to nothing.

Between 2020/21 and 2022/23 the Council completed only 34 affordable homes – That's the worst in London. Richmond Council came **bottom** of the London Councils' league table: 33rd out of 33.

Twickenham Labour Party believes people deserve better.

We have organised a petition to call for more affordable homes in Richmond. Our Council should be one of the best councils in London for completing affordable homes - not the worst.

Since last Spring we have run a Labour Party street stall with placards explaining the facts. Every 10 days or so, the stall has visited a local shopping area. We explain our campaign to passers-by and ask them to sign our petition.

So far, we have over 2,000 signatures.

We plan to present our petition to the next full meeting of Richmond Council on 3rd March.

The presentation will be at York House - the council's HQ in the middle of Twickenham - Richmond Rd, Twickenham TW1 3AA.

Pam Marum, our local Labour Party housing expert, will present the petition with a speech arguing that the council must listen to local people and ensure that we have more affordable homes.

We are asking Labour Party members and anyone else who supports our campaign affordable homes to **assemble outside the York House at 6.30pm on 3rd March** to greet the councillors arriving for their meeting which begins at 7pm.

Everyone who believes in more affordable homes is welcome - Labour Party members, relatives, neighbours and friends. The event should end at about 7.15pm when Pam and her colleagues come out to tell us that the Petition has been presented.

With your help, our petition should lead to the provision of **more affordable homes in Richmond.**



Heathfield Cut, Richmond Boosted

By James Knight

Under an administration that speaks often of fairness, funding has flowed away from one of the poorest wards and toward the borough's wealthiest centre. The figures, more than the rhetoric, tell the story.



An election promise made

There are moments in local government when the rhetoric of fairness collides with the arithmetic of the budget. This is one of them.

In Heathfield Ward, residents of Powder Mill Lane and Hanworth Road were told during the last election that money had been secured to improve their shopping parades. The commitment was concrete rather than abstract. The Council commissioned specialist urban designers, Metropolitan Workshop, to prepare a detailed public realm and greening scheme under the Public Realm Improvement Fund. A formal consultation followed, complete with plans, planting schedules and visualisations. Residents were asked for their views because the scheme was presented as funded and deliverable.

This was not framed as an aspiration. It was framed as progress. It was offered as evidence that Heathfield was not being overlooked.

A scheme cancelled

That promise has now been broken. The Finance Committee cancelled the scheme on Thursday evening. The original £358,000 allocation has been removed from the capital programme, leaving only the £28,000 already spent on preparatory design work. The official explanation is that the Public Realm Improvement Fund has been “reprioritised to support other capital priorities.” However careful the wording, the outcome is straightforward: the improvements promised to Heathfield have been cut.

At the same Finance Committee meeting that confirmed the cancellation, the capital programme included proposed new funding of £1.5 million for a Richmond Town Centre Improvement Project. The contrast is not subtle. In one of the borough's more economically stretched wards, a fully designed and publicly consulted scheme is abandoned. In the borough's wealthiest town centre, a seven-figure enhancement is advanced. It is difficult to imagine a clearer illustration of priority.

The public narrative

This decision did not occur in isolation. Only weeks earlier, at the Council's Community Conversation, Cllr Katie Mansfield described Richmond town centre as having "about 40–50 projects" under consideration and a roadmap stretching "over the next five, ten years." The tone was expansive and confident. Richmond was being master planned for a decade of visible change.

When that comment prompted concern, Heathfield councillor Michael Wilson responded publicly that the suggestion of imbalance was "simply not true," adding that "at best four or five projects are likely to be taken forward" in Richmond. The reassurance was clear: there was no concentration of investment at the expense of other areas.

Yet capital programmes speak more plainly than community conversations. Heathfield loses approximately £330,000 from a promised scheme. Richmond receives £1.5 million for town centre improvements. One ward's cancellation coincides with another ward's funding boost.



Fairness tested

The Liberal Democrats speak frequently of fairness. They present their administration as socially conscious and attentive to inequality within a borough that contains both affluence and hardship. That language carries weight. But fairness in public administration is not ultimately a matter of tone. It is a matter of distribution.

Heathfield is not Richmond Green. It is among the borough's more deprived wards, with a markedly different socio-economic profile from the prosperous centre. Powder Mill Lane and Hanworth Road are not boutique destinations. They are practical neighbourhood parades of barbers, takeaways, small supermarkets and independent traders serving a hard-pressed local community. The shopfronts are modest. Parking dominates the frontage in places. The public

realm feels utilitarian rather than curated. It works, but it lacks the civic polish that investment can bring.

The cancelled scheme was not about spectacle. It proposed modest interventions: coordinated planting to soften the forecourts, clearer pedestrian routes, improved refuse storage, better wayfinding, and small design elements intended to give the parades a stronger identity. These were incremental improvements aimed at raising everyday standards rather than transforming the area overnight.

When capital allocations shift from a place like that to one that already benefits from high footfall, large retail units, and sustained private investment, the distributive effect is clear. It represents not simply a financial adjustment but a choice about where civic attention is concentrated. Under fiscal pressure, those choices reveal priorities.

Broken commitments

Residents in Heathfield engaged with the consultation process in good faith. They were told funding had been secured. They were invited to consider design details because the scheme was presented as a real project. They now discover that it has been cancelled. At the same time, Richmond town centre is positioned for substantial new investment and described as the focus of a long-term programme of potential projects.

Inclusive growth is not established by speeches or strategy documents. It is established by whether investment reaches beyond the borough's most prosperous streets when budgets tighten. In this instance, when capital pressure arrived, money flowed out of a poorer ward and into a richer one.

Budgets are moral documents. They reveal which improvements are treated as essential and which are negotiable. In Heathfield, the ledger now provides its own answer.



Photos ©Twickenham & Richmond Tribune

Bushy Park - amphibian-friendly grit



You may have noticed this signage appearing in the park.

We're trialling amphibian-friendly grit on pathways near Hampton Hill to help protect newts as they make their annual migration to breeding ponds.

Standard rock salt isn't suitable for amphibians, so we've switched to a salt-free alternative in this area.

If you're walking or cycling near Hampton Hill Pond, please take extra care.



Richmond Park - Roehampton Restored project

The Royal Parks charity is carrying out works in February 2026 to enable the installation of a new electricity supply in preparation for the new café as part of the Roehampton Restored project.



A section of the Tamsin Trail will be closed between Roehampton Gate and the Roehampton Car Park entrance during this period of works.

We apologise for the disruption and during this time ask visitors to use alternative routes. Cyclists, please follow the road for a short distance before rejoining the Tamsin Trail.

Thank you for bearing with us.

If you have any questions, please contact: visitorsupport@royalparks.org.uk

Find out more about the Roehampton Restored project, [HERE](#)



Richmond's Centre Stage Festival to Return This Summer

By Michael Jones

Following what it describes as the “roaring success” of last year’s event, Richmond Council has confirmed that Centre Stage will return on Saturday 18 July, once again closing George Street and Whittaker Square for a day-long celebration of music, performance and family activity.

The figures the council quotes are striking. In 2025 the festival, the council reports, “drew thousands of visitors, lifted footfall by 30%, and gave local businesses an immediate boost – hospitality up 20–45%, retail up 10–30%,” Councillor Katie Mansfeld declared that “Centre Stage brings people back onto the high street,” adding that when George Street is used “in a more creative way, the town buzzes, local businesses see the benefit and our community comes together.”



Councillor Gareth Roberts was equally clear. “Residents have been clear – they want a high street full of life and activity. Centre Stage delivers exactly that, right in the heart of Richmond.” It is a fluent case for cultural intervention as an economic stimulus. Yet the language surrounding the event suggests a wider cultural agenda.

Reclaiming the Street

The promotional material describes Centre Stage as “reclaiming George Street and Whittaker Square as a platform for creativity, community and contemporary culture,” with the streets becoming “a stage, canvas and playground.”

Reclaiming from whom is left tactfully unsaid. In practice, the space is reclaimed from traffic. For one day, buses divert, cars disappear, and the high street is curated rather than crossed. Culture becomes not merely content, but demonstration, a visible argument that the town centre should prioritise programmed experience over movement. For many residents, this is an appealing vision of renewal. For others, it carries more complicated implications.

From Festival to Policy

The council is already developing longer-term traffic measures for the town centre, including proposals that would substantially reduce, and potentially remove, through traffic on George Street. These proposals reflect the now dominant view in Richmond town hall that routine private car use in dense town centres is environmentally and morally unsustainable. In that context, a festival that temporarily excludes vehicles inevitably functions as more than celebration. It becomes illustration.

For one day, residents are invited to experience George Street without cars, to see how it feels, how it trades, how it photographs. The absence of traffic is not incidental to the atmosphere; it is the condition that makes it possible. The event therefore offers a lived demonstration of the model towards which policy is gradually moving.

Framed this way, Centre Stage is both performance and proof of concept. A road closure justified by music and theatre is easier to embrace than one justified by carbon reduction targets. Yet the underlying direction of travel is consistent: a high street in which motor traffic is no longer the organising principle.

Who Benefits

At a recent Richmond Society forum examining the future of the town centre, the mood was measured but candid. Retailers on George Street reportedly did well. Businesses further afield, on Richmond Hill, in the Lanes, and along King Street reported reduced takings.

Pamela Fleming, a Richmond Society Committee member, noted at a recent engagement event that “we had two local businesses on our table, who had not had a good day,” and cautioned that it was important to determine “whether it’s really right to have the events on George Street, which, you know, does prevent people actually getting into Richmond.”

This is where the debate acquires an edge. A car-free, performance-led festival is, by design, leisurely. It presumes time to browse, to watch, to linger. It flatters a certain version of the town’s identity, affluent, professional, culturally literate. For residents with flexible schedules, for homeowners whose relationship to the high street is recreational rather than transactional, the transformation can feel like enrichment.

For shift workers reliant on predictable bus routes, for carers navigating crowded pavements, for independent traders beyond the immediate footprint whose margins depend on access rather than ambience, the calculus is different. A high street recast as a playground may be welcoming in principle yet excluding in practice.

It is not unreasonable to ask whether such interventions risk prioritising the tastes of a confident middle class over the everyday routines of those who work in and pass through the town rather than curate it. In a prosperous borough like Richmond, the politics of aesthetic placemaking finds a ready constituency. Critics of contemporary municipal liberalism argue that an emphasis on lifestyle, environmental signalling and curated community events can slide into bourgeois indulgence, attentive to ambience while inattentive to structural inequality.

Whether that charge is fair in this instance is open to argument. The council’s figures suggest real economic uplift for some. But the distribution of that uplift, and the experience of those beyond the festival perimeter, complicate the story.

Movement, Order and the Everyday

Forum participants also raised concerns about buses navigating diversions, congestion around Richmond Green, and difficulties navigating narrower streets. There were calls for visible policing, improved enforcement against e-bikes on pavements and better provision of public toilets.

Fleming observed that some felt events “would have been better placed and done, actually, on the Green, or somewhere else,” reflecting a desire not to reject animation, but to recalibrate it. None of this negates the atmosphere described by supporters. Even critics acknowledged that the event was family-friendly and well received by many. The difficulty lies in reconciling atmosphere with operation, and uplift with access.



A Civic Choice

Centre Stage will return this July, bigger, better and bolder, in the council’s phrase. It will once again test the proposition that culture can revive the high street and, in doing so, redefine its purpose. The question is not whether Richmond should be lively. It is whether liveliness, once staged, serves the whole town or a confident part of it. A borough that prides itself on inclusion must ensure that reclamation does not become reallocation by stealth, and that a street transformed for a day remains workable for the other three hundred and sixty-four.

A festival can illuminate what a town might become. It can also expose what it risks overlooking. In that sense, Centre Stage is more than an event. It is a civic argument conducted in public, complete with applause, diversion signs and the quiet scrutiny of those counting the day’s takings when the music fades.



Tickets are ON SALE

**BARNES
MUSIC
FESTIVAL**

15 - 30 March 2025

BOOK NOW at www.barnesmusicfestival.com

Next week at Richmond Council

On Wednesday, 18th February, the **Planning Committee** will meet to discuss (1) the demolition of a former bank at 42 High Street, Teddington and the construction of a four-storey building, (2) a variation application to amend the permission to demolish a bungalow and replace it with a semi-detached house at 83 Udney Park Road. The meeting will commence at 7 pm at York House, Twickenham. Please click [HERE](#) for more details.

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

A Flipping Good Pancake Recipe

It's Shrove Tuesday next week and here's an idea for dialling up the health angle with an extraordinarily different idea, using beetroot juice. The juice is delicious and packed with vitamin C, so the result is a vibrantly purple pancake, perfect for sweet or savoury toppings.

With beetroot on everyone's radar as an official superfood of the moment, with its vibrant colours, as well as great health benefits, **Cawston Press** has whipped together this delicious pancake recipe featuring its [Brilliant Beetroot Pressed Juice](#). These beetroot pancakes can be enjoyed as a savoury or sweet dish

BRILLIANT BEETROOT PANCAKES

- **120g** self-raising flour, (wheat or gluten-free)
- **Pinch** of salt
- **15g** caster sugar
- **1** large egg
- **70ml** whole milk
- **70ml** Cawston Press Brilliant Beetroot Pressed Juice

Combine the wet and dry ingredients and whisk together in a large mixing bowl until the mixture is smooth and a vibrant purple. Lightly oil a non-stick pan and put on a medium heat. Ladle or pour 3 pancakes at a time around 9cm wide. Once the surface has bubbled up and just set (2-3 mins), flip over. Cook for 1 more minute on the other side. Remove the pancakes from the pan and repeat the process with the remaining mixture. (makes approx 9 pancakes).



- **Enjoy Sweet** – served with: butter and maple syrup or Greek yoghurt and fruit compote/fresh berries
- **Enjoy Savoury** – served with; fresh goat's cheese, walnut pieces and a dusting of cumin or cream cheese, smoked salmon and horseradish or sour cream, anchovy and capers

Or experiment and make up your own variations, perhaps adding a herb or spice to the batter?



Full of earthly goodness, the Cawston Press Brilliant Beetroot Pressed Juice is a blend of 90% pressed beetroot juice, with pressed apple juice for a rich and hearty refreshment packed full of vitamins.

Cawston Press' Brilliant Beetroot is available from major supermarkets for around £3.00 and from www.cawstonpress.com.

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YACHT HOTEL RESORT

A romantic dinner setup featuring two glasses of champagne, a vase of red roses, lit candles, a box of chocolates, and a wrapped gift, all set against a red background.

SAIL INTO ROMANCE

VALENTINE'S PACKAGE

Romantic amenities

One-night accommodation with breakfast buffet

Complimentary upgrade to a Superior Room

Amuse-bouche | 3-course menu | Petit four

£50 Spa voucher

£360 per room / per night (for 2 guests)

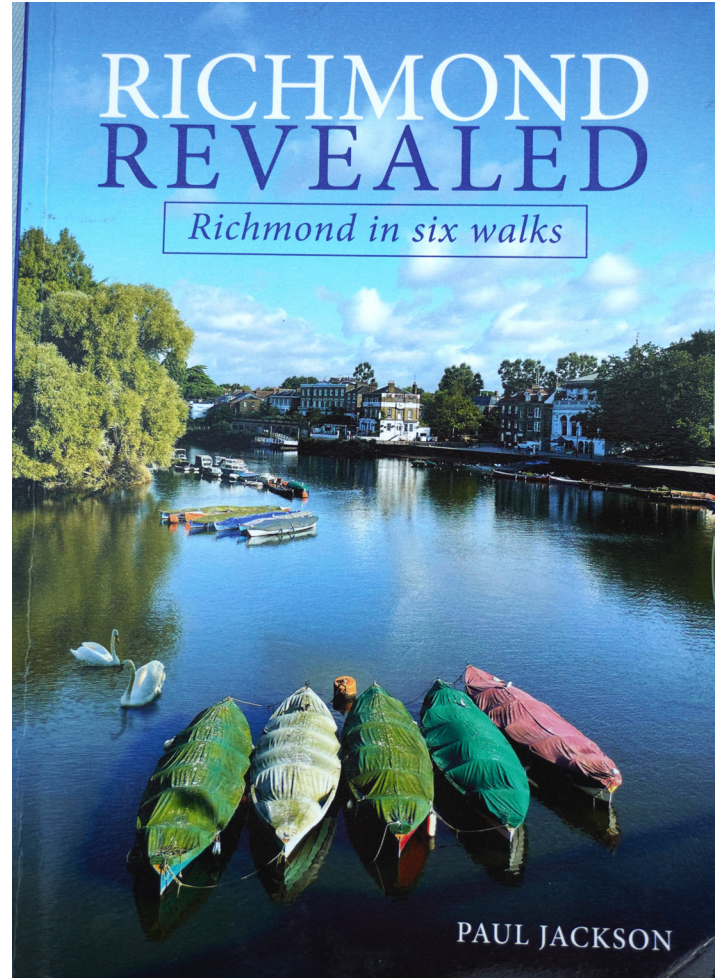
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Traveller's Tales 179

Guidance

Doug Goodman reviews some travel books

A new guide to Richmond will appeal to anyone who likes exploring, walking and reading about local history. 'Richmond Revealed in Six Walks' by Paul Jackson is packed with fascinating descriptions of local sites, useful maps and beautiful pictures. The walks take you around the town, along the riverside and through our wonderful park. Walk number four is my favourite because, although I thought I knew the park after hundreds of visits, I discovered so many new attractions. The walk covers the park's history, the ponds and plantations, the wildlife and the ancient trees. This walk is just over five miles and estimated to take four hours. As a child a trip to the park for a picnic and to paddle in Pen Ponds was a great adventure. I recall walking the park's boundary which measured about nine miles. Stop for coffee at Pembroke Lodge or for lunch and enjoy the spectacular view to the west. On a clear day you can just see Windsor Castle on the horizon. Walk number five lets you explore Ham and Petersham. In the Georgian era Petersham was described as the most elegant village in the country. You'll spot many of the beautiful houses on your walk, which testify to the district's past grandeur.



New Guide to Richmond



View from Richmond Hill



London's Oldest Bridge



Richmond Green



Richmond Park

EXPLORE

Travel guide books encourage exploration and provide so much valuable information about your holiday destination before you depart; or in some cases tell you what you missed when you return home. Travel books can be inspirational. A well written account of a person's independent travelling can make you want to visit the places described. The weekend papers carry so many travel features which generate bookings. Before I became a travel writer I ran a PR company promoting destinations, hotels and attractions. A good newspaper or magazine article written by a journalist for whom I had arranged an overseas visit could encourage hundreds of enquiries and bookings.



Travel Section in Waterstones



Isabella Plantation in Richmond Park



Ancient Oak

Another new book is 'Around the World in 65 Years' published by The British Guild of Travel Writers to mark 65 years of travel writing by its members. You'll read stories about remote places, strange local customs and encounters with wild animals. Well known and award winning journalists have contributed to this 65th anniversary book. And here I have to admit that one chapter about travels in The Soviet Union in the 1970s was written by me. The book takes you to all corners of the world with its 101 fascinating tales.

GUIDE BOOK OR TRAVEL STORIES

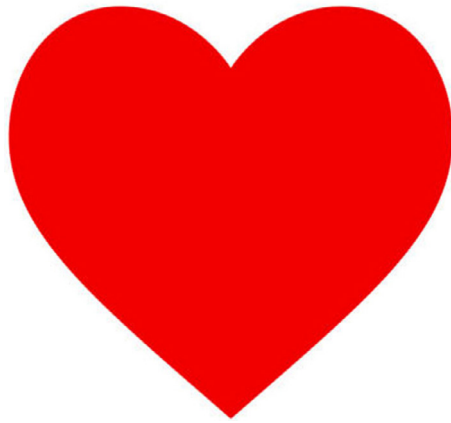
Whichever you choose, guides or tales, you'll find a wealth of information to inspire, excite and prepare you for a visit. A trip to one of the many Waterstones shops or to Foyles in Tottenham Court Road will confront you with a vast range of publications. Our own public library in Twickenham has a good selection of travel books and maps on the first floor. Our charity shops often have shelves of guides no longer wanted by their purchasers. I never discard travel books hoping that they will be needed when I might return to a favourite destination.

Information: 'Richmond Revealed' by Paul Jackson. £15. Around The World in 65 Years by The British Guild of Travel Writers. £12.99. Both books should be available from Waterstones.

LOVE YOU?

By Deep Patel

~ Life through the eyes of a Twickenham Shopkeeper ~



Customers have been talking about Valentine's day this week...you know...the usual talk... "I love my girlfriend so much, she's the best thing that has ever happened to me"...or "my boyfriend is my life, he phones me on every lunchbreak to tell me he misses me"...or "me and my partner love each other so much that we hate being apart"...and all the usual crap...it's enough to make you sick isn't it?! Someone pass the sick bucket will you? Yuk (I'm not jealous, honestly, not at all...well maybe a tad...ok...ok I'm jealous. There I admit it, but why? I had to ask myself this and do some soul searching this past week...I wanted to know...so I could change myself...and this is what I found...

Well, I finally realised what it was...we tend to be quite content as humans, but the world around us often makes us feel somewhat lacking, or inadequate...not necessarily intentionally... it just does. For example, when others say they have something, be it a relationship, a house, a car or great job, it can sometimes make us feel lacking or inadequate ourselves...like we are not enough somehow...like others have more than us...like our lives are inferior to their way of life...does this ever happen to you? (no? Just me then...). However, the truth is that we create all these beliefs in our minds...and that's the only real place they exist...not in reality, but in our perceptions...so we cannot blame others for making us feel inadequate or lacking in some way...they are just living and being happy...if we really want to blame someone...blame ourselves for imprisoning ourselves in such off-key perceptions that give us some degree of an inferiority complex, our own insecurities and nothing more. Through realising that everyone's path in this life is different, and where others may be blessed in one way, you are blessed in another (blessed none the less) we can still be happy. So this week in the shop with all the Valentine's chat between cutomers, I realised that happiness isn't in having someone, finding someone or even loving someone...happiness is in finding yourself, your true passions in life, loving yourself and celebrating the things you already are and the things that you already have rather than lamenting over the things you don't.

In a word, happiness is contentment...because in the end what matters most is not what other people have or even what they think of you, but what you think of yourself and the gratitude you show for the blessings you already have...so this weeks lesson is to love yourself and remember above all...you are enough. Happy Valentine's Day Lovely Twickenham xx

Remember...

"You are enough"...

Dance of Death

by August Strindberg, adapted by Richard Eyre
Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond until 7th March

Samuel Butler wrote: “God let Carlyle and Mrs. Carlyle marry one another and so make only two people miserable.” Alice and Edgar, the awful couple in *Dance of Death*, would clearly find the Carlyles lamentably unambitious, as they take turns to make mincemeat of Alice’s cousin Kurt, Edgar’s friend, who unwisely pays them a visit.

We are told that the servants have abandoned this nasty couple to their own devices, and that their neighbours avoid them. Strindberg’s sardonic joke is that we have the misfortune to be shut in a darkened theatre with them for two hours. As Edgar, Will Keen portrays militarism mixed with strokes and fits, which he seems able to deploy at will. Lisa Dillon’s Alice is a confused blend of manipulative attention-seeking ex-actress, and damaged oppressed womanhood.



The island setting is moved from 1900 to 1918, in a Europe devastated by Spanish Flu, an epidemic reminding one of lockdown, face masks and all, emphasising isolation.

Mutual bickering starts mild and low key, with none of the sheer nastiness of Miss Julie. Captain Edgar doesn’t attain virtuoso alcoholism, despite Alice’s tales of epic drinking with his army mates, since poor health means only a couple of glasses of whisky an evening. But, eventually their mutual hatred is so total and all-consuming that they are barely able to further damage each another without bringing in outsiders. Geoffrey Streatfield’s Kurt, as their hapless plaything, is rather good at dazed ordinariness, as he discovers to his horror that if one of them is bad, the other can

still be worse. They are as high on self pity as they are on quarrelling. “Do we know anyone who is actually happy?” they regularly expatiate.

Richard Eyre’s witty conversational version allows a few bitter laughs, and he directs it all frightfully well, with excellent performances, and superb design skills. But one wonders if this relentlessly bleak nastiness is just an opportunity for displays of dramatic skill.

Perhaps the real hell depicted here is the co-dependent relationship between Strindberg’s characters, who are desperate for attention and prepared to do anything to retain it, and an audience that laps it up until it just wants it to be over.



Read Patrick Shorrock’s review at www.markaspen.com/2026/02/07/dance-death-ot

Photography by Ellie Kurttz

Practically Imperfect

by Clare Norburn

The Telling at the OSO, Barnes until 15th February, then on tour until 20th March

Whilst PL Travers did write other books, she is best known for her Mary Poppins series, bolstered by the enormous success of Disney's film of the same name. Clare Norburn's play *Practically Imperfect* starts from the premise of what might have happened if the author had met her heroine, or indeed if her heroine had met her author. Thus starts a clever engaging dialogue between the two, until one wonders who's in charge, Mary Poppins or Travers. Part biographical, part psychological exploration of what happens when an author becomes controlled and overtaken by her creation, this is a thought-provoking reflection.



The two could not have been more different. Travers was unassuming and fiercely private whereas Mary Poppins is engaging, charismatic and has a gift (along with a bit of magic) for making everything 'right'. One wonders whether Mary is who quiet, frumpy Travers would like to be: the children's author who couldn't bear being asked questions by children, as opposed to Mary Poppins, the charming and irresistible nanny; or else Travers, the lonely author who desperately sought love from her adopted child, as opposed to Poppins whose children in her care flocked to her.

Lottie Walker (creator of excellent one woman shows, [Marie Lloyd Stole My Life](#) and [Chopped Liver and Onions](#)) gives a touching performance as Travers, totally believable as the lonely spinster, lacking in confidence. In perfect contrast is Joanna Brown's spirited Mary Poppins, ably aided by accordion and singing

the songs Travers would have imagined Poppins singing had Disney not insisted on his own blend of sugary catchy tunes.

The set is simple, an anonymous 1960s room, fittingly with typewriter at the forefront. But there are lovely details, especially Poppins using her infamous umbrella and carpet bag to good effect.

Perhaps, particularly in the biographical sequences, we could have seen Travers' more excitement as she won her first acting role, and disappointment at her father's disparaging comment on her first poem, "Well, it's hardly Yeats". But is that the real Travers, flat and overcome?

Directed sensitively and unpretentiously by Nicholas Renton, *Perfectly Imperfect* provides an interesting, intriguing reflection on what happens when your muse becomes more successful than you. It has kept me talking and thinking.

Read Claire Alexander's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/02/11/pract-imp

Photography by Robert Piwko



Così Fan Tutte

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte
English National Opera at the London Coliseum until 21st February

Just how hilarious an opera *Così Fan Tutte* remains is an open question. Two men attempt to seduce one another's lovers for a bet, because they are convinced of their faithfulness, and get a rude awakening, or more accurately, a taste of their own medicine. This sounds like a recipe for something witty, ironic, and funny, but the music is so intense and so magnificent that it never quite feels like a joke, and it has always been seen as morally dubious. Yet the 18th Century view that you can't completely trust anyone, because everyone is fallible, is perhaps quite sensible.

The atmospheric designs set in Coney Island fairground fluently address these ambiguities. An ensemble of circus performers, including fire-eating acrobats and sword swallows, provides plenty of stage business. There is something sinister as well as beautiful about this fairground location, a holiday pleasure garden that suggests that inhibitions can be temporarily abandoned. Yet there may be penalties for doing so.



There are many brilliantly funny gags, but director Phelim McDermott knows exactly when to stop and let the emotions and the music register. Jeremy Sams' excellent translation elicits spontaneous guffaws for its wit, although it carefully refers to human nature rather than to women.

It was initially disappointing to hear that Lucy Crowe was not singing because of sickness, but this enabled the splendid Madeline Boreham to make a wonderfully confident debut as Fiordiligi. She has a splendid voice that effortlessly fills this huge house with gloriously even tone. She is also talented in her acting and fits into this cast like a glove.

Darwin Prakash makes Guglielmo sound easy with a warm flexible baritone that never need force itself. Ailish Tynan is a winning, stylish Despina in a part that is often overplayed. Taylor Raven is a splendid Dorabella, adding pleasing variety to the overall blend.

Conductor Dinis Sousa has an unobtrusive grip on the score which allows Mozart's music to dance, and generates a natural and exhilarating momentum. This is a brilliant show: funny, beautiful, inventive, heartbreaking, and very human. What really distinguishes it is the cast's superb playing and singing, each to their own personality, inhabiting their roles in miraculous harmony.



Read Patrick Shorrock's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/02/12/cosi-eno-26

Photography by James Glossop

Free talks and creative workshops to celebrate the opening of Teddington's Ellera Centre

From Ellera Community Association

PLEASE JOIN US FOR OUR FEBRUARY

OPENING WEEK'S EVENTS

25 TH WEDNESDAY	26 TH THURSDAY	27 TH FRIDAY	28 TH SATURDAY
			
Ellera Creative Beginner's Photography by Robert Fisher, RTPS 5:30 pm– 6:30 pm and 7:00 pm– 8 pm	Ellera Creative & Talk Woodworking Principles by Ben Brooks 5:00 pm– 6:30 pm Hidden Secrets of Bushy Park, Teddington by Rebecca Harvey 7:15 pm– 8:15 pm	Ellera Creative Art & Craft Club Floral Motif Mixed Media workshop 3:00 pm– 5:30 pm	Ellera Creative & Talk Wycinanki Polish Paper Cut-Out craft by Ania Ruszkowski 1:30 pm– 2:30 pm Understand your communication style with Ania Ruszkowski 2:45 pm– 4:30 pm

 RESERVE YOUR SEAT AT: [ELLERAYCENTRE.EVENTBRITE.CO.UK](https://elleraycentre.eventbrite.co.uk)

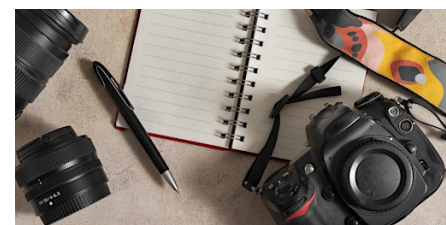
ELLERAY CENTRE North Lane, Teddington TW11 OHJ <https://elleraycentre.org>
Registered Charity No. 1150261



February 24th marks the official opening of Teddington's brand new Ellera Centre. Besides becoming the home of Ellera Community Association's social club for older people, it will be the venue for a host of activities, classes and events that will appeal right across the local community.

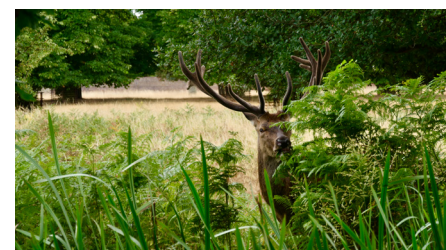
The first of these is a series of talks and creative workshops covering a variety of subjects. These are free, but you should reserve your seats for all these sessions. You can find more details of the talks and reserve your place at <https://elleraycentre.eventbrite.com/>

Beginners' Photography by Robert Fisher RTPS, Richmond & Twickenham Photographic Society
Wednesday, February 25th, 5:30 - 6:30 pm and repeated at 7.30 – 8.30 pm
Reserve your place at 5.30 [HERE](#) - Reserve your place at 7.30 [HERE](#)
Learn how to use your camera or phone more confidently and take standout photos. Robert will explain the difference between a snap and an image and will set you up to capture stunning images.



Hidden Secrets of Bushy Park
by Rebecca Harvey, Friends of Bushy Park
Thursday, February 26th, 7:15 - 8:15 pm
Reserve your place [HERE](#)

Come and discover the fascinating history and wildlife of Bushy Park. You'll hear secrets and fascinating stories about its history, its populations of rare insects, ancient trees and rare acid grassland so you can enjoy the park with fresh eyes.



Woodworking Principles

by Ben Brooks

Thursday, February 26th, 5.00 - 6:30 pm

Reserve your place [HERE](#)



Learn about Woodworking Principles, veneer application, and general problem solving. The talk will conclude with a Q&A session where you can get the answers to all kinds of knotty problems!

Ben is a graduate of the world-renowned Parnham College with 30 years of experience as a designer and maker of fine furniture. Through a light-hearted exploration of his own exciting portfolio of work and 'behind the scenes' photographs, Ben will introduce woodworking principles to inspire.

This is a rare opportunity to see and discuss unusual commissions and to learn about the creative and technical processes behind them.

Ben will also speak briefly about his involvement with the Sheddington charity and the opportunities open to anyone wishing to 'get started' or continue their creative journey.

Floral Motif Mixed Media Workshop

with the Ellera Art & Craft Club

Friday, February 27th, 3 pm - 5:30 pm

Reserve your place [HERE](#)



Immerse yourself in a friendly setting while you explore watercolour, pencil drawing, or pasta press printing in a relaxed, social atmosphere before taking home your finished card or artwork. This is an untutored workshop but feel free to share your ideas with Juliet Janssens and Kinga Ocetkiewicz, local artists who can assist you with composition and idea development.

Let's keep the creativity flowing!

Wycinanki Polish Paper Cut-Out Craft

with Ania Ruszkowski

Saturday, February 28th, 1:30 - 2:30 pm

Reserve your place [HERE](#)



Join this Polish folk art paper-craft workshop and discover the symbolism of Wycinanki with artist Ania Ruszkowski. These intricate paper cut-outs have been a popular folk craft in Poland since the late 19th century. You will create your own paper cutting to take home, guided through the process by Ania Ruszkowski, a practising artist. No prior experience needed, just curiosity and a willingness to try your hand at something new!

Understand Your Communication Style

by Ania Ruszkowski

Saturday, February 28th, 2:45 - 4:30 pm

Reserve your place [HERE](#)



An engaging workshop exploring communication styles and their impact on how we connect, collaborate, and work together. It will help you identify your own communication style, understand others and develop your own approach to improve communication, reduce misunderstandings and build stronger working relationships.

HAMPTON CHORAL SOCIETY

In association with Arts Richmond, festival of phenomenal female composers, presents:

Grand Mass in Eflat Major Amy Beach

Saturday 21 March 2026, 7.30pm

Musical Director Emma Warren
with professional soloists & musicians

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



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

Charity Number 261788

Richmond upon Thames College Celebrates Win at the Richmond Business Awards 2025

Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) celebrated a significant achievement at the prestigious Richmond Business Awards, held on Friday 5 December 2025 at the Spirit of Rugby Suite in the Allianz Stadium in Twickenham, hosted by the Richmond Chamber of Commerce.

The College was proudly announced as the winner of the highly coveted People's Choice Award, reflecting strong support and recognition for its impact across the borough.



A Year of Achievement Culminates in Community Recognition

The Richmond Business Awards serve to celebrate and spotlight organisations that make a significant difference to Richmond's economic and social landscape.

The publicly voted People's Choice Award positions RuTC at the forefront of those leading positive change, alongside other outstanding local winners across business, charity, and innovation sectors.

This achievement caps off a successful year for RuTC and the Harrow, Richmond & Uxbridge College (HRUC) group, who continue to deliver highquality education, strengthened partnerships, and meaningful opportunities for students. The award also reinforces the College's role as a key community collaborator, highlighting dedication not only to education but also contributing to the wider initiatives in the borough.

HRUC has long been recognised for nurturing talent across academic, technical, and vocational pathways supporting thousands of young people and adult learners annually.

Inspired by our awardwinning work in the community?

[Explore the wide range of courses, training opportunities and pathways we offer to help you achieve your goals here.](#)

Applications for 2026 are open now!



Jack Petchey Foundation recognises young people from Richmond upon Thames for amazing achievements

From the Jack Petchey Foundation

83 incredible young people from the Guides, including many from Richmond upon Thames, received their prestigious Jack Petchey Foundation Achievement Awards presented at a live event at The Kings Centre.

The live event celebrated Achievement Award winners aged 11-25 for their contributions to their unit, where winners received medallions and framed certificates from the Foundation along with a £300 grant for them to spend to benefit their unit.

In addition, 15 adults were awarded Leader Awards for demonstrating outstanding ability to motivate young people. They each received a medallion and a framed certificate.

The Jack Petchey Foundation has invested over £1m in Richmond upon Thames since funding started.

Here is an inspiring story from one of our **Achievement Award Winners:**
Lila, 13, attends 6th Teddington Guides.



Lila won the Jack Petchey Achievement Award for positivity and her growth in confidence. Known to be a bright individual, she has developed exceptional bonds with new members since joining the unit.

On winning the award, Lila said: *“Try your hardest and give your best self at all times and always look on the brighter side!”*

Lila decided to spend her **£300 Jack Petchey Achievement Award Grant** on a cinema trip with her peers.



Michelin Star retained for seventh year

From The Dysart Petersham

The Dysart Petersham in Richmond upon Thames has retained its coveted Michelin star, consolidating its growing critical acclaim and recognition across the UK and Europe.



Managing Director Barny Taylor said: *"We are immensely proud of the recognition we have achieved and wish to thank Michelin, all our customers for their support and glowing reviews over the year, and our whole team. We are committed to excellence in all we do, sustainability in our day-to-day operations, authentic classical cooking, combined with creativity in every dish on our menus, and, above all, to providing relaxed pleasure."*

He added: *"Our guests expect the very finest seasonal ingredients, dishes, drinks, and service. We strive every day to ensure they are not disappointed."*

"We see the renewal of our Michelin Star as a reflection of consistency, our absolute commitment, reliability, refined judgement in food and wine, focus on natural flavour, creativity by hand, by tradition, by classical, authentic cooking, dedication to craft over technology, days spent on stocks, sauces, preserves, making everything ourselves here, thoughtful, imaginative wine and food pairings, teamwork for the benefit of the customer."

"Not least in all of this is the warmth of welcome, an experience in beautiful surroundings, clear and individual personality, confidence in quality, value, sustainability, and understated, calm, relaxed comfort: qualities we all want more and more."

"These are values associated indelibly with Michelin from its earliest days. They are our motivation and guide."

The latest accolade for The Dysart came as the creative leaders of the UK's and Eire's hospitality world gathered for the first time in Dublin for the Michelin Awards Ceremony for Great Britain and Ireland. The Dysart Petersham's Head Chef, Kenneth Culhane, was there.

Speaking after the ceremony, Kenneth, who hails from deeply rural SW Ireland, said: *"It was*

particularly special for me to be part of the excitement here in Ireland, all the more so as it was in Dublin I studied and then first worked at Patrick Guilbaud. I draw so much inspiration from the ancient and country traditions here. To be ranked alongside the greatest names in the world of UK and Irish hospitality is a privilege. Our achievements have only been made possible by the unwavering commitment and talent of everyone involved in our team."

Kenneth recently had the honour of being a judge in Ireland of the Euro-Toques Ireland Chef of the Year competition. He is a member of the Royal Academy of Culinary Arts and a Roux Scholar.

The Dysart Petersham enjoys a beautifully restored, calm and spacious Arts and Crafts building in an idyllic country village setting, overlooking Richmond Park, surrounded by woodlands and water meadows, yet just 30 minutes from central London.

It holds three AA rosettes and received the AA's 'Notable Wine List' award again for 25/26.

It is one of only a small number of London venues in the European rankings of Opinionated About Dining.

MD, Barny Taylor, as well as being honoured with the AA Notable Wine List Award for several years, in 2025 won a Europe-wide competition organised by Jeunes Restaurateurs d'Europe to create a new cocktail and is nominated for the JRE Sommelier of the Year Award 2026, alongside some of Europe's most passionate and knowledgeable sommeliers.

The team has always been guided by a strong focus on sustainability, the importance of '[living thoughtfully, responsibly, well](#)', and is well known for sourcing the very best seasonal ingredients from within the UK and Ireland from small suppliers who share the same commitment, gaining much personal pleasure in the process. Plans for 2026 include increasing the produce from its own [kitchen garden](#) and continuing its series of reviews on the need to live thoughtfully and responsibly and on the joy this also brings.

The Dysart Petersham continues to [receive high praise](#) indeed from well-regarded independent food writer and critic, Andy Hayler, who has been reviewing the world's finest restaurants for years. Only last month, he wrote that it was [a joy to eat at The Dysart Petersham](#), one of his top three favourite places to eat in London.

The Dysart Petersham is open for lunch on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, and for dinner between Wednesday and Sunday. Private gatherings for drinks with canapés, lunches, or dinners can be booked throughout the week. Wine dinners and [classical recitals](#) followed by dinner are regular events.

The team is led by Managing Director Barny Taylor and Head Chef, Kenneth Culhane.



Another year in the MICHELIN Guide

From Mignonette Bistro

Another year and another MICHELIN guide. We're extremely proud to have retained our Bib Gourmand award in the 2026 edition - and to celebrate, we're launching a new £38 3-course set menu for dinner on Tuesdays until the end of April.

MICHELIN's Bib Gourmand award is a celebration of affordable restaurants with "exceptionally good food". We're committed to procuring high quality ingredients whilst still keeping a modest price tag.



Launching a £38 Set Dinner Menu

3 Courses: *prix fixe including a glass of Kir Aligote*

Smoked salmon topped with fresh crab, citrus guacamole, olive oil dressing

Asparagus Caesar | cos lettuce, croutons, parmesan shavings (v)

Ballotine of duck foie gras, guava puree, duck fat brioche

//

Fillet of seabass, miso celeriac purée, lobster sabayon

Saddle of Devonshire lamb, merguez sausage, aubergine purée

Watercress Comté cheese soufflé with Comté cheese sauce

//

Selection of mature French cheese

Tarte Tatin of caramelised pears, calvados chantilly

—

£38 per person

(served on Tuesdays for dinner from 24th February until 28th April)



Mignonette · 109 Kew Road · Richmond, London TW9 2PN

mignonette

England Team To Play Scotland

England men's head coach Steve Borthwick has named his team to play Scotland for the Calcutta Cup at Murrayfield Stadium on Saturday 14 February (kick-off 4.40pm, live on ITV1).

Saturday's fixture will be the 144th meeting between the two sides, a rivalry that dates back to 1871.

There are two changes to the starting XV which defeated Wales 48-7 in the opening round of the Guinness Men's Six Nations Championship with Maro Itoje and Luke Cowan-Dickie coming into the side. Itoje returns to captain the team. Elsewhere, Fin Smith is included among the replacements on a 6-2 split bench.

"Playing Scotland at Murrayfield is always a fantastic occasion and a challenge we are relishing," said Borthwick.

"We made a pleasing start to the Championship, but we understand that we must continue to raise our standards. The squad has trained with focus and determination this week, and we're excited for the opportunity to test ourselves again on Saturday."

ENGLAND v SCOTLAND

Saturday 14 February 2026

Murrayfield Stadium

Kick-off: 4.40pm

- 15. Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers, 42 caps)
- 14. Tom Roebuck (Sale Sharks, 9 caps)
- 13. Tommy Freeman (Northampton Saints, 23 caps)
- 12. Fraser Dingwall (Northampton Saints, 8 caps)
- 11. Henry Arundell (Bath Rugby, 12 caps)
- 10. George Ford (Sale Sharks, 106 caps) – vice-captain
- 9. Alex Mitchell (Northampton Saints, 28 caps)

- 1. Ellis Genge (Bristol Bears, 76 caps) – vice-captain
- 2. Luke Cowan-Dickie (Sale Sharks, 54 caps)
- 3. Joe Heyes (Leicester Tigers, 18 caps)
- 4. Maro Itoje (Saracens, 98 caps) – captain
- 5. Ollie Chessum (Leicester Tigers, 31 caps)
- 6. Guy Pepper (Bath Rugby, 8 caps)
- 7. Sam Underhill (Bath Rugby, 46 caps)
- 8. Ben Earl (Saracens, 47 caps)

Replacements:

- 16. Jamie George (Saracens, 106 caps) – vice-captain
- 17. Bevan Rodd (Sale Sharks, 11 caps)
- 18. Trevor Davison (Northampton Saints, 4 caps)
- 19. Alex Coles (Northampton Saints, 15 caps)

- 20. Tom Curry (Sale Sharks, 66 caps)
- 21. Henry Pollock (Northampton Saints, 6 caps)
- 22. Ben Spencer (Bath Rugby, 15 caps)
- 23. Fin Smith (Northampton Saints, 13 caps)



Macclesfield v Brentford in the FA Cup

By Ron Brand

Another interesting week for the BEES!

A 3-2 win at Newcastle where recently sold Wissa was subbed off by the Magpies, followed by a 1-1 draw against the league runaway leaders Arsenal adds up to a successful 7 days.

Four Points when two would have been considered an achievement keeps Brentford on track for a successful start to the Second half of the Season. Add to that a contract extension for leading scorer Igor Thiago, 18 goals already and second only to Erling Haaland in the Goal Scorers list, means Head Coach Keith Andrews can deservedly sleep soundly.

When you add to that the sad news of the Sacking of Thomas Frank at Spurs you understand that things could be very different.

The Set-Up at Brentford fc continues to deliver remarkable Results on a Shoestring. Arsenal spent more on one player than the whole team have cost the BEES. KEEP DOING WHAT YOU ARE DOING BEES!

Now comes the next challenge?

A visit to Macclesfield in the FA Cup would normally be considered a should win simple game for a Premiership team like Brentford! Until you remember what happened in the last round to Crystal Palace? The fact is there are no easy games in the FA Cup.

Given the chance to test themselves against the Spoilt Millionaire Super Stars of the Premiership, teams from the lower leagues excel themselves. Fight for every ball and give 100% in EVERY TACKLE.

It is so important that the Premier League players have the correct mind-set and show respect to their lower league opponents. Judging by previous test I expect Keith Andrews to have the Brentford players well prepared.

Success brings its own challenges for teams with Smaller Squads? With a place in Europe next season and the financial rewards that brings, should Brentford let the FA Cup take a back seat?

But telling your players that losing a game will not matter brings an interesting dilemma.

Winning is a habit you never want to break!

Once again I am sure The Backroom Team will find an answer? One thing is certain. **It is a Great position to be in.**

Even thinking about a place in Europe next season is something I never considered for Brentford when this Season started. Relegation seemed to me, to be the likely challenge.

Keep doing what you are doing Brentford. Already an outstanding Season.



Match Preview: Macclesfield v Brentford

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford host National League North side Macclesfield at Leasing.com Stadium in the FA Cup fourth round on Monday (7.30pm kick-off), live on *TNT Sports*.

In the previous round, the sixth-tier side knocked out current holders Crystal Palace to deliver one of the biggest upsets in the competition's history. The Bees beat Sheffield Wednesday 2-0 at Hillsborough Stadium.

Analysis, team news, match officials and more. Here's everything you need to know ahead of the game.

Pre-match Analysis

Stephen Gillett, *Playmaker Stats*: What Brentford can learn from Macclesfield's previous giantkilling

Brentford travel to Macclesfield this Monday with one clear aim: to avoid becoming the latest scalp claimed by the FA Cup's greatest giantkillers.

The National League North outfit knocked out current holders Crystal Palace in January to deliver the biggest upset in the competition's history in terms of league position, with the Silkmen starting that day ranked 117 places below Palace in the English football pyramid.

Captain Paul Dawson's towering first-half header put Macclesfield ahead before Isaac Buckley-Ricketts doubled their lead after the break to further stun the holders. Jeremy Pino's stoppage-time free-kick set up a tense finale, but the Silkmen held firm to seal a monumental victory, as Macclesfield became the first non-league team to eliminate the reigning FA Cup holders since 1908/09.

With Brentford seventh and Macclesfield sixth in their respective divisions, there are currently 122 places between the two sides - but the Bees would be wise to view Macclesfield's seismic success against Palace as a case study rather than a fairytale.

A combination of factors helped John Rooney's side clip the Eagles' wings, and Brentford can learn plenty from what Macclesfield did well (and what their Premier League opponents did less so) back in January.

Macclesfield's numbers against Palace indicate a bold approach that paid off spectacularly. The Silkmen registered 13 shots to Palace's 12 and were willing to shoot from all angles, with nine of their efforts coming from outside the box.

On home turf at Moss Rose, Macclesfield were also tenacious, with their competitive edge perhaps surprising a Premier League side expecting a less intense affair away from the rigours of the top flight. Captain Dawson embodied that spirit in midfield, winning 15 of his 30 attempted tackles and becoming the first non-league player to score against the holders since Rocky Baptiste for Farnborough Town against Arsenal in 2003.



Brother of former Manchester United and England forward Wayne, Macclesfield manager Rooney has links to the top flight - but so too does 21-year-old defender Luis Lacey, brother of Red Devils academy prospect Shea Lacey.

Against Palace, Lacey offered the Silkmen a valuable outlet going forward, completing the joint-most dribbles of any player on the pitch while also excelling with his long-range distribution, including three accurate long passes.

There is no doubt Macclesfield did plenty right to prevail against Palace, but the FA Cup holders also contributed to their own downfall.

Despite enjoying 71 per cent possession, the Premier League side repeatedly handed encouragement to their hosts. England internationals Adam Wharton (24 occasions) and Marc Guehi (21) gave the ball away 45 times between them, and Brentford should aim to avoid cheap turnovers that energise the crowd this Monday.

Palace dominated territory without converting that control into a genuine threat. The Eagles mustered only four shots on target - including their goal - during the third-round clash and won just three corners at Moss Rose, generating only 0.09 xG from those.

In this regard, Brentford head coach Keith Andrews may look to maximise his side's strengths from dead balls. This term, the Bees have managed a shot from 38 per cent of their set-pieces, and they are likely to find joy if their delivery is right.

Macclesfield have shown that the magic of the cup remains potent - and Brentford will need to manage both the occasion and their opponents' strengths to book their place in the last 16.

Scout Report

Dan Long, Sky Sports: The remarkable rise of Macclesfield

Macclesfield FC will turn six years old in October - and the journey over their first five years is something to behold.

The club was formed by Rob Smethurst and Robbie Savage as the phoenix club of Macclesfield Town, who were wound up in September 2020 after 152 years.

In 2021/22, they won the North West Counties Football League Premier Division. In 2022/23, they won the Northern Premier League Division One West. In 2023/24, they finished second in the Northern Premier League Premier Division - but in 2024/25 they won that title too, picking up a stunning 32 more points than they had the year before.

Savage was head coach for the latter and, though his stock was high as a result, in an interview with BBC Radio Manchester shortly after the title was sealed Savage said: "It's my club and it's not very often you can manage your club, the one you've built from the first brick with your best friend, so it would take an awful lot for me to leave. There are League One and League Two clubs I wouldn't go to if they offered me the job now because I can't see the journey or the project."

But on 1 July 2025, he did leave to take over as manager of National League side Forest Green Rovers, replacing Steve Cotterill, who had failed to secure promotion back to the EFL at the first time of asking.

Former player John Rooney - who had announced his retirement at the conclusion of the 2024/25 season - was quickly announced as his successor. "There can be no doubt that John is fully invested in the club's journey on an emotional level, and we have every confidence that he will be able to continue our upward trajectory towards the EFL," the club said in a statement after announcing the news.

It has been quite the introduction to management for Rooney. With 28 games played in the league, Macclesfield sit sixth in the National League North table. They are 19 points behind current leaders South Shields - but, crucially, with up to four games in hand on the teams around them. They reached the FA Trophy fifth round, too.

But the most incredible moment of the season, the club's short history, and, arguably, the rich history of the FA Cup came just over a month ago on 10 January, when they beat Crystal Palace.

It was a poignant result, too, given the tragic death of forward Ethan McLeod at the age of just 21, less than four weeks earlier.

The Macclesfield story already contains enough chapters for a lifetime, yet it feels as though that story is still very much in its infancy. Six years after reforming, this is a club no longer defined by what they rose from, but by where they can go next.

In the Dugout

John Rooney

John Rooney joined Everton alongside his older brother - Manchester United and England legend Wayne - at the age of six in 1996. But while Wayne progressed to the first team by 2002, John was released the same year.

He joined Macclesfield Town's youth set-up and played 46 times for the first team before leaving in the summer of 2010. The midfielder then crossed the Atlantic, first joining New York Red Bulls - where he was a team-mate of Thierry Henry - then Orlando City.

However, Rooney only managed 17 appearances across the two spells and returned to England. After time at Barnsley and Bury, he joined fifth-tier side Chester, where he spent three seasons, with 26 goals and 24 assists in 115 appearances. Next came another two seasons in the National League, one at Wrexham, the other at Guiseley after an initial loan spell.

Then he went to Barrow in 2018 and helped the club to a long-awaited return to the EFL in his second season, finishing as the fifth-highest scorer in the division with 17, as the Bluebirds were promoted as champions by way of a points-per-game average of 1.89 in a season curtailed prematurely due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Rooney did not make the step up to League Two until 2021/22, again with Barrow, after spending a season-and-a-half at Stockport. His second spell there lasted just shy of nine months, though, as he later joined Oldham Athletic on a two-year deal in September 2022. He left the Latics after one season to sign for Macclesfield in August 2023, returning to the town - albeit at the newly-formed club - after 13 years away.

He helped the Silkmen lift the Northern Premier League Premier Division title in 2024/25, which preceded his retirement at the age of 34. And, just a matter of weeks later, following Robbie Savage's departure, he took on his first non-playing role when he was appointed Macclesfield's new manager.



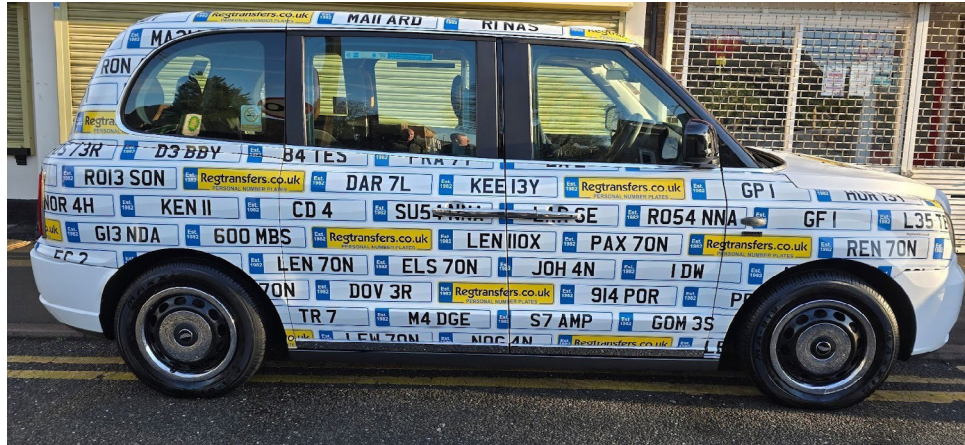
Have you spotted this taxi around Twickenham?

From Regtransfers

Hailing down a black taxi is a defining characteristic of London life - but you'd be forgiven for doing a double take on seeing this cab.

A taxi driver of 37 years has recently allowed a [private registration](#) provider to give his traditional black cab a stark makeover.

Billy Daly - who lives in Dunstable and operates across London - says he was initially cautious to let Regtransfers wrap his pride and joy, which is now bright white and sports a plethora of personalised plate combinations. The makeover was provided by vehicle wrapping providers Totally Dynamic, who operate centres in London, Manchester and Norwich.



Speaking of his cab's new look, Daly comments:

"It's something I use for my livelihood every single day, and this is a brand new vehicle, so it was a bit of a nerve-wracking decision. I wanted to make sure it looked good, and it really does! I think it's quite special - when people think about hailing a cab, they're on the lookout for a plain black vehicle - not a white car with letters and numbers all over it. It really stands out."

While Regtransfers have stated that the plate combinations appearing on the cab are "random" selections from available stock, it could be argued that there are few subtle easter eggs to British culture. As much as DOV 3R could be used to denote a surname, it could also refer to the Kentish ferry port. BUT 70N could be a subtle celebrity nod to former F1 driver Jenson Button, just as N1 ALL might reference former One Direction member Niall Horan. The wrap also features JUL 13T - a potential homage to Shakespeare's classic romance - and the more outwardly patriotic GB 1, currently on sale for £525,000.

The taxi itself has been given the highly appropriate personalised plate - CAB 111E - and so far, many of the comments on Regtransfers' [Instagram](#) have humorously suggested the taxi's new look may give ANPR cameras a bit of grief identifying the vehicle, but Regtransfers have assured that will not be the case.

"We thought having a taxi wrapped in Regtransfers branding in the streets of London would be a striking marketing opportunity", says Regtransfers Marketing Manager, Angela Banh. *"This isn't the first time we've worked with Billy - we affectionately hijacked his taxi some years ago, but had to stop during COVID. It's great to see it back in London!"*

The taxi can be seen (and hailed) on London streets for the next 3 years, and despite the makeover, it's been confirmed that fares will remain at the standard London rate.

Mayor sets out bold new licensing plans to boost capital's hospitality and nightlife industries

From The Mayor of London

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, has today set out bold new plans to improve licensing across the capital and support London's vital hospitality and nightlife industries.

Sadiq has published proposals for a new London-wide Strategic Licensing Policy that would create a more unified and consistent licensing system for boroughs and businesses.

The policy is designed to support businesses and boroughs by reducing the inconsistency of licensing rules and regulations, where each of the 33 London local authorities has a different licensing policy. It would provide a set of overarching principles for the whole capital that will boost the economy and align better with the Mayor's strategic priorities.

London's wide-ranging night-time economy contributes over £139 billion to the capital each year. However, hospitality and nightlife industries have faced a huge number of challenges in recent years, including outdated licensing rules and complex processes.

Last year, the Government announced it would give licensing powers to the Mayor to help boost the capital's night-time economy. The Mayor's new Strategic Licensing Policy is at the heart of these proposed new powers.

The policy requires licensing decisions to promote the licensing objectives by:

- being based on evidence and avoid unnecessary costs and burdens for businesses.
- support economic growth, socialising and culture.
- support a wide range of cultural, hospitality and night-time activities.
- recognise the benefits of offering a range of well-managed activities after dark.
- be transparent and work closely with businesses to address issues.

Under the proposals, the Mayor would also be given the power to call-in certain types of licensing applications of strategic importance. This intends to allow the Mayor to intervene on applications that have a significant economic impact, such as large venues, festivals or temporary use of spaces before redevelopment, applications in a location of strategic importance, such as high streets, or that have an impact on the capital's reputation.

To work alongside these proposed powers, a new London Licensing Playbook is being designed to help boroughs, businesses and all those involved in licensing. The new playbook will explain best practice and provide templates and approaches to ensure consistency across the capital.

Today a six-week consultation begins on the details of the proposed new Strategic Licensing Policy and the Licensing Playbook. The Government recently issued advice to all licensing authorities to consider the impact on the economy and encourage growth when making licensing decisions, ensuring more support is given to nightlife and hospitality venues. As this consultation is launched, the Government has published further advice to licensing authorities urging them to take into account local plans and strategies such as the Mayor's pro-nightlife London Plan and his vision for Good Growth when considering license applications, boosting nightlife businesses who have struggled for years to get the licenses they need to thrive.

Sadiq is doing all he can to support the capital's nightlife and last month the capital's independent Nightlife Taskforce outlined its recommendations across 10 areas to protect, support and grow London's vital nightlife industries. This included introduction of a new, London-wide licensing standard to modernise licensing and planning processes, making applications simpler and decisions more consistent.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said: *"We want to continue improving London's nightlife by encouraging later opening hours, supporting our nightlife industries and revitalising our high streets. Too often we've heard from pubs, clubs, music venues, restaurants and others that have struggled to get the licenses they need to succeed. That's why I'm working to create a system that will end the 'licensing postcode lottery' and works for businesses, boroughs and Londoners alike. By making it easier to extend opening hours and expand what's on offer at night for Londoners and visitors, we can continue to grow our capital's nightlife offer and build a better London for everyone."*

Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, Steve Reed, said: *"People travel from all over world to go out in London. The city's nightlife is a huge part of what makes it great. But overly-complicated and overbearing licensing rules are getting in the way of that. So, I've been working with the Mayor to simplify the system so that it work for pubs and clubs, not against them. This is devolution in action. Communities know what's best for them and these changes will mean they can enjoy everything London has to offer."*

Cameron Leslie, Co-founder and Director, fabric, and chair of the Nightlife Taskforce said: *"Licensing emerged as one of the most significant structural challenges facing London's nightlife. The Taskforce therefore recommended a clearer, more consistent London-wide framework, focused on evidence and proportionality. This would remove unnecessary barriers, support well-managed venues and give boroughs and businesses a stronger basis for collaboration."*

Kate Nicholls, Chair of UKHospitality and member of the Nightlife Taskforce, said: *"London is home to some of our most iconic hospitality and leisure hubs, from the buzzing nightlife of Soho to world-leading theatres in the West End. These are strategic, economic priorities for the capital that should be treated as such and I'm pleased that this approach to licensing from the Mayor will deliver that. This consistent approach is much-needed to deliver economic growth, meet the needs of Londoners and satisfy demand from millions of international visitors."*

Sam Spencer, Director of Live Operations at Broadwick Live and member of the Nightlife Taskforce, said: *"This is a major moment for London's night-time economy. A London-wide Strategic Licensing Policy has been needed for years, and it's encouraging to see real leadership in bringing forward a more joined-up, economics, culture first, informed approach. Greater consistency across boroughs will unlock confidence. When operators can plan with clarity and fairness, they invest, create jobs and build cultural capital. London's venues and festivals are not an optional extra, they are serious civic and economic infrastructure, generating employment, tourism and global reputation. Recognising that some applications carry city-wide significance is an important evolution. If London wants to compete globally, its licensing framework must reflect the scale and value of its cultural and hospitality sector. This consultation is a genuine opportunity to modernise the system and support responsible growth after dark."*

Georgina Wald, Corporate Communications Manager at Fuller, Smith & Turner, and member of the Nightlife Taskforce, said: *"London's pubs and clubs are a key part of our culture, our heritage and our vibe. They deserve to be celebrated, and any move to reduce the complexities of licensing and recognise the economic benefits a thriving hospitality scene brings to the local area will be most welcome."*

MAYOR OF LONDON

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