

# Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



# Contents

Editors: Teresa Read, Berkley Driscoll

TickerTape

The lines in the Wimbledon area will be closed all weekend due to maintenance work

South Western Railway

The Tree Agency

The Local Picture Postcard Page - Teddington – The Footbridges

Alan Winter

Crusader Travel

Neutrality questions after pre-election publicity surge at Richmond Council

James Knight

Local Election Hustings

The Richmond Society

Regal Spice Twickenham

Green Party shocked at Poppy Factory issuing eviction notices to tenants

Richmond & Twickenham Green Party

Mega Skip coming to South Twickenham on 4 April

Richmond Council

RSS Alive! Evening Events

Richmond Shakespeare Society

Richmond Council Moves to Bury Teddington's Last Allotments

James Knight

Richmond Set for Festival Weekend as Centre Stage Returns this Summer

HemingwayDesign

LibDem Machine Politics

James Knight

London Children's Literature Festival

Council declares war on Hampton residents

Derek Jones

East Sheen Spring Hunt

EastSheenMatters

Richmond Council Fined Over SEND Failings as Ombudsman Cases Mount

Michael Jones

Free minibus service in Richmond Park

The Royal Parks

Church of England Bishops Issue Warning on Abortion Law Changes

Michael Jones

Twickers Foodie: March Food & Drink News

Alison Jee

Twickers Foodie: LEBNANI: A Journey Through Family, Food and the Flavours of Lebanon

Alison Jee

Gibraltar Sunborn

Sunborn Gibraltar

Resilience - a very British word!! Resilience to reach the Sun!!

Bruce Lyons

Mark Aspen Review: Vincent in Brixton

Patrick Shorrocks

Mark Aspen Review: Waiting for Hamlet

Gill Martin

Mark Aspen Review: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

Andrew Lawston

St Mary's Alumnae and Student Selected for Six Nations Squads

St Mary's University

Three 'At Risk' Church Buildings in London Awarded More Than £1million

Historic England

Architecture:WK announces "The Precinct"

Architecture:WK

Care that connects us all: celebrating 40 years of Princess Alice Hospice

Princess Alice Hospice

Brentford v Everton

Ron Brand

Rugby Made Accessible for All Through Harlequins Access Day

Harlequins

[CONTACT](#)

[DONATE](#)

[ADVERTISE](#)

# British Summertime Starts On Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March



TwickerSeal would like to remind everyone to put their  
clocks forward by one hour this Sunday  
(At 1am)

# TickerTape - News in Brief

## South Western Railway

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the **Wimbledon area Saturday 28 and Sunday 29 March**

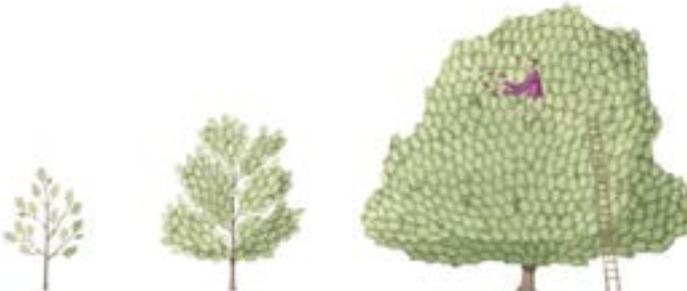
The lines in the **Wimbledon** area will be **closed all weekend** due to maintenance work.

### Saturday

- **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will be **revised** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Fulwell via Richmond**.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will **not** run.
- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will **not** run.
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised**.
- **Buses will run between:**  
**Clapham Junction and Twickenham via Kingston**  
**Clapham Junction and Hampton Court via Surbiton**

### Sunday

- **London Waterloo to Shepperton** services will be **revised** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Fulwell via Richmond**.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Wimbledon and Kingston** services will **not** run.
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.
- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will **not** run.
- **Buses will run between:**  
**Clapham Junction and Twickenham via Kingston**  
**Clapham Junction and Hampton Court via Surbiton**



**The Tree Agency**

darryl parkin

The Treehouse  
25 King Edwards Grove  
Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9LY  
Telephone 020 8274 0107  
Mobile 07960 123580  
Fax 020 8274 0119  
info@thetreeagency.co.uk  
www.thetreeagency.co.uk



# The Local Picture Postcard Page - Part 319

Teddington – The Footbridges

By Alan Winter

The building of the two footbridges at Teddington were completed just before picture postcards saw the light of day in 1893 so there are no postcards that I am aware of showing their opening days.



The Teddington Lock Footbridges are two footbridges over the River Thames, situated just upstream of Teddington Lock at Teddington. There is a small island between the bridges.





The two footbridges were built between 1887 and 1889, funded by donations from local residents and businesses. They replaced a ferry which gave its name to Ferry Road at Teddington. The northern bridge consists of a suspension bridge crossing the weir stream and linking the island to Teddington. The southern bridge is an iron girder bridge crossing the lock cut and linking the island to Ham on the Surrey bank.

The first postcard this week shows the suspension bridge leading towards the Anglers hotel. The second card shows most of the span of the girder bridge.

The third card shows the backwater and the final card pictures the suspension bridge.

In recent years wooden ramps have been added to the approach to the bridge on the Ham side and to the middle part on the small island so that cycles and pushchairs etc. can avoid the steps up to and down from that section of the bridge.

The last few years have seen refurbishments of both bridges which will see them standing for many years in the future to accommodate the thousands of pedestrians and cyclists that use them each day.



From this point downstream the Thames Path runs on both sides of the river and upstream it runs on the Surrey side only.

The footbridges are both Grade II listed

# CrusaderTravel

020 8744 0474

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

Escapology Experts

[info@crusadertravel.com](mailto:info@crusadertravel.com)



Your friendly local Travel Agency  
established in Twickenham since 1966

With over 50 years' experience we pride ourselves on being able to offer an unrivalled service with attention to detail. Come and have a chat with us in our cosy office off Church Street Square, we are open 6 days a week from 11am until 5pm (Closed Sunday)



# Neutrality questions after pre-election publicity surge at Richmond Council

By James Knight



A sharp increase in council communications has taken place at Richmond Council in the days immediately preceding the pre-election period of heightened sensitivity. Councils are expected to inform residents, and much of what is published will be entirely legitimate in isolation. But timing, volume, and tone are crucial. When those three factors align, perception becomes hard to overlook.

The numbers are clear. Between 9<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> March, the council published eight press releases. Between 16<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> March, that rose slightly to nine. Then, in the final stretch before polling, the number more than doubled to twenty-two announcements in just a matter of days. That is a marked escalation, and one that coincides precisely with the period when public attention is most politically focused.

## **Not Routine Communication**

Many of these releases go beyond routine service updates. They are discretionary communications: regeneration milestones, investment announcements, programme launches and community celebration pieces. That distinction matters. These are not items the council is required to publish at a particular moment, but choices about what to highlight, and when.

Residents are told Richmond is London's best place to live, with that status linked to council leadership and investment. A "bold growth plan" promises jobs and opportunity. Housing schemes, leisure upgrades and town centre improvements are presented as evidence of delivery and ambition. Across policy areas, the message is consistent: progress is being made and the borough is moving forward. There is nothing inherently improper in that. But concentrated into a short pre-election window, it takes on a different significance.

## **What is Missing**

The more substantive concern is not what is said, but what is not. Take housing. Council communications point to "hundreds of affordable homes" in the pipeline, presented as evidence of strong delivery. Yet official Government statistics show Richmond sits near the bottom of London rankings for affordable housing delivery, well below the average over the past four years. That wider context is absent.

A similar silence appears on council finances. There is no reference to the pressures facing the authority, including the impact of the Government's Fair Funding 2.0 reforms, expected to result in around £30 million of reductions in the coming three years. Those reductions will require difficult decisions on services and priorities. Yet residents are presented with a picture of investment and expansion, without the corresponding constraints.

This raises serious questions about balance and objectivity

### **Oversight and the Rules**

Responsibility for maintaining that balance rests not only with elected members but with senior officers. The Chief Executive, currently Andrew Travers in an interim capacity, is responsible for ensuring that council communications comply with the established framework.

That framework is clear. The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity states that councils must ensure communications are "objective, balanced and even-handed" and must not publish material that "appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party." It also emphasises the importance of avoiding not only actual bias, but the **perception** of political use of public resources.

That emphasis on perception matters. It recognises that public trust depends not just on intent, but on how actions are reasonably understood.

### **Use of Council Chamber for Party Photoshoots**

It is in that context that the use of the council chamber for party-political imagery raises a more direct concern. A widely circulated image, click [HERE](#) to view, shows local Liberal Democrats campaigners, including two of the borough's MPs, posing inside the chamber holding "Vote Liberal Democrats" signs. This is not a question of tone or balance. It is something more straightforward.

Council chambers are publicly funded civic spaces. Their use is governed by clear principles which prohibit the use of council resources for party political purposes. On the face of it, staging a party-political photoshoot in that setting conflicts with the principle that council resources must not be used for party political purposes. There may be explanations or permissions offered. But absent a clear justification, the optics are difficult to reconcile with the standards expected.

### **A Question of Trust**

Taken individually, many of the recent communications can be defended. Councils have a duty to inform, and positive developments should be reported. But the cumulative effect is harder to dismiss. A surge in discretionary communications, a consistently positive narrative, the omission of countervailing facts, and the use of civic space for overtly political imagery.

Together, these raise a broader question.

Local government depends on a simple principle: that public resources are used to inform, not to persuade. Most of the time, that distinction is maintained without difficulty. But when messaging begins to align closely with campaign slogans, and when institutional settings appear to be drawn into party activity, that boundary becomes less clear. And when that happens, the issue is no longer simply one of compliance. But of public trust.

# Local Election Hustings

From The Richmond Society

Local Council election candidates discuss local issues and answer questions in hustings organised by The Richmond Society.

Hear from candidates seeking election to the Council on 7 May.

Richmond Council is elected once every four years, when the entire contingent of councillors is chosen. This election will therefore determine the policies of the borough until 2030 – and it will affect everything from planning and transport policy through to education, housing, social care and the local environment.

We've invited representatives from the parties standing in the election to come to our hustings on 16 April. The panel will be made up of some of the candidates from the three wards that The Richmond Society covers: North Richmond; South Richmond; and Ham, Petersham & Richmond Riverside. They'll set out their party's plans and they will be questioned about the main issues facing the area.

The event will be held at Duke Street Church, Richmond TW9 1DH on **Thursday 16 April at 7:30pm** and will be streamed on Zoom. All are welcome – you do not need to be a member of the Society. There is no charge but places cannot be assured without booking a ticket in advance.

Reserve your spot [HERE](#)

The Richmond Society is a civic and amenity charity and is wholly non-political.



**EVERY TUESDAY BANQUET DINNER**

STARTER+ MAIN DISH+ SIDE DISH+ RICE/ BREAD  
King Prawns £3 extra

£12.95 Only

Regal Spice Twickenham

Limited Seats!

FOR BOOKINGS, CALL **020-88939291**

# Green Party shocked at Poppy Factory issuing eviction notices to tenants

From Richmond & Twickenham Green Party

Tenants of the Poppy Factory estate on Petersham Road, Richmond Hill, have been issued Section 21 notices to leave their homes because they are unable to pay the much higher rents being demanded.

As many as 28 tenants have been asked to leave their homes by their landlords, the Poppy Factory charity. Many of the tenants have been living there for years, are embedded in the community with children in local schools. Some of the residents have health issues and/or are single parents and few can afford to stay within the area due to high rents in Richmond.

Leader of the Opposition, Green Councillor Andrée Frieze, says:

*"I am truly shocked that the Poppy Factory is behaving this way. These are longstanding tenants, some are older, some are vulnerable, all of them are part of our community. I have met the CEO of the Poppy Factory and while I understand its objectives are to support veterans, as a charity it has moral and ethical obligations to behave decently to everyone it engages with."*

*"It is clear that the Poppy Factory - a charity - is evicting tenants and raising their rents massively before the Renters Rights Act comes into force on 1<sup>st</sup> May. The Act is designed precisely to prevent landlords from evicting tenants and raising rents significantly above inflation."*

Furthermore, these sudden evictions will put pressure on Richmond Council's temporary accommodation, with the result that residents may well be forced into housing outside the borough. This is not the only landlord stooping to using Section 21 evictions, with residents in Garden Court in Kew similarly affected. The Green Party is also aware that tenants in around 50 properties that Richmond Foundation lets to social tenants are having their rents increased dramatically, in some cases up to 70 per cent of market rates from 50 per cent currently.

Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Chas Warlow says:

*"I was surprised to hear from residents that their landlord - charity Richmond Foundation - is increasing rents by hundreds of pounds a month and in some cases doubling it."*

*"While I understand that exceptions are being made when the new rent levels are genuinely unaffordable and that apparently no one will be evicted, this is impacting people who are the least able to afford it and surely goes against the grain of the Foundation's ethics."*



# Mega Skip coming to South Twickenham on 4 April

From Richmond Council

Usually, there is a charge for bulky waste collections. On **Saturday 4 April**, our mega skips will be available in your area, giving you the chance to dispose of **up to six** bulky household items for free.

- **Location:** Vicarage Road, outside Holy Trinity Church
- **Time:** 9am-12noon or until the skips are full - whichever comes first. Please come early to avoid disappointment.

You can bring items like sofas, mattresses, furniture, smaller electrical items and black bags (one black bag counts as one item).

We **cannot accept** things like hazardous or sharp objects, paint, oil, rubble, plasterboard, car batteries or flammable liquids/chemicals.

[Visit our website for more details on what you can and can't bring.](#)

This service is for **Richmond upon Thames residents only** – proof of address may be required.

We will recycle the items we collect where we're able. The [Richmond Furniture Scheme](#) will be on hand to take reusable furniture for upcycling and redistributing back into the community.

Thanks for doing your bit to help reduce waste and fly-tipping in our communities!

## RSS Alive! Evening Events

at the Mary Wallace Theatre

Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup>

On a number of Monday, Wednesday and Saturday evenings throughout the main season the Richmond Shakespeare Society presents a number of varied and exciting events - auditions, play readings, short lectures and social gatherings - to which all are welcome.

Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> offers a talk by Luke Daxon - "LEAVING ROME, BUT GOING WHERE? Henry VIII and the early English Reformation".

Join us at the Mary Wallace Theatre (close to the Barmy Arms on Twickenham's Embankment) at 7.30 on and learn more about Henry's rift with Catholicism and what followed.

For more information about these and further Evening Events at the Mary Wallace please visit [www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk](http://www.richmondshakespeare.org.uk)



# Richmond Council Moves to Bury Teddington's Last Allotments

By James Knight



The issue before Richmond's Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee this week was as clear as it was contentious. The council plans to remove the Shacklegate Lane allotments to expand Teddington Cemetery, arguing that burial capacity has now been exhausted and must be urgently increased. Residents, however, have mounted a sustained campaign to preserve the site, questioning both the necessity and the timing of that decision.

It is rare for a dispute of this scale to generate such a petition. More than 1,700 residents signed in favour of keeping the allotments, a figure that one councillor noted is only seen "four or five" times in over twenty years of service. The sheer number alone did not decide the outcome, but it set the tone. This was not a routine objection. It was organised, informed, and resilient.

## **A Problem Foreseen in 2018**

The pressure on burial space did not emerge suddenly. It has been understood for years that Teddington Cemetery would eventually reach capacity, and the council itself has previously considered how best to respond. Among the options identified was the reuse of older graves, a measure that could have extended capacity without immediate recourse to new land.

Yet, as residents pointed out, that approach was not meaningfully advanced. One speaker reminded the committee that Cabinet had already resolved in 2018 that such powers should be used, adding that "we haven't initiated what we set out to do... and that's something that this committee should be initiating now."

The result is that a problem once anticipated has become compressed into a moment of urgency. With capacity now effectively exhausted, the removal of the allotments is presented less as one option among several and more as a foregone conclusion.

## **A Campaign Grounded in Stewardship**

Those speaking for the petition framed their case not as resistance, but as stewardship. Jane

Cowling described the allotments as “a living, breathing part of our community,” warning that once lost, “it’s gone forever.”

The argument rested on a shift in how such spaces are valued. Since earlier decisions were taken, she noted, expectations around sustainability, access to green space and local food growing have changed. The question, therefore, was not whether burial provision is needed, but whether the balance between competing uses has been properly reconsidered.

### **Alternatives That Were Not Embraced**

A notable feature of the meeting was the extent to which alternatives were advanced in detail, both by residents and by members within the chamber itself. Mr Candice Taylor, an allotment holder, proposed a partial solution, arguing that using only part of the site could provide more than a decade of burial capacity, particularly if combined with grave reuse. “Ideally we would like to keep the whole lot,” he said, before adding, “but we want to compromise if this is what we need to do.”

The emphasis throughout was consistent. Residents were not denying the need for burial space. They were asking whether it could be achieved differently.

### **Opposition Within The Chamber**

While the committee ultimately held its course, there were signs of unease within the chamber itself. Councillor Jonathan Cardy, who represents the ward in which the allotments are located, pointed to unused areas within the cemetery and suggested that “if you change your decision slightly, we could keep these allotments going for much longer,” even if that required additional cost or more labour-intensive methods.

His intervention carried a particular weight. As a ward councillor, he spoke not only to the technicalities of the proposal, but to its local consequences. In doing so, he reflected a recognition that decisions of this kind, especially when taken in the months leading up to an election, are unlikely to be judged solely on their administrative merits.

That tension is not accidental. In an interview on the Lib Dem Podcast, the Leader of the Council, Gareth Roberts, has been clear that a large majority allows the administration to proceed even where some within its own ranks are hesitant, noting that “even if one or two... disagree, then we’ve still got the numbers to get things through.” In that context, Councillor Cardy’s intervention carries a quieter significance. It reflects not only a local concern, but the limits of influence within a chamber where the outcome, once set, is rarely in doubt due to the Liberal Democrats’ large majority on the council.

Councillor Chas Warlow, speaking from the Green group, also questioned whether the financial case for full redevelopment had been sufficiently tested, observing that partial reclamation appeared to come in at “more or less half the cost” and pressing for clarity on whether that option had been properly weighed.

Taken together, these interventions did not alter the recommendation before members, but they did introduce a note of scrutiny from within the chamber that closely echoed the arguments being made by residents outside it.

### **“Hold the Bureaucrats to Account”**

Others took a more direct view. Mr Martin Baker challenged both the premise and the process, telling the committee that “just because the council granted itself planning permission does

not mean it is required to proceed,” and warning that members were too often presented with “a one sided argument with no alternative options.”

He went further, suggesting that the situation reflected “a serious failure of management and lack of forward planning,” rather than an unavoidable shortage.

Mr Baker’s closing appeal captured the public mood with some clarity. “It’s up to you, as committee members, to hold the bureaucrats to account and do the right thing for the local community.” It was not a line that altered the outcome. But it framed the debate in terms that are likely to endure.

### **A Meeting That Heard, But Did Not Shift**

The committee’s response was measured and consistent with the officer advice before it. Burial capacity at Teddington was described as effectively exhausted, reuse as complex and uncertain, and partial development as operationally difficult. Within that framework, proceeding with a full scheme was presented as the most prudent course.

Yet the structure of the exchange revealed its limits. Residents spoke at length, tested assumptions, and advanced alternatives in detail, yet the direction of travel did not materially change. Participation was evident, but its capacity to alter the outcome was less so.

Councillors were explicit about the boundaries of that influence. While acknowledging the unusual scale of the petition, one member made clear that decisions could not be guided “purely” by the number of signatures attached to it. The principle is understandable. Representation cannot be reduced to a tally. Yet in the context of a campaign that combined scale with detailed proposals and a willingness to compromise, it leaves open a quieter question about what form of engagement is sufficient to alter a course once it has been set.

### **A Decision Shaped as Much by the Past as the Present**

In the end, the council’s course remained unchanged. The allotments are to be removed to allow the expansion of Teddington Cemetery, with a longer term strategy on burial provision still to take shape. Yet the more difficult question is not what has been decided, but how it came to feel inevitable. The need for additional capacity was neither sudden nor unforeseen. It was known, discussed, and, in part, deferred. Where earlier action might have preserved a wider range of options, the borough now finds itself choosing at the point where choice is most constrained.

Residents did not dispute the necessity of burial space. Their case was narrower, and more pointed: that the loss of the allotments reflects not only present pressure, but the accumulation of decisions not taken when there was still time to take them differently.

A petition of this scale rarely leaves the matter where it began. With local elections due in May 2026, and the Fullwell and Hampton Hill ward, where the allotments are located, already a target for the Green Party, the issue is unlikely to remain confined to committee proceedings. It has the ingredients of a local electoral test: a visible community asset, a large and organised campaign, and a decision that, for many, feels both consequential and avoidable.

Whether it proves decisive will depend on how it is understood in the weeks ahead. But it is now firmly part of the political landscape, and one that may yet be settled not in the committee room, but at the ballot box.

# Richmond Set for Festival Weekend as Centre Stage Returns this Summer

From HemingwayDesign

Richmond town centre will once again become a stage for performance, creativity and community this summer as **Centre Stage:** returns from Friday 17 to Sunday 19 July.

Following the success of last year's event, the 2026 edition expands across the full weekend – with a vibrant new programme presented in partnership with **Orange Tree Theatre**, who will present **Richmond Myths**, a thematic strand reimagining legendary tales for today.

Curated and produced by HemingwayDesign in partnership with Richmond Council, with the lead community partner Be Richmond - the town's Business Improvement District (BID), **Centre Stage: Richmond Myths** will transform key locations across the town centre with performances, creative activity and cultural experiences designed to attract visitors and celebrate Richmond's vibrant high street - also reclaiming public space and making room for culture - filling the streets with joy, inviting people to experience Richmond in a completely different way.



Guided by the Richmond Vision - where the buzz of a global city meets the warmth of a market town - the festival celebrates the unique duality at the heart of Richmond. With a focus on



rediscovery, youth culture, hidden heritage, and the joyful occupation of public space, it reimagines what the town centre can be.

Over this extraordinary weekend, the town will come alive with myths and monsters, fates and feasts, mighty heroes, and ancient magic. From the streets and shops to historic buildings, green spaces, and perhaps even the river itself, Richmond

will fizz with performances in unexpected places - each reimagining legendary tales for today.

Be Richmond Chief Executive Fay Cannings said the festival plays an important role in supporting the town centre and strengthening Richmond's reputation as one of London's most distinctive destinations.

*"Be Richmond is pleased to support the festival once again this year as the official Community Partner and to work alongside our partners to deliver a memorable weekend for residents and visitors," she said.*

*"Centre Stage Richmond is a fantastic example of how culture and community can bring the town centre to life and events like this encourage people to spend time in Richmond, explore its businesses and enjoy everything the area has to offer." she added.*



The festival begins on Friday 17 July with an evening performance on Richmond Riverside, setting the tone for a weekend of live entertainment.

On Saturday 18 July, the streets become a stage, canvas and playground as George Street and Whittaker Square come alive with music, theatre, food, workshops, skateable sculptures and joyful public participation.

The celebrations will continue on Sunday 19 July as the festival spreads across more of the town, appearing in unexpected and hidden locations throughout Richmond including activities on Hill Rise, which will be closed from the junction with Petersham Road to The Vineyard for the day.

To support the event, George Street and Whittaker Avenue will be closed from 6am to 9pm on Saturday 18 July. Hill Rise will be closed on Sunday 19 July. Traffic diversions will be clearly signposted to minimise disruption.

For businesses, the event offers an opportunity to showcase Richmond's unique mix of independent retailers, restaurants and cultural venues while benefiting from increased footfall across the weekend.

Businesses are being encouraged to take part in the festival by hosting activities within their premises or contributing ideas and sponsorship to help bring the weekend to life. Those who would like to get involved can contact the organisers at [events@hemingwaydesign.co.uk](mailto:events@hemingwaydesign.co.uk) by 6 April.

# LibDem Machine Politics

By James Knight



The recent surge in council communications has prompted questions about balance and perception. It is not, however, an isolated development, but reflects a broader and more established approach to political campaigning. Often described as “machine politics”, this approach is defined not by any single action, but by structure and consistency, with communication sustained throughout the electoral cycle, messaging tightly controlled, and voter contact ongoing rather than episodic. In areas where the Liberal Democrats are electorally dominant, it has become a particularly refined model.

## **Campaigning Without Pause**

This approach is not concealed. It is openly articulated by those who practise it. As Councillor Gareth Roberts has observed on the [LibDem Podcast](#), “the day after the election, our re-election campaign starts now.” That mindset reflects a view of politics as continuous rather than cyclical, in which elections are not discrete events but stages within an ongoing process of communication and persuasion.

The same emphasis appears in wider Liberal Democrat campaigning practice. As Mark Pack has argued in his writing on election strategy, success depends on sustained voter contact, clear and repeated messaging, and a focus on the issues most likely to resonate locally. The aim is not simply to win arguments, but to shape how voters understand the local political landscape over time. There is nothing inherently improper in this. It is, by design, effective.

## **Data, Messaging and Visibility**

The model is strengthened through the systematic use of data and targeting. Roberts himself highlights the central role of detailed voter information systems such as Connect and MiniVAN, describing how campaigners can track opinion “on a day by day basis”, identify where they are performing strongly and where they need to concentrate effort, and deploy resources accordingly. He speaks of having “an enormous amount of data in the palm of your hands”, adding that the system ultimately “drives everything”. Campaigning, in this sense, becomes highly structured and data-led, less a matter of instinct than of continuous measurement, targeting and reinforcement, a defining feature of what is often described as machine politics.

Alongside this sits a strong emphasis on visibility. Regular leaflets, updates and announcements ensure that the party remains present in the everyday experience of residents. Over time, that presence can create a sense not only of activity, but of constant engagement. It is a disciplined system, and one that has been electorally successful.

## **What is Emphasised, and What is Not**

However, this model also shapes what is brought to the foreground. Local campaigning tends to focus on immediate, tangible issues such as parking, traffic, neighbourhood concerns and specific developments, often presented in a way that resembles a residents' association rather than a political party. These are the matters residents encounter most directly and lend themselves to clear, repeated messaging. Critics argue that this emphasis is deliberate, designed to create an impression of local responsiveness while placing less visible distance between that image and the party's broader national positions.

In a borough such as Richmond, this creates a particular tension. National Liberal Democrat positions have included higher taxation on higher earners and proposals for significantly higher property taxation, alongside support for increased housing delivery and density and environmental policies that can impose practical constraints on transport and parking. In justice policy, proposals to reduce reliance on short custodial sentences may be framed in terms of rehabilitation, but can be perceived by some residents as a weakening of deterrence. None of these positions are inherently controversial in themselves. The issue is that they are not prominent within local messaging, which instead emphasises reassurance, delivery and a "fairer" borough.

## **Presentation and Reality**

This is where the concept of machine politics becomes more relevant. It is not simply about campaigning harder, but about shaping perception. When communication is consistent, selective and sustained, it creates a narrative of activity, presence and progress that may not fully reflect the complexity of underlying policy or its implications.

Roberts himself hints at this dynamic when reflecting on public engagement, noting that councils often fail to explain fully what they do, even as they communicate regularly with residents. The result is a gap between visibility and understanding, where what is seen does not always capture the full picture of what is proposed or pursued. That gap matters, because it influences how residents interpret what they are being told.

## **A Question of Balance**

None of this suggests that disciplined campaigning is wrong, or that councils should not communicate their achievements. Both are legitimate parts of democratic life. But when the structures of political messaging are continuous, data-driven and closely aligned with official communication, the distinction between the voice of the council and the voice of the party can become less clear.

At that point, a further question arises about the role of the council's professional communications function. Officers are required to act with political neutrality and to ensure that public resources are not used for party political purposes. Yet where messaging, timing and emphasis begin to mirror campaign narratives, it is reasonable to ask how clearly that separation is being maintained in practice, and whether senior officers are exercising sufficient oversight to guard against even the perception of political alignment.

In a borough of high earners and homeowners, that raises a more pointed question. When a politics of reassurance and a "fairer" future sits alongside policy positions that may imply higher taxation, including on property, and increased development, how fully is that tension being presented?

It is not a question of any single statement or decision. It is a question of whether residents are being shown the full picture.



Barnes Children's Literature Festival, the UK's largest dedicated children's literature festival, has relaunched as the London Children's Literature Festival for its return on Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 June. Founded in 2015, the Festival will, once again, offer the public over 100 thrilling live author and illustrator events set around beautiful Barnes.

The full programme will be announced before tickets go on sale at **8.00am Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April**  
[www.londonkidslitfest.org](http://www.londonkidslitfest.org)

# Council declares war on Hampton residents

Submitted by Derek Jones, Conservative Councillor Candidate for Hampton Ward

A Liberal Democrat Council-induced parking nightmare has unfolded in the sleepy backstreets of Hampton, on the outskirts of the borough. Out of the blue, residents of Milton Road discovered that their LibDem-controlled, car-hating council was planning to paint double yellow lines all down one side of the road, removing kerb parking for up to 30 cars.



Milton Road is a narrow street. As cars are parked on both sides of the road, there is barely enough room for fire appliances to pass through. That said, London Fire Brigade had successfully fought 5 fires in 22 years in Milton Road by running extension hoses. They have long been aware of the problem and have briefed their drivers on suitable nearby points from which to fight fires. There hasn't been a fire in the road since 2021.

But, following a fatal fire in another, far away street in Hampton last November, the Council seized upon this incident to justify invoking emergency powers to tackle the restricted width in Milton Road - by stopping 50% of the parking in the road. This ETMO (Emergency Traffic Management Order) meant that the Council did not need to consult residents: it could just do what it wanted.

As you might expect, the news created a furore, and angry residents made their feelings well known. A number of them had individual correspondence and conversations with the council, and some alternative suggestions were informally proposed. Many felt the best option was to allow pavement parking on both sides of the road, so creating the recommended 3.7m gap for fire appliances while still allowing adequate access for wheelchairs.

A significant number of Milton Road residents meanwhile got together behind one neighbour, who represented their views and suggestions very eloquently to Council Leader Cllr Gareth Roberts – coincidentally one of the Councillors for the local ward. He rejected this approach out of hand, on the grounds that it was not an official representation on behalf of every resident.

Notwithstanding these many approaches by residents, there was never a proper street-wide consultation, nor any invitation to a residents' meeting.

In the midst of all the ongoing correspondence, and while residents were asking for a moratorium on the matter until proper consideration had been given to all the various options,

workmen turned up on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March and painted the yellow lines. As a result, 30 cars now have nowhere to park, so are spilling over onto neighbouring, already-congested roads. The Milton Road residents' nightmare is accordingly spreading to a much wider area.

Some think this deliberate creation of parking mayhem was a ploy by the Council to sell residents on the idea of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) for the whole area. And while there are those who believe CPZs are a universal panacea, the reality is that they usually reduce available kerb parking space, they do not guarantee that you can park outside your house, and they often don't even guarantee that you can park *anywhere* in the zone. The only thing you *can* be sure of is that they cost you for an annual permit - the price of which then rises at above-inflation rates every year. Richmond Council made at least £4.2 million from CPZs last year: so they love them.

I have visited and spoken to many residents in Milton Road and surrounding streets . . . personally measured Milton Road and its pavements . . . spoken to a senior officer of London Fire Brigade . . . and studied the relevant documents. So, I can confidently say that there was at least one viable solution to this problem that worked for everyone. But the Council didn't want residents to have it, so steamrolled the process through. They cited cost as one reason: white paint must be more expensive than yellow . . .

Overall, Richmond Council officers and Councillors have taken a sledgehammer to crack a nut. They have abused emergency powers to push through yet another anti-motorist measure, without giving residents any effective say in something that will now change their daily lives and adversely impact their property values.

In Hampton, cars are not a luxury: people NEED them. We don't have the same enviable transport services enjoyed by Twickenham and Richmond residents.

We have seen this kind of heavy-handed behaviour before from the LibDem Council: for example, when some 70% of Hampton residents rejected the idea of a blanket 20mph speed limit, treating this area (with its very limited public transport options) just the same as the centres of Richmond and Twickenham. There were sham consultations to silence the locals, and then the Council did what it always intended.

It's this very kind of autocratic behaviour that is one of the chief reasons I decided to come out of partial retirement, and stand as a ward Councillor for Hampton on May 7<sup>th</sup>. I have always believed wholeheartedly in democracy, and I will always support the wishes of the majority on important issues such as this. So, if I and my Conservative colleagues are elected, we pledge to do all in our power to reverse this undemocratic attack on local residents – and replace it with a scheme that abides by the wishes of a majority of constituents. This is a fundamental Conservative principle.

When a council goes to war with its own residents, it's time for change. This week, the innocent victims were the residents of Milton Road, Hampton. Next time, it could be you. Remember that when you choose your councillors on May 7<sup>th</sup>.



# East Sheen Spring Hunt

From EastSheenMatters

**Continue the Easter Fun and bring your little bunnies along to East Sheen's Spring Hunt – a family-friendly activity in the heart of SW14**

It's back! East Sheen's popular post-Easter trail around lots of SW14's fabulous independent businesses will take place on Saturday 11 April.

Each participating business will be ready to welcome you and your little ones with treats and a unique clue. Collect all the clues to spell out a secret phrase and claim a prize.

Along the trail, children will also encounter spring-themed sights and activities designed to create a lively and engaging experience for all. The Spring Hunt brings together local people and businesses in a true celebration of community.

Will Pritchard, Manager of the Hare & Hounds, said: "The Spring Hunt is a highlight of East Sheen's events calendar. It's a lovely way to continue the fun of the Easter holidays, giving children the chance to get out and about while adults discover how diverse, friendly and welcoming our local businesses are. We would love you to come and join us."



## How it works:

Starting at the Hare & Hounds, children collect a map which details the places they will visit along the trail. Go to each, say hello and write down the letter clue in the correct place on the map. Once you have all the clues, you'll see what they spell out – then it's time to head back to the Hare & Hounds to collect a prize.

## Tickets & Details:

There are two trails, one from 10am-12pm and one from 1pm-3pm. If you're booking with friends, please be sure to all book the same time slot.

This event is available by pre-paid ticket only and the price is £8 per child + £0.80 booking fee. Adults go free and all children must be accompanied.

Early booking recommended – tickets available at <https://www.designmynight.com/london/pubs/south-london/the-hare-hounds/the-east-sheen-easter-hunt-1>

The event is suitable for children of all ages, although families should note that the trail involves walking around the area.

## Event Details

- **What:** East Sheen Spring Hunt
- **Where:** Hare & Hounds, 214 – 216 Upper Richmond Road West, East Sheen, SW14 8AH
- **When:** Saturday 11 April 2026
- **Times:** 10am to 12pm and 1pm to 3pm (two maps)
- **Tickets:** £8 per child (adults free) – [click here for tickets](#)

Hare & Hounds, Will Pritchard – [hareandhounds@youngs.co.uk](mailto:hareandhounds@youngs.co.uk)

# Richmond Council Fined Over SEND Failings as Ombudsman Cases Mount

By Michael Jones

## A Modest Payment, A More Significant Pattern

Richmond Council has been formally found at fault following an Ombudsman investigation into its handling of a child's special educational needs, in a case that resulted in a financial remedy and adds to what is becoming a steady stream of similar findings.

The Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman upheld a complaint from a parent, identified as Ms F, concluding that the Council failed to secure provision set out in her son's Education, Health and Care Plan, while also delaying key decisions and denying her a clear route of appeal. The authority has agreed to pay



£400 in recognition of the injustice caused. Such payments are not punitive, but declarative, marking a formal finding of fault in both administration and service delivery.

Taken in isolation, the case might be dismissed as an administrative lapse. Considered alongside a growing number of Ombudsman findings in SEND provision, it begins to suggest something more structural, a system in which failure is not exceptional, but recurring. Such findings rarely arrive in isolation. Across London, Ombudsman investigations into SEND provision have increasingly focused on delays, missed provision and failures of communication, suggesting a pattern that extends beyond any single case.

## Consequences of Delay

The chronology is not complicated, but it is revealing. A request for an early review, made in May 2024, was not acted upon until late September, a delay the Council itself accepted should have been addressed sooner. During that period, the child's attendance declined sharply, culminating in a mental health breakdown.

The Ombudsman's conclusion is characteristically restrained, noting that the delay caused "frustration" rather than a direct loss of provision. Yet this understates the practical reality. A system designed to respond to changing need did so only after the point at which that need had materially escalated.

What appears procedural, in other words, proves substantive.

## When Process and Provision Diverge

The more significant finding lies in the Council's failure to deliver elements of provision already agreed. Emotional support sessions were not provided, and basic welfare checks, including monitoring whether the child had eaten, were not carried out.

Alongside this sat procedural failures that are harder to dismiss as incidental. The Council missed statutory deadlines and failed to inform the parent of her right to appeal its decision not to reassess the child's needs, thereby removing, at least temporarily, a key safeguard built into the system.

The distinction often drawn between administrative fault and service failure becomes difficult to sustain in such circumstances. Delay in process becomes delay in provision, omission in

communication becomes a loss of recourse, and what is described as technical acquires tangible consequence.

### **Oversight and Accountability**

Responsibility for the strategic oversight of special educational needs provision within the borough lies with the Education and Children's Services Committee, chaired by Cllr Julia Cambridge, with Cllr Michael Wilson serving as Vice-Chair. It is within this forum that performance, compliance, and emerging risks are expected to be identified and addressed.

The ongoing occurrence of Ombudsman findings raises a more pointed question about whether scrutiny is functioning proactively to prevent failure or merely responding after it has happened. A system that repeatedly results in formal complaints indicates that issues are not being consistently resolved at the oversight stage but are instead escalating to external adjudication.

The distinction is important. Effective scrutiny is not measured by how well failure is explained after the event but by how consistently it is prevented beforehand. When findings of fault become routine, oversight risks becoming merely observational rather than instituting corrective action.

### **A System Under Financial and Structural Pressure**

The context surrounding these failures is far from neutral. Children's services budgets face ongoing pressure, with rising demand and funding that struggles to keep up. Within Richmond's own financial planning, the cost of SEND provision is recognised as an emerging risk, with high needs funding effectively frozen while demand and complexity continue to grow.

This pressure is not abstract. The Council's own medium-term financial strategy identifies SEND and high needs education as among the most significant and escalating cost drivers, with an explicit requirement to "drive down average costs of support" if services are to remain affordable. What is framed as sustainability begins, on closer inspection, to resemble constraint.

The response increasingly leans towards control as much as provision. Financial strategy documents mention "threshold assurances" and "step down processes" as mechanisms to manage costs, alongside a broader focus on ensuring support stays within what is considered affordable.

Against this backdrop, local proposals suggest tightening eligibility criteria, introducing banding models, and using reassessment more frequently to move pupils down tiers of support, thereby reducing funding commitments. While these approaches may be presented as aligning provision more closely with need, they raise concerns as they sit alongside a system already criticised for failing to deliver existing entitlements. The risk is not simply that provision falls short, but that the response to that shortfall is to narrow access to it, a system under strain becoming, by degrees, a system less willing to recognise need.

### **Accountability: Practice Over Principle**

The importance of the Ombudsman's ruling is not the £400 payment. It is the clear finding that the Council got it wrong. It shows that legal duties were not met, that this caused real harm, and that the family had to go outside the Council to get it put right.

For residents, especially those dealing with SEND support, the message is a worrying one. The system is there, and the rules are clear, but getting the support your child is entitled to may depend on how hard you are able to push, and how far you are willing to take it. For the Council, the question is whether this is a one-off, or part of a pattern that is becoming harder to ignore.

A system that only works after a complaint is made is not working as it should. It may eventually deliver the right outcome, but often only after stress, delay and uncertainty for families. The real question is whether support is being put in place when it is needed, or only after things have already gone wrong.

# Free minibus service in Richmond Park

From The Royal Parks



A free, volunteer-run, transport service will operate every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from March to November 2026 to help visitors get better access to Richmond Park.



The minibus has disabled access, and runs between all the Richmond Park car parks, Ladderstile Gate, Richmond Gate, Pembroke Lodge and Isabella Plantation.

[View the 2026 timetable](#)

The minibus is free and fully accessible with a ramp and steps to aid access. Wheelchair users wishing to use the service should contact [volunteering@royalparks.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@royalparks.org.uk).

We are delighted to support this service, which is funded by private donations to the Royal Parks, as it allows those without access to the park the ability to enjoy the wonders of London's largest royal park.

[View the 2026 map](#)



# Church of England Bishops Issue Warning on Abortion Law Changes

By Michael Jones



© House of Lords / photography by Roger Harris

***The Church of England has warned that changes to abortion law, approved by MPs last summer and now before the Lords, risk weakening the very limits they leave formally intact.***

There are moments in parliamentary life when the manner of a decision becomes inseparable from its meaning, and the late sitting of the House of Lords on 18 March 2026 was unmistakably one of them. The Church of England, through a coordinated intervention by eleven bishops, did not seek to reverse the direction of travel on abortion law so much as to question whether that direction had been reached with sufficient care, and whether the settlement it proposes can bear the weight now placed upon it.

At issue was Clause 208 of the Crime and Policing Bill, inserted during its passage through the House of Commons in June 2025, and now arriving in the Lords with its central proposition intact. The clause removes criminal liability from women who access abortion outside the framework of the Abortion Act 1967, while leaving providers subject to investigation and prosecution. It is, on its face, a carefully drawn distinction. Yet as the bishops' contributions made clear, its effect is less to redraw the boundary than to alter its character, a shift from a limit that is enforceable to one that risks becoming, over time, largely declaratory.

The passage of nearly nine months between Commons approval and Lords scrutiny has done little to expand public understanding of the change itself. A reform of considerable moral and constitutional weight has travelled through Parliament with relatively limited public engagement, a fact that sits uncomfortably with the scale of what is being proposed. It is precisely this compression of significance into procedure that underpins much of the Church's concern.

## **A Voice Formed by Care, and a National Office**

The leading contribution came from The Most Rev. and Rt Hon. the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury, Dame Sarah Mullally DBE, whose authority rests not only on her current office but on her earlier career as Chief Nursing Officer for England. It is a formation that shapes both tone and substance, lending her intervention a clinical attentiveness to consequence rather than a purely doctrinal cast.

As Archbishop of Canterbury, she occupies the most senior position within the Church of England, serving as Primate of All England and, in effect, its principal public voice within both Church and state. Her presence in the Lords is not incidental but constitutional, a reminder that the Church remains established and that its senior figures continue to participate directly in legislative scrutiny.

She began by restating the Church's position with a precision often absent from public debate: a principled opposition to abortion, grounded in the belief in the "infinite value of human life", coupled with an acknowledgment that there are circumstances in which abortion may be judged the least harmful course available. It is a position that resists easy categorisation, holding together moral seriousness with pastoral realism, and recognising that law must often operate within the imperfect conditions of human life. In her remarks, she recalled the call of the prophet Micah "to do justice and to love mercy", adding that "balancing justice and mercy is the challenge that we are debating today", a formulation that captures the Church's attempt to hold moral principle alongside pastoral care.

Her objection to Clause 208 followed from that premise. "Decriminalisation of abortion is a question of such legal, moral and practical complexity," she told peers, "that it cannot be properly addressed in an amendment hastily added to another Bill." The phrasing was careful, but the implication clear: this is not merely another policy adjustment, but a change that touches the underlying structure of the law itself.

### **Law as Boundary and Signal**

At the centre of the Church's argument lies a distinction often overlooked in political debate. The law does not merely regulate conduct; it signals meaning. Mullally did not argue for the prosecution of women. On the contrary, she made clear that she did not wish to see women criminalised for decisions taken in difficult and often distressing circumstances. Her concern was that the existence of enforceable limits performs a dual function, not only setting boundaries but expressing that those boundaries matter.

Clause 208, in removing criminal liability for women, risks unsettling that equilibrium. Not by formally extending the 24-week limit, but by weakening the framework that gives that limit coherence. A boundary that remains in statute yet loses its enforceability begins to shift in character, from a clear line into something more contingent, more dependent on interpretation, and therefore less certain in practice.

It is here that the Church's position departs from both sides of the more familiar political argument. It is neither an attempt to tighten the law nor to liberalise it outright, but an attempt to preserve the intelligibility of the existing settlement, a settlement that depends as much on what the law expresses as on what it permits.

She was equally clear that she did not wish to see any increase in late-term abortions, a concern that sits directly behind the question of how far legal limits can be sustained once enforcement is weakened.

### **Safeguarding and the Limits of Distance**

Alongside this broader concern sat a more specific set of amendments, supported by Mullally and advanced by Martyn Snow and Philippa Stroud, seeking to restore in-person consultations prior to the prescription of abortion medication, particularly for those under eighteen.

Here, the Church's argument moved from constitutional principle to clinical practice. Telemedicine, introduced widely during the pandemic, has increased access and flexibility. Yet, as Snow argued, it may also limit the ability of clinicians to identify coercion, assess safeguarding risks, or accurately determine gestational age, especially among younger patients.

The proposal, that a child should be seen in person before treatment, was framed as a proportionate safeguard rather than a reversal of policy. It reflects a consistent thread in the Church's contribution, that autonomy, while essential, is not self-sufficient, and that care requires structures capable of recognising vulnerability as well as enabling choice.

The House was unconvinced: the amendment to remove Clause 208 was defeated by 185 votes to 148, while a separate safeguarding amendment relating to under-18s fell by 163 votes to 68. The amendment fell, as did others seeking to adjust the balance of the clause. The direction of travel, at least in legislative terms, remains unchanged.

## **A Commons Majority, and a Borough in Alignment**

If the Lords sought to examine the implications in March 2026, the Commons had already determined the principle in June 2025. MPs approved the amendment by 379 votes to 137, a margin that suggests not merely approval but a settled parliamentary direction.

Within south-west London, that direction was reflected without deviation. Munira Wilson, Sarah Olney and Ruth Cadbury each supported the measure. For constituencies that tend to favour incremental change over moral rupture, such alignment is revealing. It suggests that the parliamentary centre has moved decisively in one direction, even as the language of moderation continues to define local political identity.

## **Labour, the Greens, and the Reframing of the Law**

For the Labour Party, the vote reflects a long-term repositioning. Although formally a free vote, the scale of support among Labour MPs indicates a settled view that criminal sanctions should no longer apply to women in relation to their own pregnancies, and that abortion is more properly understood within a framework of healthcare provision.

The Green Party of England and Wales has long advocated full decriminalisation, regarding existing legal limits as outdated and, in some cases, harmful. In that sense, the Commons vote represents not a departure but a continuation of an established position.

What unites these approaches is a redefinition of the law's purpose, away from enforcement and towards facilitation. It is precisely this shift that the Church's intervention sought to interrogate, not by denying the importance of access, but by asking what becomes of a framework once its capacity to express limits is diminished.

## **Badenoch and the Defence of an Equilibrium**

Set against this alignment was the intervention of Kemi Badenoch, Leader of the Conservative Party, who, while maintaining the convention of a free vote, articulated a personal position that was both pro-choice and resistant to what she described as decriminalisation extending "up to full term".

Her concern was framed not as a rejection of abortion rights, but as a question of protection. The existing framework, she argued, provides safeguards intended to ensure that decisions are freely made and properly supported. Removing criminal liability without strengthening those safeguards risks leaving some women and girls, particularly the young or vulnerable, more exposed to coercion or pressure.

In that sense, the issue becomes not only where the legal boundary is drawn, but how effectively the system can recognise when consent is compromised. Here, there is a quiet point of contact with the Church's argument: a shared unease that altering the framework without sufficient care may weaken the protections on which it depends.

## **A Settlement Tested, Not Yet Resolved**

What the Church of England's intervention ultimately offers is not a veto but a warning, that a legal framework built upon a careful accommodation of competing moral claims cannot easily be altered in part without affecting the whole.

The Commons has determined the principle; the Lords has tested its implications. Yet the underlying question remains unsettled. A law that retains its limits in form while loosening them in practice risks becoming something more ambiguous, a framework that continues to speak of boundaries while gradually relinquishing the means by which those boundaries are understood.

For the Church, this is not merely a question of legal design, but of moral meaning. The concern is not only where the line is drawn, but whether it continues to signify what it once did. A society may choose to redraw its boundaries. The more difficult question, and the one placed quietly before Parliament, is whether those boundaries still carry weight once the structures that sustained them begin to recede.

## March Food & Drink News

It's a busy time of the year for product launches, and with a bumper feature, here are some great new products I've discovered this month:

Starting with breakfast, **Nature's Path** firmly believes that our best hope for creating a better planet is through the ways we grow and produce food. Eating organic is a great help, as long as the products taste good. Well, **Nature's Path's** organic cereals are designed to taste great and nourish and sustain us in the mornings. Made with organic wholegrains and free from artificial additives, the range includes: **Millet Rice Flakes** (oat bran sweetened with fruit juice); **Mesa Sunrise Cereal** (crispy gluten-free flakes of corn and ancient grains); **Sunrise Crunchy Maple Cereal** (also gluten-free with maple syrup) and **Nice and Nobbly Blueberries, Raspberries, Strawberries & Yogurt Chunks Granola** (also gluten-free). Under £4 a pack usually and widely available in most major supermarkets.



And coffee bags make life so much easier, **Cupsfull** is on a mission to



make speciality grade coffee compromise-free. Founder Katherine Willis wanted to modernise coffee with the range **Peace** (decaff), **Pace** (Medium) and **Power** (strong). Single serve bags brew hot or cold, smell like chocolate, and are compostable (so reduce CO2 + add nitrates). These bags are filled with delicious coffee

and great for travellers, campers, office workers, and anyone else who enjoys a good coffee with minimal fuss. Available online from [cupsfull.co.uk](https://cupsfull.co.uk) and selected delis for around £10 for a pack of ten.

We're great fans of an **Agua de Madre Remedio** infusion and the company has recently launched cans of **water kefir** (fermented lightly sparkling water kefir made from a natural probiotic culture discovered 2000 years ago on the Mexican Opuntia cactus. Bursting with live cultures.) It's vegan, gluten and caffeine-free, and has no artificial sweeteners. It naturally contains multiple strains of live cultures and postbiotics. It's available in two flavours (Raspberry & Passion Fruit and Pink Grapefruit & Lime) in packs of 4 x 25cl cans at £6.33 from Waitrose.





If you are a crisp fan, look no further than **Salty Dog**. These are seriously flavoursome crisps, but be warned, you won't want to share a pack! This is a guilty-pleasure crisp that pairs beautifully with our favourite tipples, adds gravitas to any ploughmans, picnic or pre dinner nibble. There's prawn cocktail, sweet chilli, ham & mustard, salt & vinegar, roast beef, sea salt, strong cheddar & onion and newly launched jalapeno & paprika. Hand-cooked, these are "pedigree" potato crisps that are sliced slightly thicker for a signature crunch.

Look out for them in pubs and independent shops and on ebay.

Another delicious savoury snack is **Crunch Corn**, produced by the **Popcorn Kitchen** team of 'corn obsessives' committed to delivering 'a new direction in fine grain appreciation'. Made using Peruvian Chocolo Giant Corn, to ensure a satisfying crunch as well as, by virtue of its size, providing a larger surface area for adding the flavours: **Sea Salt; Salt & Vinegar and Spicy Chilli**. "We cooked up Crunch Corn because we wanted to create a more complete savoury treat for those underwhelmed by potato crisps and frustrated by spiralling costs of allergy-risking nuts and seeds." said founder Louise Monk. Available from [popcornkitchen.co.uk](http://popcornkitchen.co.uk) and Not on the High Street.



Grown and produced in the New Forest, these Great Taste Award winning tasty, vegan and sustainable dried fruits are ideal for healthy snacking or even cooking with. Made from 'wonky' and misshapen strawberries and raspberries destined for food waste, **New Forest Fruit Snacks** are made by the innovative food technology process of pulse drying. And made where the fruit is grown - so **zero food miles** - they're a great way to tackle food waste. Made with 100% real fruit, they offer an array of health benefits, are packed with vitamins, vegan friendly, low in calories and gluten free. In 10g packets, equating to 100g of fresh fruit. They're online at [newforestfruitsnacks.com](http://newforestfruitsnacks.com), in 244 selected [Waitrose stores](#) nationwide and Hampshire food stores. **£1.75 per pack** or in multipacks, available on the website, starting at £12.99 for a pack of eight.



There are ready meal deliveries to suit all diets, and having tried quite a few, I'm pleased to tell you about **NUUDA**. It brings together the best ingredients, with no added 'nasties' and produced in the most responsible way. Founded by women, each meal is: designed by nutritionists; made by chefs; gluten-free and dairy-free; frozen to lock in nutrients without preservatives and available in single or double portions. The meals taste delicious - they feel indulgent, while also being healthy. So if you fancy a health kick without the cost of visiting a health farm, or know someone who needs to be on a special diet, perhaps has just had a baby, check out the full range and the special 'bundles' at [nuudafood.com](http://nuudafood.com)





**Aagrah Foods** is a family owned, award-winning restaurant business in Yorkshire that's also now bringing authentic Indian flavours into home kitchens for easy preparation of delicious recipes. Aagrah's range of premium cooking sauces, spice blends, chutneys and sides lets you create restaurant quality curries without the expense of eating out or ordering in. It's curry simplicity: just add meat or veg and hey presto, you have a delicious meal. Available from Tesco (on offer till mid April for clubcard holders), Morrisons and Ocado (currently on offer too).

**Tracklements NEW Special Edition Sweet Carrot & Pink Peppercorn Relish**

is a deliciously clever twist on a traditional Bengal pickle. Made with naturally sweet, earthy carrots, Bramley apples, garlic, ginger, coriander seeds, pink peppercorns and a hint of chilli.. Vegan and gluten-free, this vibrant condiment adds sweet, subtly spiced notes to any dish (as well as a curry). Try it in a cheese baguette, alongside grilled meats or burgers, as an addition to a cheeseboard or a pork pie. RRP £3.95 for 200g from fine food delis and farm shops nationwide and online at [www.tracklements.co.uk](http://www.tracklements.co.uk). Warning: it's rather addictive!



**Häagen-Dazs**

Look out for these two exceptional new limited edition flavours,: Tiramisu and Chocolate Brownie. Inspired by iconic desserts and created with Häagen-Dazs' signature recipes, these new flavours will give you a delicious chocolate fix and are perfect for the Easter weekend. Available across major supermarkets, for around £5.75. Häagen-Dazs has perfected its own take on Tiramisu, presenting a luxurious interpretation of the timeless favourite made with real mascarpone combined with espresso, delicate sponge pieces, and rich coffee and cocoa swirls.



And when it comes to the Brownie flavour, there's a gourmet twist. Goey brownie pieces are scattered in chocolate ice cream, complemented by ribbons of delicate salted chocolate sauce.

## LEBNANI:

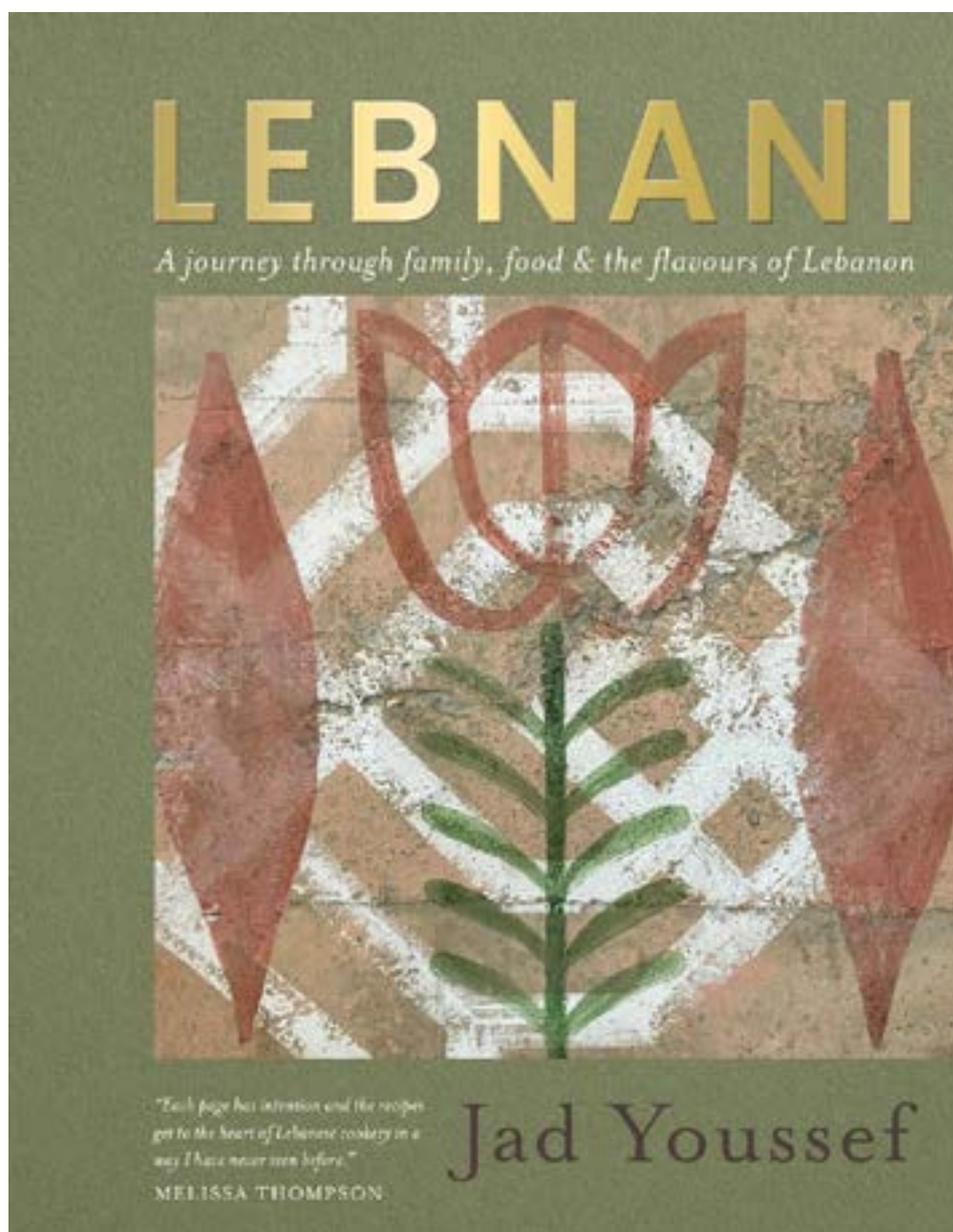
### *A Journey Through Family, Food and the Flavours of Lebanon*

This fabulous debut cookbook - published this week - offers something distinct in the Middle Eastern food space: an exploration of purely Lebanese cuisine. It moves beyond the broader Levantine genre, and author Jad Youssef presents over 80 traditional recipes exactly as they've been made for generations. Now running **Lebnani**, an award-winning family restaurant in Reigate, Surrey, with his wife Aga, he was born in Beirut during the civil war. Youssef learned to cook from his mother Khadija, whose tabbouleh was famous within the family. The book combines these family recipes with personal narratives about how food sustained his family through conflict.

Published by **Meze at £28** for a truly inspirational hardback, the book captures the flavour and rhythm of the everyday Lebanese table, with chapters that echo the meals and the occasions that bring people together: Lebanese

Mornings, Mezza at Home, Classic Mezza, Tabkha (everyday meals), Mashawi (grills), Sandwiche (street wraps), Helweyet (sweets) and Namlied (the pantry). Here are the secret spice blends, time-honoured techniques and the beloved dishes of his mother, aunts, and grandparents that gather everyone around the table to feast family-style. Family stories are threaded throughout, tracing how food sustained Lebanese families through conflict and change. The daily rituals of shopping at souks, picking olives, baking bread and cooking together are woven into the national identity and resilience.

On reading this gorgeous book, you'll no doubt want to add a few well known Middle Eastern ingredients to your next food shop. Here in Twickenham, of course, we have two wonderful Mediterranean supermarkets so we've no excuses.



Here are a couple of recipes to encourage you to treat yourself to this book.

### **Sawda Ghanam (Lamb livers seared with garlic, lemon & Baharat) Serves 4–5**

*“This dish takes me back to those early mornings when my father would come home from the butcher with fresh sawda wrapped in butcher’s paper, still warm. My mother always said it had to be cooked the same day, no refrigeration, just cleaned well and straight into the pan. She’d rinse it with lemon juice, pat it dry, and sauté it with garlic, lemon juice, a little Baharat, and a kiss of heat. We’d eat it with fresh bread, fresh mint, and a raw spring onion on the side. It’s the food of real people – honest, warm, and full of soul. And just like many things in our culture, it’s meant to be shared.”*

- 500g lamb liver (ask your butcher for very fresh, firm liver with the membrane removed)
- 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 5 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 1½ tsp fine sea salt, or to taste
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper, or to taste
- ½ tsp Baharat (Lebanese 7 spices)
- ¼ tsp chilli flakes or 1 small fresh red chilli (optional)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- Fresh chopped parsley, to garnish
- Clean the liver well and trim off any connective tissue or small veins. Slice into bite-size strips, about 1cm thick. Pat dry thoroughly with kitchen paper to help it sear properly rather than steaming.

Heat the olive oil in a wide sauté pan over medium-high heat. Once hot, add the liver pieces in a single layer (do not overcrowd the pan). Let them sear undisturbed for about 2–3 minutes to develop colour, then flip and cook the other side for another 2–3 minutes.

The liver should be browned on the outside but still tender and just slightly pink inside – if overcooked it will become dry and tough. Add the garlic, salt, black pepper, Baharat, and chilli (if using) to the pan. Sauté for another 30 seconds until the garlic is fragrant. Finally, squeeze over the lemon juice and stir briefly to coat the liver.

Transfer immediately to a serving plate, drizzle with a touch more olive oil, and garnish with fresh parsley.

Serve with warm Lebanese khobez, classic sides – raw onions, radishes, fresh mint – and, if it’s evening, a small glass of arak.



## Salatét l'Batata (Fluffy potatoes dressed in lemon, olive oil & pomegranate) Serves 4–5

*“This salad was always part of our Sunday table when I was growing up in Beirut. My mum made it early in the morning so the garlic, lemon, and olive oil could soak into the warm potatoes. When pomegranates were in season, she'd toss in the seeds for colour and sweetness. We never needed mayonnaise, just fresh herbs and good olive oil.”*

- 800g waxy potatoes, such as Jersey Royals or Charlotte
- 20g fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 20g fresh mint leaves
- 2 spring onions
- 40g pitted black or green olives
- 80g fresh pomegranate seeds (about ½ pomegranate)
- 4 tbsp freshly squeezed lemon juice (about 2 medium lemons)
- 60ml extra virgin olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 1½ tsp fine sea salt, or to taste
- 1 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp pomegranate molasses

Start by scrubbing the potatoes well under cold running water. Place them whole (skins on) in a deep pot, cover with cold water, and add a pinch of salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce to a simmer and cook until fork-tender, about 20–25 minutes. You should be able to pierce them easily, but they should not fall apart.

While the potatoes cook, wash the parsley and mint thoroughly in a bowl of cold water with a splash of white vinegar or a pinch of salt. Swish the leaves to remove any dirt, drain, and rinse twice more under cold water. Dry completely using a clean towel or salad spinner, then finely chop and set aside.

Rinse and slice the spring onions thinly, using both the green and white parts. Cut the olives into halves or small pieces. If using a fresh pomegranate, slice it open and gently remove the seeds, discarding the bitter membrane.

Once the potatoes are cooked, drain and allow them to cool slightly. While still warm (but not hot), peel by hand or with a small knife. Cut into quarters and place in a large bowl. Add the lemon juice, olive oil, garlic, salt, and pepper. Gently fold to coat all the cubes while the potatoes are still warm, allowing them to absorb the dressing. Add the chopped herbs, spring onions, olives, and pomegranate seeds. Mix again gently, just until combined, then drizzle with the pomegranate molasses.

Allow the salad to sit at room temperature for 20–30 minutes before serving. Serve at room temperature as part of a mezza, alongside grilled chicken, kafta, or fish – or simply enjoy by itself.



GIBRALTAR  
**sunborn**  
YACHT HOTEL RESORT



**OFFERS**

**STAY 7 PAY 5**  
ENJOY A 7 NIGHT LUXURY BREAK  
FOR THE PRICE OF 5.

**STAY 7 NIGHTS, PAY 5**

**EXPERIENCE GIBRALTAR**

SUPERYACHT DELUXE ROOM AND BREAKFAST  
BUFFET FOR 2  
DOLPHIN TRIP FOR 2  
DINNER FOR 2  
BOTTLE OF CAVA ON ARRIVAL  
TOTAL £280.00

**EXPERIENCE PACKAGE**



# Resilience - a very British word!!

## Resilience to reach the Sun!!

By Bruce Lyons

It must be in our DNA. Nothing, it seems, is going to stop the Twickenham Community from travelling. Maybe we need to make some changes in direction, but after one of the wettest winters in memory SUN is needed. Seems England is no longer in "Drought" so even if our Summer is a scorcher we are unlikely to have a hosepipe ban!!

The Greek Islands and The Canary Islands have been having a tad of rain too!! For now travelling East can be tricky but oddly we found some Easter Breaks, how shall we put it "in budget".



Surprisingly perhaps Egypt and the Red Sea have proved to be inexpensive, sunny and the country, Egypt, has this last winter remained popular. There has been an increase in flights too with EasyJet returning to the Egypt of old, Luxor and now Cairo. Tunisia too has "heat" and value for money.



The Gambia winter season is soon to end but here too you can find excellent Sun and good value too.

Jordan and Morocco are also on the "sun" radar. Summer looks like being mainly Med and once the Sun comes out the Greek Islands will get the attention it deserves. "Best Value" for sure.

Whilst for the Summer the popular Mediterranean destination will be top choice, we are seeing a lot of Increased "Direct" flights more to Sri Lanka, more to Dubai and the return of a direct flight to Phuket. All coming on line in the fall.

But Egypt looks like a winner for the resilient English, it is already very busy there in the Winter (October) and I suspect there will be more creative itineraries proposed.

South America is also getting even more popular, and last week we saw promotion for Rail Holidays in South America - exciting, but you will need longer than a weekend break!!!

I have mentioned before that "Cold" is also gaining in popularity and for the Summer there are great discounts to Svalbard, HX have a 130 yrs anniversary offer of 25% off Antarctic sailing this coming winter and Inghams has a "winter launch" promotion this weekend (must book by 31 March) with a £100 off per booking- call us for details of their Lapland and Santa Breaks

Let's hope for a Sunny Weekend - need to get my potatoes in enjoy the weekend, Bruce



# Vincent in Brixton

by Nicholas Wright

OT Productions at the Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond until 18<sup>th</sup> April

It hardly seems plausible that a young Vincent Van Gough lodged in Brixton and became romantically entangled with both his landlady and her daughter. But, as often with implausible reality, all is historical fact. *Vincent in Brixton* serves up well flavoured drama from these unlikely ingredients, but this would still be a fascinating play, even if it wasn't about someone who became a universally famous artist.

The intensity of ordinary life (think still life of pipe on chair) is also conveyed by Charlotte Henery's wonderful set. It's crammed with beautiful detail: a real range with steaming saucepans; lovely old china cups and saucers; towels hanging up to dry; vases of flowers (carnations not sunflowers); a sink with taps that gets a lot of use during the play; a metal bucket that receives everything from broken plates to sprout peelings.



Jeroen Frank Kales' red haired twenty-year-old Van Gough is shy and awkward, still untouched by nervous breakdown. Although he produces a portfolio of drawings during the play, he hasn't yet realised that he wants to be a painter. Niamh Cusack plays his landlady, Ursula Loyer, battered by experience but also receptive to what life still has to offer. Their relationship is every bit as much about the need for intimacy as about sexual attraction.

Things are complicated by Ursula's daughter, Eugenie (Ayesha Ostler) to whom Vincent is initially attracted, especially as she is already close to Vincent's friend and fellow-lodger Sam Plowman (Rawaed Asde). Sam is a painter and decorator, keen to become an artist, but constrained by poverty and fatherhood. Then, the arrival of Van Gough's abrasive sister Anna (Amber Van Der Brugge) brings things abruptly to a head.

There is a lot of ordinary life going on, meals prepared and floors cleaned, as the cast negotiate emotional undercurrents that get progressively deeper and more complex. Aided by Donato Wharton's musical soundscape and Lucía Sánchez Roldán's lighting, the piece is unfussily directed by Georgia Green, and beautifully performed too by the actors, who brim with talent and potential. And that is what *Vincent in Brixton* captures so brilliantly: the wonder of ordinary life and people's ability to capture its spell for others, even if future challenges may ultimately prove overwhelming.



Read Patrick Shorrock's review at [www.markaspen.com/2026/03/21/vincent-brixton](http://www.markaspen.com/2026/03/21/vincent-brixton)

Photography by Johan Persson

# Waiting for Hamlet

by David Visick

Smokescreen Productions at the Tabard Theatre, Chiswick until 4<sup>th</sup> April

The audience is directly in the line of the fire. In the firing squad are two actors with laser focus, bullseye accuracy and the delivery of a machine gun. Their ammo is words, just words, but what wordplay!

Tim Marriott is Old King Hamlet, and Nicholas Collett, the Fool. Apart from their unwavering aim, as back-up they have only a pair of hats. One a bejewelled golden crown for King Hamlet, or rather his ghost since his murder most foul. And a colourful cap'n'bells for the Fool, who is much wiser than the foolish King.



There is no set to speak of, just a couple of boxes doubling as coffin and seat. *Waiting for Hamlet*



romps along at breakneck speed, but ends far too soon, leaving us wanting even more laughter. It is wonderfully Shakespearean, but you don't need to be a scholar of the Bard to follow this deliciously funny play. Nor a Beckett buff to appreciate the nod to *Waiting for Godot*. But if you're a *Monty Python* fan you'll lap up the giddy nonsense.

This prequel to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* imagines the Old King arriving in the afterlife where he encounters his court jester, Yorick. His Majesty is not amused by his plight. Poisoned by his brother Claudius, his Queen Gertrude unfaithful, he even

harbours doubts about the parentage of his son. After all, his wife is widowed, wooed and wed in weeks following his murder. Stranded in limbo between heaven and hell, he is determined to exact revenge. 'Just because I'm dead do I have to take this lying down?' he rails.

A battle of wits takes place, but who is the fool? Is it the one whose signature act is a well-timed jump, whistle and fart to amuse the King? In their mini-democracy of two they vote for who should rule. 'You can't put a clown in charge,' argues the King. In the present time here and abroad, this brings hollow laughter from the audience.

It takes a talented trio of playwright and actors to fashion a comedy from a Shakespearean tragedy. Yorick sums up his boss's reign. 'You were a really bad king. You were shit.' If only there were more fools to call out their leaders, we pondered over our pints.



Read Gill Martin's review at [www.markaspen.com/2026/03/20/waiting-hamlet](http://www.markaspen.com/2026/03/20/waiting-hamlet)

Photography by Matt Hunter

# The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time

by Simon Stephens

Questors at the Juli Dench Playhouse, Ealing, until 28<sup>th</sup> March

Centre stage is a dead dog, garden fork poking out from it.

The grisly tableau ought to be shocking, but it's so instantly recognisable from the cover of the iconic novel *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* that it's strangely reassuring. The plot tells of mid-teen Christopher Boone in his Swindon neighbour's garden, making the unpleasant discovery that someone has killed Wellington the dog. A Sherlock Holmes fan, he decides to begin "detecting" by questioning everyone.

Neurodiverse Christopher dislikes physical contact, can't eat yellow or brown food, and he is incapable of lying. He's highly intelligent and likes maths, but finds people confusing. As Christopher's investigations continue, he learns more about his family and the community around him.



The stage, a grid of green squares, is bare apart from some boxes ... and the occasional dead dog ... but all the stops have been pulled out. Impressive arrays of screens display animations, which complement the action rather than stealing the show.

Rory Hobson, as the ever present Christopher, gives a committed and sensitive performance. He shows him "stimming", both when overwhelmed and in more subtle ways. Timing is spot-on for Christopher's deadpan lines, yet he is never portrayed as a figure of fun.

Andrew Miller, in the challenging role of Christopher's dad, portrays a caring but struggling father, but gradually revealing his unpleasant side. Holly Gillanders plays Judy, Christopher's loving mother, who struggles to deal with a son with very specific needs.

Claire Durrant has the key role of Christopher's favourite teacher, who supports him in his effort to take his Maths A-Level, and encourages him to write a book about his canine murder investigation. Durrant's warm chemistry with Hobson makes their relationship the heart of the show.

An ensemble of neighbours, teachers, police officers, and passers-by sparkles with energy. They seem to be constantly on the move, notably in the chaos of the Bakerloo Line, and one unexpectedly suspenseful sequence when Christopher's pet rat goes missing. While video effects fill the background, Martin Walton's lighting effortlessly directs one around the stage.



Roger Beaumont's taut direction brings everything together to create a highly-polished production, and the result is spectacular. (Don't be too quick to move after the curtain call!)

Read Andrew Lawston's review at [www.markaspen.com/2026/03/21/curious-incident-q](http://www.markaspen.com/2026/03/21/curious-incident-q)

Photography by Robert Vass

# St Mary's University

## St Mary's Alumnae and Student Selected for Six Nations Squads



St Mary's University is celebrating the selection of several alumnae and a current student for the upcoming Six Nations Championship.

Among those [selected for England are former students](#) Ellie Kildunne (Harlequins, 57 caps), Jess Breach (Saracens, 53 caps), and Abi Burton (Trailfinders Women, 4 caps). Their inclusion reflects both their individual excellence and the strength of St Mary's sporting pathways.

Current student Aoife Wafer has been [selected to represent Ireland](#). Aoife, who is studying [Physiotherapy](#) at St Mary's, was named [Women's Six Nation Player of the Championship](#) last year, continues to balance her academic commitments with high-performance sport playing for Harlequins.

These selections follow a landmark year for English rugby, with the Red Roses securing victory at the Women's Rugby World Cup. In

recognition of their achievements, members of the World Cup-winning squad - including St Mary's alumna Rosie Galligan - [were awarded Honorary Doctorates by the University](#).

Head of Sport at St Mary's, Andrew Reid-Smith said: "We are incredibly proud to see our alumnae and current students selected for the Six Nations. Ellie, Jess and Abi have all made outstanding contributions to the game, and Aoife's selection for Ireland is a fantastic achievement while balancing her studies. These selections are a testament to the strength of our performance sport programme and the dedication of our athletes and staff."

The success of these athletes underscores St Mary's University's reputation as a hub for sporting excellence, supporting students and graduates in reaching the highest levels of competition on the international stage.



# Three 'At Risk' Church Buildings in London Awarded More Than £1million From Historic England

From Historic England

Historic England has awarded grant funding worth more than £1million to three listed buildings in London to aid their repair. All three are currently on the Heritage at Risk Register.

- £431,804 will kickstart the spire repair project at St Andrew's Church, Thornhill Square, Islington.
- £428,384 will pay for the installation of structural support at **St Richard's Church, Ham, Richmond** to safeguard the post-war building's roof until further essential repairs can be carried out.
- £172,274 is going to the Sunday School at Union Chapel, Islington to complete repairs and reopen the space for community use.

**Tom Foxall, Regional Director at Historic England, said:** "These three special buildings are not only beautiful historic places in need of urgent funding for repairs, but they are all essential to their local communities as important places to meet, bond, worship in and enjoy. We're proud to step in to help ensure people can continue to benefit from these magnificent spaces and take pride in the remarkable heritage on their doorstep."

"Working in partnership with The National Lottery Heritage Fund and other generous supporters means our money can go further and essential repairs are completed sooner."

**Stuart McLeod, Director of England - London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said:** "London's historic churches sit at the heart of our communities, shaping the places where people come together and share in their local heritage. By working in close partnership with Historic England, we're able to maximise the impact of National Lottery investment and ensure that these muchloved buildings receive the urgent care they need. Together, we're not only safeguarding remarkable heritage but helping these historic places of worship to continue to serve as vibrant, welcoming spaces for everyone, securing their future for generations to come."

## **[St Richard's Church, Ham, Richmond](#) – Grade II listed**

The Church of St Richard, Ham, was designed by post-war Modernist architect Ralph Covell, who was known for his innovative designs including over twenty churches in the Diocese of Southwark. St Richard's was listed in 2024 on account of its innovative 1960s architecture, superb 'dalle de verre' window glass, and Star of David-shaped plan, which is thought to be unique.

However, its complex and striking hyperbolic paraboloid roof structure has failed and the building needs urgent structural support. Part of the roof is already supported by scaffolding, but the church has had to be closed until further propping is put in place.

Historic England's grant of £428,384 will enable the installation of this additional internal propping to

support the roof, alongside the construction of a large canopy to protect the building from any further water damage until full repairs can be carried out.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund has awarded a grant of £248,000 to prepare plans for comprehensive repairs cost £3million, expected to begin in 2027.

**Simon Coupland, Vicar at St Richard's Ham, said:** "We love our iconic 1960s church but desperately need to keep the rain out and repair the damage it's caused, so we're incredibly grateful to Historic England for their generous grant. This will prevent further deterioration and let the building dry out, ready for the restoration work planned for 2027/8. It also keeps the church open for the community until that work takes place."



# Architecture:WK announces “The Precinct” - a visionary mixed-use project on a former police station site in Teddington

From Architecture:WK

Teddington architects Architecture:WK (AWK) - currently shortlisted for a RIBA London Awards for their work on Park Lane Stables RDA - have announced the launch of a visionary plan for the former Police Station site at the intersection of Park Lane and Park Road in Teddington. The proposed design has the working title of “The Precinct” and envisages fully maximising the potential of this brownfield site to offer a local independent outdoor cinema & associated bar, a community cafe, 21 proposed affordable, Self-Build or Self-Finish units/homes and a new health clinic with 5 consultation rooms.

“The Precinct” is the latest proposal of AWK’s pro-bono Social Initiative Projects. These are mostly self-generated projects with no client or agenda and aim to positively contribute to the locality and provide socially useful discussion for community decisions. Recent SIP projects have included the Strawberry Hill Village proposal and the Teddington Cinema. The latter project was extremely well received locally and nationally and was featured in the town’s winning write up in The Times’ Best Places To Live In London in 2021.



The new mixed-used proposal for The Precinct is AWK’s most ambitious to date: It is known that the nearby Park Lane NHS Surgery is looking for overspill accommodation and the new clinic with five consultation rooms forms an important part of the proposal. The planned new homes include 12 flats above the **Copper Bar** and **the Beat Cafe**. Some have balconies and all have access to a retained open space to the north of the site and the new shared ‘street’ between the buildings. A further 9 smaller Courtyard flats are to the west of the site, a mixture of 1 & 2 bedrooms, and include courtyard gardens and roof terraces, all integrating biophilic design (meaning integrated greening of the buildings and spaces) and planting throughout the scheme.

Externally, the proposal is a contextual brick and rusted warm steel development with balconies and terraces to most of the flats. The idea is to make greening each terrace a part of owning the units, to encourage the development to be as ‘lush’ as possible. The internal street will convey a sense of community and cosiness and the outdoor cinema accommodates seating as well as a small stage for impromptu spoken word recitals.

AWK’s vision is that the site can be added to the Community Land Trust for the residential part – with the potential for a new Teddington CLT - and a specialist cinema investor for the boutique cinema. The site could be offered under a Self-Build proposal with a mix of younger and older residents ( 25-45 year olds and over 65 year olds ) having primary access to genuinely affordable homes in the heart of Teddington, allowing for a generational mix with opportunities to interact via the on-site co-working cafe, cinema and bar in addition to the spill-over clinic for Park Road Surgery.

Sam Kamleh, Director at Architecture:WK says: *“This brownfield site is in an important area where there is demand for affordable housing as well as alternative social venues for interaction. It is critical that any development here provides the maximum value for our community. Our multiple use proposal addresses that, offering an innovative housing solution together with valuable new community assets. The Self-Build proposal, where owners could potentially buy off-plan and fit out their units would also reduce the risk for any developer, including a CLT.”*

Sam continues: *“I can see a mixture of young and older homeowners forging a fantastic and collaborative new community here in Teddington, with the scheme addressing the issues of isolation and loneliness facing “downsizers”, and that of affordability facing young people in the area. We all know what a wonderful site this is - with easy access to public transport and our fantastic local amenities for young and old alike. It could be very special.”*

Full details of “The Precinct” proposal are due to be released in the next month and will be posted on AWK’s website ([architecturewkw.com](http://architecturewkw.com)) and their social media platforms ([Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/architecturewkw)).

# Care that connects us all: celebrating 40 years of Princess Alice Hospice

From Princess Alice Hospice

Over the past year, Princess Alice Hospice has been marking 40 years of delivering compassionate care to local people, through a series of events and fundraising activities. Last week, staff and volunteers heard more about the Hospice's plans for the coming years, which involve extending its reach to more local people; evolving its role to work more closely with the wider healthcare system, and engaging with communities to ensure care is local, inclusive and shaped by real life experience. Celebrations culminated with a Moment of Unity for staff and volunteers at 3.30pm on Friday 20 March, to commemorate the exact time in 1986 the Hospice building was opened by HRH The Queen Mother.



Ahead of a tree planting on Friday 20 March, Princess Alice Hospice Chair, Sally Harris, and Nigel Seymour, CEO, spoke of their pride in being joined by founding trustee, Peter Munday, his former Vice Chair, Roger Wyatt, and Honorary President, Jane Formby MBE. Afterwards, Peter spoke about how the idea for a local Hospice had been born, before passing to Monica Harding MP, who spoke about what the charity means to her, as a former trustee and now as the Hospice's local MP.

After the tree planting, guests moved back inside to share stories and reminisce over tea and a beautifully themed cake, which had been made by Jo Lambert, a community nurse at the Hospice.

**Nigel Seymour, Chief Executive of Princess Alice Hospice, said:**  
*'Princess Alice Hospice began as a community response charity over 40 years ago. Today, the need remains urgent and we have a huge responsibility to reach as many local people as we can. Our work is only made possible by over 1,400 volunteers who support us in over 80 different roles. Each year, we receive just 20% of the £12.3m it costs to deliver our free care from NHS funding. For the rest, we rely on the amazing generosity of our wonderful community, full of people who continue to fundraise and support us so brilliantly. I'd like to thank every single person, past and present, who has contributed to the success of the Hospice, for everything that it has been and all it will continue to be, now and in the future.'*



# Brentford v Everton

By Ron Brand

Sitting 7th and 8th in the Premiership both clubs on 46 Points an interesting contest for us to anticipate?

Brentford has Home advantage? The BEES Fans are passionate about their team so let us see if that support provides the edge and victory?

March 2026 has presented an interesting picture for the BEES, 3 Games 3 Points. It would be easy to conclude a disappointing month!

Let us dig deeper?

Two of the games were away, Bournemouth always a tricky place to visit, so a point and 0-0 a good result?

Wolves probably already down with only 17 points and 3 wins all season, should we have done better than 2-2? Two goals at Molineux should have won the game. I would look at the defence in that game.

Having said that, Wolves had defeated Liverpool 2-1 earlier in the month? Once again, we see!

There are no easy games in the Premier!

The third game away to Leeds United and another 0-0. Fundamentally a good result the Defence did their job. The Brentford Attack has scored 46 goals this season, trouble is the Defence have conceded 42.

So, is this your answer?

Then again: Liverpool have also let in 42 goals so far this season!

Fundamentally I think the first half of the 25/26 Season has been a success, particularly when we remember the Close Season activity and in my opinion Relegation a serious threat

Keith Andrews has stepped up and managed the situation Extra-Ordinarily well. Like a Seasoned Pro.

Keith presents himself so well in the Press Conferences and I am sure carries that Confidence and Authority over to his Team Talks.

Could he win Coach of the Year?



# Rugby Made Accessible for All Through Harlequins Access Day

From Harlequins

Harlequins is continuing to break down barriers in sport through its annual Access Day at The Stoop – a matchday dedicated to ensuring rugby is accessible, welcoming and enjoyable for disabled supporters. First launched in 2023, the initiative was created to offer a dedicated Harlequins matchday to welcome disabled people and their communities to attend a live sporting event, delivering a range of important initiatives to improve accessibility and to educate all visitors to The Stoop. It has quickly become one of the most meaningful fixtures in the club's calendar.

Recently hosted during a Premiership Women's Rugby home match, Access Day combined elite sport with enhanced accessibility provisions. Through a combination of calming sensory spaces and audio descriptive commentary, a mobile accessible toilet delivered by Mobiloo, and British Sign Language interpretation throughout the game, more people were able to experience the excitement of live sport.

This focus on inclusion mirrors the wider movement across rugby. Throughout this weekend 27–29 March, Round 12 of the Gallagher PREM and Round 16 of the PWR will see PREM Rugby, Premiership

Women's Rugby and their clubs unite for the first time to celebrate inclusivity across the game. Using the platform of elite competition, outdated stereotypes will be challenged and one clear message will be made: everyone is welcome, and anyone can play.

Themed 'This Is Belonging', the weekend will use every game, every stand and every platform to showcase that rugby is a place for all - no matter who you are or your background. Across clubs, pitches and communities, both leagues will spotlight the welcoming environment and the powerful role rugby plays in bringing people together.



This is Belonging is about pride and progress - ensuring existing fans and players feel proud to be part of the rugby family, while opening the door wider to welcome new audiences who want to see themselves represented in the game.

Across the country, PREM and PWR clubs and their foundations are deeply embedded in their communities, delivering programmes that strengthen social connection, increase participation across all ages and abilities, and support physical and mental wellbeing long after the final whistle.

The Harlequins Access Day is a leading example of how sport can be truly inclusive - a stepping stone for disabled supporters to experience live sport in a welcoming and supported environment. Now in its fourth season, it has become a highly regarded matchday, with this year seeing upwards of 1,700 people in the stands.

This year's event saw Harlequins Women take on Exeter Chiefs in an inspiring PWR clash. The club also collaborated with Mencap Kingston - a branch of the UK charity that supports people with learning disabilities in Kingston upon Thames. Learners from Mencap Kingston undertook volunteering opportunities on the day, including roles such as selling the Harlequins Season 3 Trading Cards and greeting members of the public as they arrived. The Chobham Chargers - a mixed ability team - also provided the Guard of Honour at kick-off and played touch on the pitch at half time.

One Access Day attendee commented: *"We brought along our autistic son for his first match and hugely appreciated the support on offer. We spent the first half in the stand and when our son began to get a bit overwhelmed by the noise, we moved to the quiet room for the second half which allowed him to calm down, reboot and then continue to enjoy the rest of the match from inside the room. Without this, we would have probably had to leave at half time."*

Harlequins CEO, Laurie Dalrymple said: *"Access Day is about making live sport accessible and enjoyable for all, while simultaneously educating and raising awareness across our community. The feedback has been fantastic, and each year we build on these initiatives to improve accessibility not just for Access Day, but across the entire season."*

Ultimately, the club's ambition is to embed these initiatives across many more fixtures, enhancing accessibility across the season at The Stoop. The Club continue to undertake work to refine and introduce new initiatives, in consultation with our supporters, to tackle barriers that the disabled community face and to make every visitor feel welcome so that they can fully enjoy the Harlequins experience.

As rugby unites under the 'This Is Belonging' banner, initiatives like the Harlequins Access Day show what inclusion looks like in practice: creating safe, supportive spaces, connecting communities, and demonstrating that rugby is more than a game - it is a family, and a place where everyone belongs.

#ThisIsBelonging



# Donate

***A small donation will help to keep the Tribune online***

CLICK [HERE](#) for a one-off donation

or

CLICK [HERE](#) for a monthly donation

The Tribune is published weekly by members of our community who stepped up at the time when some local newspapers closed or changed style and content. Local community journalists and contributors living in our Borough play an important role in producing the Tribune but like any newspaper the Tribune has essential fixed costs.

Supporting the Tribune with a small donation will help you to keep local news and views alive; support is very much appreciated.

*We would like to say "Thank You" to all those who support the Twickenham & Richmond Tribune; your support is very much appreciated.*

## Thousands read The Twickenham & Richmond Tribune

If you are reading this you could be advertising your business with The Twickenham & Richmond Tribune. Community rates are available

Contact: [advertise@TwickenhamTribune.com](mailto:advertise@TwickenhamTribune.com)

View ad details at [www.TwickenhamTribune.com/advertise](http://www.TwickenhamTribune.com/advertise)

### Contact

[contact@TwickenhamTribune.com](mailto:contact@TwickenhamTribune.com)

[letters@TwickenhamTribune.com](mailto:letters@TwickenhamTribune.com)

[advertise@TwickenhamTribune.com](mailto:advertise@TwickenhamTribune.com)



### Published by:

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune (in association with World InfoZone Limited)  
Registered in England & Wales  
Reg No 10549345

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

©Twickenham & Richmond Tribune. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be used or reproduced without the permission of Twickenham & Richmond Tribune. While we take reasonable efforts, this online newspaper cannot be held responsible for the accuracy or reliability of information. The views and opinions in these pages do not necessarily represent those of The Twickenham & Richmond Tribune.

[Terms & Conditions](#)