

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



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TickerTape - News in Brief

Twickenham Green Highway Maintenance Works

Carriageway resurfacing works will take place by the Green between Vicarage Road and First Cross Road.

The works will take place **Tuesday 19th May to Thursday 21st May**, between **8pm and 5am**. During the works the road will be completely closed.

South Western Railway

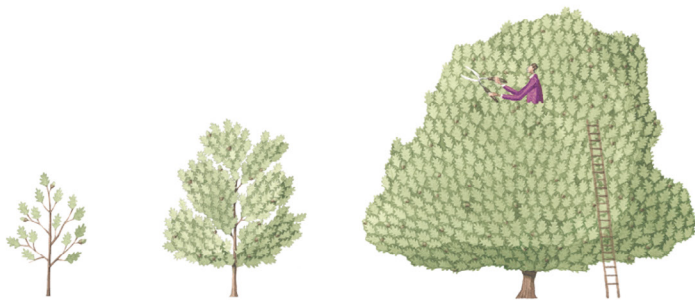
Altered train services and buses replace trains between Clapham Junction and Barnes **Saturday 9 May**. The lines between **Clapham Junction and Barnes** will be **closed all day** due to maintenance work.

Due to the diverted services, some services via **Wimbledon** will be **revised**.

- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will depart **London Waterloo earlier** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham**. These services will call additionally at **Kingston and Strawberry Hill**.
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised**. These services will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham via Kingston** calling at all stations.
- **London Waterloo to Weybridge via Staines** services will be **revised** and will start from **Barnes**.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will be **revised** and will run between **Barnes and Kingston via Richmond only**.
- **Buses** will run between **Clapham Junction and Barnes**.

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the Barnes area **Sunday 10 May**. The lines in the **Barnes** area will be **closed all day** due to maintenance work.

- **London Waterloo to Reading** services will depart **London Waterloo earlier** and will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham**. These services will call additionally at **Wimbledon, Kingston and Strawberry Hill**.
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised**.
An **hourly** service will be diverted between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham via Kingston** calling at all stations.
An **hourly** service will start from **Richmond** calling at all stations.
- **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Wimbledon** services will be **revised** and will run between **Richmond and Kingston only**.
- **London Waterloo to Woking via Staines** services will start from **Kew Bridge**.
- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.
- **London Waterloo/Wimbledon to Guildford via Cobham** services will be **revised**. These services will start from **Wimbledon all day**.
- **Buses** will run between **Clapham Junction and Twickenham via Richmond**.
- **Buses** will run between **Clapham Junction and Kew Bridge**.



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The Tree Agency

TwickerSeal and his chums popped down to Twickenham Green to join all the people enjoying the good weather and watch a bit of cricket.

But who did they bump into? None other than Sir David Attenborough!!

TwickerSeal dashed across to the nearby Tribune HQ where, luckily, he just happened to have a cake!

Happy birthday Sir David



The Local Picture Postcard Page - Part 325

South Western Pub in Whitton Road

By Alan Winter

The idea behind this column when we started it about 10 years ago was to show and discuss scenes from around the borough that had all appeared on postcards in the early 20th century. Particularly buildings and areas that had changed significantly or even disappeared.

This is the first time I have moved away from that by showing a building that was only just over the borough border in Hounslow but as it could clearly be seen while standing in LBRUT I thought you might let me get away with it!

So here is a pub that I'm sure many of us visited before it finally shut down in 2009 to become yet another block of flats.



The South Western was situated at 156-158 Whitton Road TW3. It has been hard to discover too much about its early days but we know it was trading in 1905 as we have found a postcard of it posted in that year.

In the early 2000's it was owned by Enterprise Inns and was attracting people with its 2 pool tables, a juke box and several fruit machines.

By 2008 it had closed and reopened as a very short-lived venture called the Blue Ginger Bar which also hosted an Indian Restaurant.

The UK seems full of Indian Restaurants that have taken over from old pubs. They must learn that it rarely works and many of them shut down again before reaching the end of their first year's trading.

I'm not sure that I would rush out to have a pint at a new venture called the Blue Ginger Bar either. Oh well! Fortunately we still have many 'proper' pubs in the area that will be with us for a long time yet!



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Richmond's One-Party Council

By Michael Jones



Richmond upon Thames has delivered a result that would delight any political party but should give any serious democrat pause. The Liberal Democrats won all 54 seats on Richmond Council. Their borough-wide vote share was 51.46 per cent, on a turnout of 50.77 per cent. The Conservatives came second with 17.91 per cent, the Greens third with 16.11 per cent, Reform UK fourth with 9.95 per cent, Labour took 4.51 per cent, and independents less than one per cent.

In votes, Richmond remains a plural borough. In seats, it is now a one-party council.

That is the central fact of the election. The Liberal Democrats have not merely won control. They have removed every formal opposition voice from the chamber. For the party, it is an exceptional achievement. Council leader Gareth Roberts called the result “beyond our wildest dreams” and “absolutely amazing”. He promised to govern “for every Richmond resident, not just those who voted for us”. He also moved quickly to address the obvious concern, saying: “We will not allow 54 seats to become a one-party state.” That was a necessary assurance. It was also a revealing one. When a council leader has to promise that a clean sweep will not become a one-party state, he is acknowledging the problem created by the scale of his own victory.

The difficulty is not that the Liberal Democrats intend to govern badly. It is that good intentions are not a substitute for opposition. Scrutiny does not work best when it is offered by permission from the ruling group. Dissent generated from inside a dominant party is not the same as challenge from elected opponents with their own mandate.

There is also a point of historical accuracy. Cllr Roberts’ claim that this has never happened before in Richmond is wrong. In 1968, the Conservatives won all 54 seats on Richmond upon Thames Council, with 59.24 per cent of the vote. Labour, the Liberals, Residents, Communists and Independents won none. So the 2026 result is not unprecedented. It is still highly unusual. Richmond has joined that small category of boroughs where the electoral map, for a time, stops reflecting the range of opinion among voters.

The Liberal Democrats will call this a mandate. In one sense, they are right. Voters have given them complete control. But complete control also removes the usual excuses. A party with every seat cannot complain that the opposition blocked its plans, distorted its message, or slowed its programme. It owns the council’s decisions, its priorities, its failures and its delays.

That is why this result matters beyond party celebration. Richmond has handed one party the chamber, the agenda and the complaints book. The test now is not whether the Liberal Democrats can win. They have answered that emphatically. The test is whether they can govern with restraint when the voters have removed the people whose job it would normally be to insist on it.

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Is The Museum of Richmond Being Squeezed by the Council's £30 Million Cuts Programme?

By James Knight



Some public buildings cannot be understood merely by looking at their running costs. Richmond Old Town Hall is one of them. It is not just a piece of council-owned real estate in a valuable riverside location. It is part of the civic furniture of the borough, a building whose history is bound up with Richmond's own development as a municipal town.

That is why the future of the Museum of Richmond now deserves far closer attention than it has received so far.

A Building with Richmond Written into Its Stones

The Old Town Hall was born out of an act of civic generosity. In 1888, Sir John Whittaker Ellis bought the site of the Castle Hotel and gave it to the Richmond Vestry for a new municipal building. The following year the contract was awarded to W.J. Ancell, and in 1890 Richmond became a borough, receiving its Charter of Incorporation. Whittaker Ellis became Richmond's first Mayor.

When the Town Hall opened on 10 June 1893, it was not a modest local office block. It was opened by the Duke of York, later George V, with Princess May, the future Queen Mary. It contained a Council Chamber, committee rooms, the Mayor's parlour, councillors' rooms and the offices needed to run a growing borough. It was the visible expression of Richmond's civic confidence.

That history matters because it explains why residents are right to feel protective of the building. Richmond Old Town Hall was never merely a property asset. It was created to serve the public life of the town.

From Bomb Damage To Civic Renewal

The building's story has not been one of easy preservation. In November 1940, during one of the worst air raids of the Second World War, the Town Hall suffered severe fire-bomb damage. Its roof and top floor were destroyed and the Council Chamber was gutted. After the war it was refurbished and modified, before being formally reopened by Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother in December 1952.

Then came the great municipal change of 1965, when Richmond was incorporated with Barnes and Twickenham to form the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames. York House became the main municipal building, and the Old Town Hall was used as office space. But the building did not lose its civic purpose. In the 1980s, as part of the Richmond riverside redevelopment between Water Lane and Richmond Bridge, designed by Quinlan Terry, the Town Hall was modified and refurbished. It became the home of the Reference Library, the Local Studies Collection, the Tourist and Community Information Centre and the Museum of Richmond.

That was not accidental. It was a decision to root public culture, local memory and community access in the very building that had once embodied Richmond's municipal identity. In 1988, Queen Elizabeth II opened the Riverside Development and the Museum of Richmond.

Against that background, any reduction in the Museum's place in the Town Hall would not be a routine property decision. It would cut against the very settlement that made the modern riverside development acceptable as a civic project.

A Transformation Programme with Real Consequences

The Council's "transformation" programme may sound like another piece of municipal management jargon. In reality, it sits against a much harder financial background. Richmond Council says it must find around £30 million of savings after changes to local government funding, including the Fairer Funding 2.0 review and the reduction of its main Government grant. Many local critics believe the Council accepted that outcome too readily, particularly withdrawing its threat of judicial review too soon.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of that argument, one thing is clear. When a council is hunting for savings on that scale, buildings stop being treated as civic institutions and start being treated as assets.

That is where the danger lies.

A Museum Already Being Squeezed

The Museum of Richmond occupies space in the Old Town Hall on Whittaker Avenue. Its own annual report describes its role as preserving, interpreting and communicating Richmond's past "for the public's benefit, education and enjoyment". It is not a decorative extra. It supports exhibitions, school visits, family workshops, local heritage work and community outreach. It is one of the institutions through which Richmond remembers itself.

Yet the Museum appears to be facing a slow squeeze. Correspondence now circulating locally says the Council is reducing its annual funding over three years from £80,000 to £60,000, while charging £25,000 a year in rent for its occupation of the second floor of the Town Hall, plus a further £2,000 for building security and other property costs.

The Museum's own accounts confirm how dependent the institution is on Council support. They record an £80,000 grant from the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, used to fund rent and associated occupation costs for the Old Town Hall, as well as salary costs.

This may all be defensible in the narrow language of public-sector accounting. The Council gives money with one hand, then recovers some of it through rent and charges with the other. A spreadsheet can make that look orderly. But residents are entitled to ask what the practical effect will be. If the grant falls, costs remain, and the building is increasingly viewed through the lens of income generation, the Museum's position becomes less secure.

That is not eviction by announcement. It is attrition by budget line.

The Wider Threat to Community Use

The wider concern is not confined to the Museum alone. Much of the ground floor of Richmond Town Hall has already been let out as a restaurant. The Council has also long had plans to move the Reference Library out of the building, along with the local archives. That is particularly striking given the building's post-1980s civic role. The Council's own timeline records that the Town Hall became the home of the Reference Library, Local Studies Collection and Museum of Richmond after the 1985 riverside redevelopment, while an attic extension was later built in 2000 to provide an air-conditioned store for the Local Studies Collection.

In other words, these uses were not casual afterthoughts. They were deliberately embedded in the building. The archive and local studies functions were important enough to be given specialist accommodation. The Museum formed part of a civic settlement important enough to be opened by Queen Elizabeth II. Now, with the authority under pressure to close a £30 million gap, the fear is that community use of the Town Hall will be reduced still further, while commercial or income-generating activity takes its place.

This would mark a profound change in the character of the building. A Town Hall should not be treated as though it were merely a difficult property problem. It carries public meaning. It belongs, in the broadest sense, to the people who live around it. Its value cannot be measured solely by the rent it commands or the savings it produces.

The Question after 2028

The Museum's current lease reportedly runs until 2028. The Council may say that it remains supportive of the institution for the foreseeable future. But "foreseeable future" is not a guarantee. It is a phrase that often appears when a firm commitment is being avoided.

Richmond residents therefore deserve straight answers. Will the Museum remain in the Town Hall beyond 2028? Will it keep its present space? Will the Council continue to reduce its grant? Are further rent or property charges being considered? What is the future of the Reference Library and the local archives? What precisely does the transformation programme mean for community access to the building?

These questions should not be left to rumour, newsletters or forwarded emails. If the Council has no intention of weakening the Museum, it should say so clearly. If it is considering changes to the use of the Town Hall, it should publish them openly and invite proper public scrutiny before decisions are effectively made.

A Civic Loss That Would Be Hard To Reverse

There is no denying that councils face financial pressures. Nor is it unreasonable for a local authority to examine how its estate is used. But there must be a distinction between sensible stewardship and the quiet hollowing-out of civic space. Once public rooms become commercial lets, once archives are moved, once libraries are displaced, and once museums are reduced to inconvenient tenants, the loss is not easily reversed.

Richmond is rightly proud of its history. It markets that history, celebrates it, and benefits from the identity it creates. But pride in history is cheap if the institutions that preserve it are slowly weakened in the name of transformation.

The Museum of Richmond should not have to fight for survival inside the very Town Hall where it belongs.

Meet Richmond Park's Shire horses

From The Royal Parks

There are just 2,000 Shire horses left in the world – and ten of them live in Richmond Park. You'll see them out and about, carrying out conservation work and giving carriage rides. We'll help you put the names to the faces!

The gentle giants of Richmond Park

The Royal Parks Shire Horses are managed by [Operation Centaur](#), a leading equine organisation, that specialises in heavy horses and equine therapy in the heart of London. Stabled at [Richmond Park](#) and Home Park a team of nine English Shires carry out land management throughout London's green spaces, including carriage rides for the public.

Shire horses weigh over a tonne and are rarer than the giant panda. They are Britain's largest native breed of horse, first appearing in Britain in the 18th Century.

How do they help?

In the spring two Shires will be mowing the grass road-side verges which helps ensure drivers can see any deer that may want to cross the road, whilst also encouraging low growing wildflowers. Come the summer months two sets of Shires start rolling the emerging bracken, reducing its vigour and growth. This helps protect the park's rare acid grassland habitats, allowing grasses and wildflowers to grow alongside the bracken.

During the cold winter months the shires continue to help the park's acid grasslands, harrowing areas of bracken to break up the dense thatch (dead stems and leaves) so that other plants can grow. The Shires undertake these tasks with a very light touch, avoiding the need to use heavy vehicles which can otherwise damage habitats, and are also very sensitive and alert to wildlife.

In addition to their typical seasonal work the Shires help with logging, haymaking and [volunteer](#) tasks. The Shires also help maintain the wildflower meadows in [Hyde Park](#) and [Kensington Gardens](#), working alongside volunteer teams.

In reward for their hard work, which helps them keep in good mental and physical condition, the horses get two breakfasts, one lunch, one dinner and one bale of hay per day. Plus apples and carrots!

But **please don't feed them** if you meet. It can seriously endanger their wellbeing.

Tom and Monty

Tom is our oldest horse. At eighteen years of age, he is the grandad of the group - also the tallest horse at the yard standing a whopping 19 hands tall. Tom is partnered with Monty, our second biggest horse, who is the epitome of an English Shire horse. Nicknamed 'the gentle giants,' Shire horses have the most gorgeous personality with the kindest soul imaginable, which Monty embodies magnificently. The two of them have built such a loving bond, and have become inseparable over the years. Both are a dark bay colour with four white socks, Monty has a large white blaze down his face but Tom only has a thin white stripe.



Joey

Joey is our second oldest horse. Over the years Joey has become the 'go to horse', being able to turn his hand (or hoof) to anything. With a calm unfazed demeanour, Joey is unfussed in any situation, taking it all in his stride. Now in his senior years Joey has become our go to horse for petting, meets and greets, as well as educational talks. Although our smallest horse, it is undeniable that Joey has the biggest heart.



William and Henry

William and Henry are the park's key agriculture horses, at twelve years of age they are both in the prime of their lives. Having been bought from a sanctuary that unfortunately closed down, the two of them did not have the best start in life, but when they are in harness working in the park you can see their true character come through. They both relish the opportunity to express themselves by showing how strong they are. William is the most powerful horse in the herd and has become the leader of the group. Henry, on the other hand, has had to overcome many challenges in life, but takes it all in his stride, becoming a key member of the team and loved by all.



Arthur and Lois

Arthur and Louis are one of two sets of brothers in the team, and at eight and four respectively they are still learning their trade. They have very cheeky personalities, love play time in the field, adore endless attention and constant grooming. Arthur loves his work in the park and is always very keen to get going, standing 18.5 hands tall he is a giant of a horse with immense strength. Arthur is an incredibly inquisitive horse, who loves trying new challenges, and getting involved. Louis takes after his big brother in many ways, always pushing his way into the herd, with the drive to learn new skills. Louis has only just started his working career, but has taken to it all like a duck to water, a true testament to his character. They are both a gorgeous chocolate brown, with long white socks and strong white markings on their face, both of whom would not look out of place with the iconic Budweiser Horses.



George and Charlie

Lastly we have our very own George and Charlie. They are our second set of brothers, but unlike Arthur and Louis, George and Charlie are complete opposites. George is the first Shire horse born in London for over a hundred years (born 2020) and is known as the lock-down baby. At six years old he still sees himself as the baby of the group, he loves nothing more than to be completely pampered by his care-givers. George is an incredibly friendly horse that adores hot baths, constant grooming, with endless apples and carrots. Not only a very friendly horse, he is a highly adept worker who can take on all challenges. Charlie is our youngest horse in the herd, born summer of 2023, and is already taller than his big brother. Shire horses don't stop growing until they are seven years of age. Charlie is expected to reach a great height when fully matured, coupled with his strong personality, he will make an excellent working horse. He began his training during winter 2025 and has shown immense promise - his positive attitude and prowess are all highly encouraging signs. George and Charlie, our home bred horses, have a special place in the Shire community as they are both grey, a very rare colour for the breed. Grey horses begin their life almost black and over time they lighten, ending up a brilliant white when reaching full maturity.



Training the shires of Richmond Park

As with all working horses, the Shires need a purpose – they enjoy a challenge, and being put to work, so they don't do so well as a pet.

First, the horses build a relationship with us and each other, and learn to trust. Then they get used to the equipment. Only then do we teach them how to pull. It's amazing how fast they cotton on and are ready to join an experienced horse with some equipment.

We usually start the horses off with a harrow, as this is light and doesn't require a vehicle behind them. Once they know what they're doing and settle into that work, we move to grass cutting and carriage driving before the bracken rolling in the summer.

Along with the free-roaming herds of deer, the Shires are probably some of the best known and loved sights in Richmond Park.



The Greens Discover the Price of Partnership

By James Knight



The most brutal story of Richmond's local elections was not the Liberal Democrat victory itself, but the disappearance of everyone else.

The Greens, who had once enjoyed a foothold in the borough, were ejected entirely. Borough-wide, they still polled 16.11 per cent, only a little behind the Conservatives, but converted that support into no seats at all. In South Twickenham, where their vote was particularly strong, Richard Bennett reached 10.54 per cent, with Gareth Jones on 8.33 per cent and Ross Monaghan on 7.21 per cent, yet all three Liberal Democrats were elected comfortably.

In Ham, Petersham and Richmond Riverside, the Greens again looked numerically serious but politically stranded. Their candidates polled 9.99, 9.03 and 8.95 per cent, yet the Liberal Democrats still took all three seats. The pattern was not irrelevance. It was inefficiency and perhaps miscalculation.

There was a certain cold comedy in the reaction. A Social Liberal Forum post depicted the Greens being discarded like a toy in Toy Story, with the captioned sentiment: "I don't want to play with you anymore." It was a revealingly unsentimental epitaph for the old progressive partnership, under which Liberal Democrats and Greens had previously managed rivalry through cooperation and selective non-competition.

The lesson is not difficult to read. Cooperation with a larger political machine can look principled when both sides benefit. It can look rather different when one side no longer needs the arrangement.

The Liberal Democrats also appear to have absorbed much of the environmental language that once gave the Greens their distinctive claim. Their campaign messaging promised a carbon-neutral council by 2030, a community energy cooperative, air quality leadership and "a greener Richmond Borough". Green politics, in this account, did not need Green councillors. It had been safely incorporated into the Lib Dem brand.

This is the paradox for smaller progressive parties in places like Richmond. They may supply the vocabulary, sharpen the agenda, and make certain themes unavoidable. Yet once those themes are adopted by the dominant local party, the original authors can find themselves thanked, copied, and removed.

The Greens lost every seat not because the borough had ceased to care about environmentalism, but perhaps because the Liberal Democrats had made environmentalism part of their own governing costume. In Richmond, the voters did not reject green rhetoric. They merely declined to hire the Greens to deliver it.

It is a hard lesson, but not an obscure one. In local politics, being useful to a larger party is not the same thing as being safe from it.

Local sisters raise over £8,000 at the London Marathon

From Crossroads Care Richmond and Kingston upon Thames

Sisters Joanna and Ella Tilley ran the London Marathon last weekend, raising more than £8,000 for Crossroads Care Richmond and Kingston upon Thames in memory of their late father.

The pair took on the gruelling 26.2-mile challenge on Sunday last week as a tribute to their beloved dad Clive Tilley, who died last year aged 57 after living with pulmonary fibrosis. As Clive's condition worsened, the family relied on vital support from Crossroads Care.



Inspired by their father - himself a passionate runner who completed the London Marathon in 2008 and served as Director of Old Deer Park Parkrun - the sisters dedicated months of training to prepare for the event.

Reflecting on the day, Ella said: *"I'm super proud of our fundraising and so delighted that we managed to have an incredible marathon day. Thank you to everyone who donated. We are so grateful for everyone's kindness!"*

Several members of the Crossroads staff team went along to cheer the sisters on (very loudly and enthusiastically!) from the sidelines.

Nicola Wilson, Crossroads Operations Manager, who was there, said: *"Huge congratulations to Joanna and Ella. We're all so very proud and in awe of them both. What an incredible achievement this is and what an amazing atmosphere it was!"*

It's not too late to show your support - every contribution makes a difference to the unpaid carers that Crossroads supports.

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The Victory That Now Has to Govern

By James Knight



Landslides have a habit of sounding modest on the morning after.

The official Liberal Democrat message after winning every seat on Richmond Council spoke, as such messages always do, of humility, trust, volunteers, service and delivery. It was the language of a party careful not to look triumphalist at precisely the moment when triumphalism would have been most understandable. Yet beneath the familiar phrases lay something more politically revealing: the confidence of a party that now regards Richmond not as a battleground, but as a proof of concept.

When Gratitude Becomes Certainty

Cllr Margaret Dane, newly re-elected in East Sheen, offered a less filtered version beneath a Richmond and Twickenham Times post. She argued that Richmond had been recognised for “Best Amenities”, “Best place to Live in London”, “Best Fiscally Responsible Council in London”, “Best schools in London”, and as “the Happiest place in the UK to live”, before adding that “some folks think ... this is a bad thing.” The comment attracted pushback, including complaints about council tax and the borough’s habit of believing its own publicity.

That exchange matters because landslides change the tone of politics. Before polling day, governing parties ask to be trusted. After a clean sweep, they are tempted to behave as though criticism has been settled by arithmetic. In Richmond, where civic self-congratulation is already one of the borough’s better-funded habits, that temptation may prove hard to resist.

The “Exemplary” Problem

Cllr Alexander Ehmann’s eve-of-poll message offered another useful test. He invited voters to think about services including “road resurfacing,” “bin collection,” “elderly care,” and “the education of your children,” before saying that, as a Liberal Democrat, he believed the party delivered these “to an exemplary standard.”

The phrase is politically dangerous because it is so complete. An “exemplary” council leaves little room for residents who see broken pavements, potholes, faded markings, or services that feel rather less than exemplary on the receiving end. Such residents are not refuting an aspiration. They are testing a boast.

The Wandsworth Complication

There is also a wider institutional complication. Richmond’s political monopoly sits alongside a shared-service relationship with Wandsworth, where Labour has lost control and the Conservatives have emerged as the largest party, with 29 seats to Labour’s 28 and one Independent. If Wandsworth becomes effectively Conservative-led, Richmond’s Lib Dem administration may find that some of the machinery beneath its one-party surface is linked to a borough moving in a rather different political direction.

This is where the result becomes more interesting than the victory photographs. Richmond’s Liberal Democrats have won total political control locally, but not total control of every structure on which the council depends. A shared-service arrangement that once looked like sensible administrative housekeeping may now become a place where different political instincts, particularly on spending, staffing and management discipline, rub against each other.

Control is not Immunity

The Romans had a phrase for moments like this: *sic transit gloria mundi*, thus passes worldly glory. It may be too early for decline, but not too early for perspective.

The Liberal Democrats have won by presenting themselves, in many wards, as competent local moderates, almost One Nation Conservatives in orange. The question now is whether they will govern as cautious stewards of a borough that dislikes ideological noise, or as a progressive monopoly emboldened by the absence of opposition.

That distinction matters. Richmond did not vote for a student union. It voted, in large part, for order, amenity, good schools, clean streets, manageable services and the comforting belief that local government can be kept both efficient and vaguely virtuous. The danger for the Liberal Democrats is that a party rewarded for moderation may mistake the scale of its majority for permission to indulge its instincts.

Victory has given them control. It has not given them immunity. And in a council chamber without an opposition, every cracked pavement, every delayed repair, every unexplained increase and every overconfident boast will have to do the work that opposition councillors no longer can.



Richmond Volunteer Fair

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Munira Wilson and the Social Media Half-Truth

By James Knight

The argument over banning under 16s from harmful social media has become one of those rare parliamentary debates that speaks directly to ordinary family life. Parents may not follow every stage of a Bill's progress through Lords amendments, Commons motions and late-night divisions. But they understand the problem. Childhood is now being shaped by platforms designed to hold attention, exploit vulnerabilities and keep children scrolling.



Munira Wilson ©House of Commons

At the centre of the dispute was the amendment advanced by Lord Nash, the former Conservative schools minister, during the passage of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill. His proposal sought to raise the age for access to harmful social media sites to 16, backed by stronger age assurance and action within 12 months. It was not, as critics sometimes imply, a crude ban on every useful online service. It was aimed at harmful platforms, features and functionalities, including those likely to encourage addictive behaviour, expose children to serious harm, manipulation, illegal content, loss of privacy or contact from strangers.

The Scale of the Problem

The evidence is difficult to dismiss. Ofcom figures cited by the Commons Library show that 95 per cent of 13- to 15-year-olds use social media, with 96 per cent of that age group having their own profile. Even among children aged three to five, 37 per cent use social media. Phone ownership rises from 19 per cent among three- to five-year-olds to 97 per cent among 13- to 15-year-olds. This is no longer simply teenage experimentation. It is the digital environment of childhood.

There are reasonable cautions. Some charities and academics warn that an outright ban could push children into less regulated spaces or remove sources of support for vulnerable young people. Ministers have therefore preferred consultation, including on minimum ages, addictive features, curfews, AI chatbots and age verification. A serious government should listen before it legislates.

But caution becomes harder to defend when it begins to look like delay.

Why the Nash Amendment Mattered

That is why the Lord Nash amendment mattered. It forced the issue. It gave parliamentary form to a concern many parents have felt privately for years: that they are being asked to manage, household by household, a problem created by some of the most powerful companies in the world.

By the Commons debate on 27 April, ministers had shifted from discretion to duty. The Government accepted that the Secretary of State “must”, not merely “may”, act after consultation. Ministers also said that, under any outcome, there would be age or functionality restrictions for children under 16. That was not the original Government position. It was a concession extracted by pressure.

Munira Wilson’s Version

This makes Munira Wilson’s local presentation of events all the more revealing. The Twickenham MP claimed that Liberal Democrat MPs had voted for faster action while Conservatives had “decided to go home”. It was a neat line for social media. It was not a fair account of the parliamentary record.

The reality is that the amendment originated in the Lords, was pressed repeatedly by Conservative peers led by Lord Nash, and helped force ministers into a stronger statutory commitment. Conservative MPs, including Laura Trott and Alicia Kearns, also pressed ministers to move further and faster.

There is a difference between voting against a final Government motion because one believes it is inadequate and implying that others were indifferent to children’s safety. The first is a legitimate parliamentary position. The second is a selective version of events because it ignores the Conservative amendment and the pressure that forced ministers to strengthen their position.

The Duty to be Straight with Parents

This points to a weakness in Wilson’s political style. She is often quick to occupy the moral high ground, particularly on children, education and welfare. Yet serious legislation is not a morality play in which Liberal Democrats are always the guardians and their opponents the negligent.

On this issue, Conservative pressure was instrumental in extracting a firmer Government commitment, while the Liberal Democrats sought to claim ownership of a campaign that Conservative peers had already forced into the centre of Parliament.

Parents deserve candour, not theatrical simplification. A law will not, by itself, restore childhood. But it can draw a boundary, strengthen the hand of families, and tell technology companies that childhood is not simply another market to be captured.

On this issue, the children of Twickenham need less performance politics and more fidelity to the record.



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Richmond & Twickenham Friends of the Earth Local election report 2026

From Richmond & Twickenham Friends of the Earth

The Richmond & Twickenham Friends of the Earth local election campaign 2026 involved our supporters writing to 224 candidates for election to Richmond Council across the 18 wards of London Borough of Richmond. We introduced our group as one of over 200 local environmental organisations affiliated to national Friends of the Earth. We asked the candidates seven questions which were suggested by different supporters and invited them to a showing of the People's Emergency Briefing film at the Exchange in Twickenham on 18th June.

The ease of contact and level of response from the different parties was variable. Many existing councillors mostly Lib Dem were standing again so their email addresses were publicly available. We pieced together a few other email addresses from publicity materials and social media and sent letters to postal addresses where these were given on the official notice of candidates on Richmond Council's website. Other candidates were written to at their party office in emails marked "For the attention of [candidate's name] – Please forward".

Three of the parties had no up to date website or social media that we could find letting voters know who their candidates were and what their manifestos said. Reform did not appear to have a local website or social media. Labour and Conservative parties barely mentioned that there was a local election and some of their social media pages were very out of date. The exception to this was the Conservative candidates in Barnes who had their own Facebook page "Barnes Ward" and their own email address but sadly did not respond to our emails.

A national website whocanivotefor.co.uk did not have many profiles of local candidates or contact details.

Response by party

Liberal Democrat candidates were the easiest to contact as many of them were sitting councillors, so we had email addresses for them. We also wrote to a number of new candidates either via post or via the office email address.

Green candidates included 2 councillors, and we also found a few email addresses via publicity materials and some postal addresses, but most were contacted via the Twickenham & Richmond Party office. These emails were forwarded by that office to individual candidates, and we received a number of replies from them.

Conservative candidates in the wards on the Twickenham side of the Borough were mostly contacted via the email addresses on the Twickenham Conservative Party website and Facebook page. These emails received a holding reply but also a bounce message so it is not clear how many were delivered and passed on to candidates. The only full reply received was from a candidate in Hampton who we were able to contact directly as he put out his own flyer with a separate email address on it.

Conservative candidates on the Richmond Park side of the Borough were also contacted mainly via their office email address which did not bounce but no replies were received. The only reply received was from a candidate who was contacted by post at her home address.

Labour candidates on the Twickenham side of the Borough were mainly contacted via their office address with some contacted by post. We received a message from the Party Secretary that a collective response on behalf of all 33 candidates would be sent, and this was received in due course.

Labour candidates on the Richmond Park side of the Borough were also mainly contacted via their office address. No replies were received.

Reform candidates could only be contacted via one email address on a flyer that came through the door in parts of the Borough. Emails didn't bounce but there were no responses at all at the time of writing a week before the election date.

The full report can be read on our website: <https://rtfoe.org.uk/campaigns/local-elections-2026/>



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(Members £4, children free)

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Richmond's LibDems win but nearly half of Richmond voters lose!

From the Supervote Project

The undemocratic First-past-the-post voting system effectively disenfranchised 48.5% of those who voted in Richmond upon Thames yesterday, leaving nearly half of Richmond voters with no representation on the Council and leaving the Council with no opposition to hold the LibDems to account.

These results are a disgrace. This was not what the voters of Richmond-upon-Thames had voted for.

The Liberal Democrats won a slim majority of votes so should rightfully have a slim majority of the seats on the Council, but those of other political persuasions should have had a voice as well.

According to the Council's own figures on their website, these were the voting figures:

	Con	Green	Labour	LibDem	Reform	Ind
Votes %	17.9%	16.1%	4.5%	51.5%	9.9%	<1%
Seats	0	0	0	54	0	0
Seats %	0%	0%	0%	100%	0%	0%

As the results of yesterday's elections across England emerge, it is clear that, while Richmond's results are the most undemocratic to be published to date, other councils' results show that our First-past-the-post voting system is not fit for purpose. It is high time we reformed our voting system so that seats won by the parties reflect the votes cast for them.

If Richmond residents had voted using the Single Transferable Voting system of proportional representation (the same voting system that is used in Northern Ireland and Scotland), it is calculated that the LibDems would have won 28 seats, the Conservatives would have won 10 seats, the Greens would have won 10 seats and Reform UK would have won 2 seats, with the 4 remaining seats being too close to call.

The Liberal Democrats are long-standing supporters of voting reform so should use what has happened in Richmond to highlight the fact that they have won far more seats than their support warranted and demand that the Government takes action. They could perhaps even offer up Richmond-upon-Thames for use in a pilot exercise for a fairer voting system before it is rolled out across the rest of England.

supervote.org.uk

Give your items a second life at this month's Twickenham Repair Café

From Twickenham Repair Café

The next Twickenham Repair Café will be open on Saturday 16 May, for the repair of household items.

The café does not charge for repairs, but asks for a donation based on what you think their time and expertise is worth. There's no need to book ahead, just drop in (only one item per person for repair).



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

Event details:

- **Date:** Saturday 16 May 2026
- **Time:** 10.30am to 1pm (last job accepted at 12.30pm, or earlier if very busy)
- **Location:** St Margaret's Church Hall, Twickenham, TW1 1RL

Find out more about the [Twickenham Repair Café](#).

Allotment open day at Short Lots, Kew

From Short Lots allotments

Short Lots allotments will be open to the public from 2 to 5pm on Sunday 17 May 2026.

This is a great opportunity to visit these beautiful riverside allotments, see what's growing, buy some locally-raised plants and grab a cake and refreshments!



It's Festival Season Soon

The end of May sees one of my favourite festivals: **Foodies**. This year it's at Syon Park again and runs from 23 to 25 May inclusive. Here's what you could be enjoying and/or eating your way through:

Marking over two decades as the UK's largest and longest-running touring food, drink and music festival, this special anniversary year brings together new attractions, headline

music acts, star chefs and bakers, alongside a strong showcase of local culinary and musical talent - all set within the stunning surroundings of Syon Park.

From live cooking demonstrations and artisan markets to hands-on activities and plenty of space to relax, Foodies Festival is designed to be enjoyed by everyone - including four-legged friends.

There's a line-up of **TV celebrity chefs** and **music stars**, including **Scouting For Girls**, Boyzone and Westlife supergroup **Boyzlife**, and Pop Idol star **Gareth Gates**, with the hit show '**Boyband in the Park**'.



There will be live cooking demonstrations from an extensive menu of top chefs. Featuring **MasterChef and Bake-Off champions, Great British Menu winners, judges and TV guest chefs, and highly-rated Michelin-starred and AA Rosette-awarded chefs.**

Star names cooking live include: MasterChef 2025 Champion **Harry Maguire** and finalists **Sophie Surgue** and **Claire Syrenne**, MasterChef champions **Dhruv Baker** and **Thomas Frake**, celebrity chef and TV personality **Atul Kochhar**, Great British Menu Champion of Champions, **Amber Francis**, Royal cake maker and author **Mich Turner MBE**, ITV's The Heat star, **Tom Lodge**, and Great British Bake Off 2025 stars **Hassan Islam** and **Jessika Trassel**.

Representing the best of London and surrounding regions, renowned chefs and bakers will also appear, including: TV regular and Chef Patron, **Kenny Atkinson**, from Michelin-starred House of Tides, MasterChef: The Professionals star and Chef Patron, **Elena Frattura**, from Rottura, and **Rakesh Ravindran Nair** and **Hart Nagaraj** from The Cinnamon Club.

Foodies Festival isn't just about the food – there's also a stellar music line-up that will have visitors dancing as they dine. Featuring festival favourites **Scouting for Girls** delivering their many top 40 hits, Boyzone and Westlife supergroup **Boyzlife**, with founding members **Keith Duffy** and **Brian McFadden** performing their vast catalogue of No 1's with a live band, plus Pop Idol star and heart-throb **Gareth Gates**, and his 'Boyband in the Park' show, covering the biggest boyband hits from the 90s and 00s.

Throughout each weekend, local and touring bands and artists will perform. Visitors will enjoy jam-packed schedules in the interactive live theatres. In the **Chefs Theatre**, celebrities will create their signature dishes and share new tips and tricks, cooking mouth-watering dishes and showing off the very best of locally sourced produce, whilst in the **Cake & Desserts Theatre**, patisserie chefs and star bakers whip up showstoppers and offer tempting sweet treats. For the hot-headed, Foodies' legendary chilli-eating competition expands, adding a new level of heat with the **Ultimate Hot Wings Challenge!**

Masterclasses in the **Drinks Theatre** include tutored sessions on Champagne, Beer, Cider, Cocktails, and Wine, featuring presentations from experts from ITV, BBC, and Channel 4.

Children too, will enjoy a packed itinerary with both educational and fun activities. Younger guests can enjoy the **Kids Cookery School** sessions, where they can prepare delicious food to eat or take home. The brand-new **Foodies Treasure Hunt Trail** will keep the little ones busy, following clues and uncovering hidden secrets across the entire festival. Afterwards, they can visit the fairground and games area in the **Kids Zone**.



Visitors can browse the latest food trends in the **Shopping Village**, meet local producers and sample a variety of delicious goods in the **Artisan Market** and taste exotic and unusual new dishes in the **Feasting Tent** – which features a mouth-watering range of **Street Food** and delicacies from all four corners of the globe.

Tickets available at www.foodiesfestival.com

DISCOUNT CODE: For a special discount enter code **FF30** for 30% discount on tickets!

Prolon - The No Fast Fast

I've waited a while to write this, as it didn't feel fair to do it just before Easter and the usual family feasting and chocolate indulgences. There has been a lot of talk of the benefits of fasting, and its benefits and I've tried the 5:2 diet with a degree of success in the past. So when I heard about **Prolon**, and its ability to mimic a fast, without depriving you of food, I thought I'd give it a try...

I'd been told that I shouldn't have any alcohol - not a problem. But when I heard that coffee was also not recommended I floundered. However, I decided that it was worth the time and effort to do it properly, so I promised myself that I would eschew any alcohol or caffeine for the five days of my fast mimicking diet.

So what is the Prolon Fast Mimicking Diet? Well, it's a patented, five day programme, that cleverly delivers all the benefits of fasting, but without depriving you of food. It includes meal replacements, herb teas and vitamin supplements to take you through your fasting journey. It promises to trigger the body's cellular clean up and support longevity. It targets visceral fat while protecting precious lean muscle. It supports healthy metabolic markers and is like a condensed version of the Mediterranean diet for heart health and if used regularly, will prolong your biological age (3 cycles should reverse yours by 2.5 years apparently).

It was developed by Dr Valter Longo, Director of the Longevity Institute at the University of Southern California, who was recognized by TIME magazine as one of the top 50 most influential people in health. As the pioneering mind behind the Fasting Mimicking Diet, Dr. Longo was awarded the first-ever patent for Healthspan. His groundbreaking work revealed how cells sense nutrients, leading him to develop the FMD formulation. Through extensive mouse and human trials, he demonstrated the powerful benefits of this approach. These discoveries are the foundation of the Prolon product line, designed to bring the science of healthy aging.

The diet is low-calorie, gluten-free, and low-glycemic, recommended for periodic use three to six times per year. The programme includes prepackaged meals that you eat to a set plan. There's a tasty nut bar for breakfast and then a vegetable soup for lunch and dinner, with fruit teas and supplements plus a couple of snacks like olives or crackers.

My Prolon kit arrived and it looked most impressive. Inside the box were five more boxes, each labelled by day. I'd blocked out a week in my diary - the only thing in my calendar was the AGM at our local sailing club and that should be okay as no meal is involved!



There are weekly group coaching with longevity dietitians that are free to join and very interactive. There is also a customer service team run by dietitians whom you can call with any queries. I found this very helpful.

Well, reader, I survived it, and, to be honest, I rather enjoyed it. I had a problem not having my early morning mug of Earl Grey (switched to a herb tea) and I had to eschew my regular black coffee fix during the morning and after a couple of days I had moved to decaf coffee as the herb teas, while delicious, didn't quite hit the spot.

The breakfast bars that were included for each day felt very indulgent and, in fact, rather naughty. But I quickly found that I wasn't that hungry first thing in the morning, so I just ate a tiny bit and kept the rest for later.

The plan encourages you to drink plenty of water, which I did, and it kept me feeling quite full. The soups were all really tasty and on some days there was also a bag of olives and a sachet of truly delicious almond and kale crackers. I felt replete. By mid afternoon I was feeling a tad peckish so had another herb tea and the rest of my breakfast bar. I tended to eat my dinner a little earlier than usual and went to bed earlier as I sometimes felt slightly peckish and wanted to resist the temptation of things to eat in the kitchen.

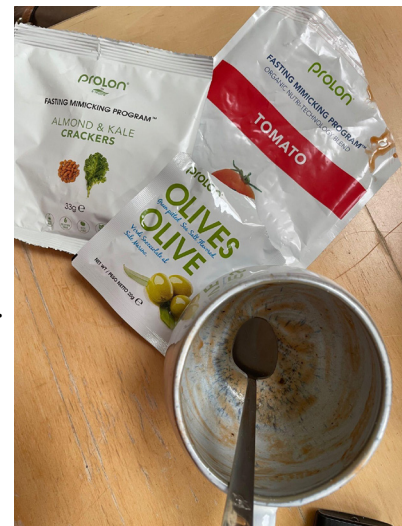
I'd been warned that I might experience some changes in my body and the first one I noticed was a lack of energy. One is encouraged to take regular exercise and I felt very sluggish when out walking on routes that I regularly take without even thinking about it. By about day 4 I was feeling very cold - one night I had to get up and put on some socks as my feet felt so chilled.

The sailing club AGM was in fact a really unexpected challenge: for the first time in many years, someone had kindly set up a massive snack buffet at the back of the room. Nursing my bottle of filtered water, I carefully avoided even looking at it and shot off home as soon as possible afterwards.

Here's what happens to your body on the programme:



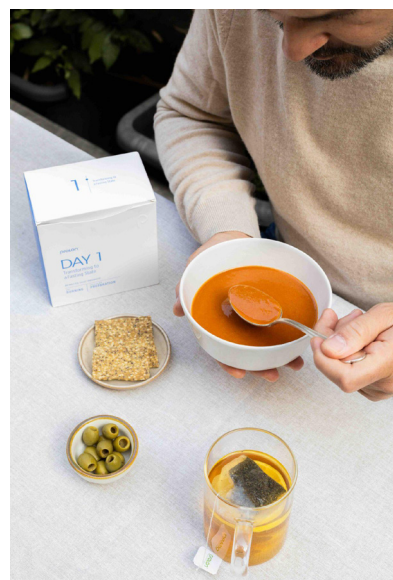
- **Day one: Fasting state.** Today, your body starts adapting to reduced calorie intake, depleting glucose stores (your primary energy source) and paving the way for fat-burning and cellular benefits.
- **Day two: Ketosis.** For most, fat-burning is in full effect! By now, your glucose stores are depleted, and your body is fully transitioning to burning fat for energy, or ketosis.
- **Day three: Autophagy.** By now, something incredible is happening—your body is transitioning to autophagy, the natural process that eliminates and recycles old, damaged cells.
- **Day four: Cellular rejuvenation.** Your body is now in a heightened state of cellular rejuvenation, with autophagy in full swing, actively repairing and renewing cells. Fat burning is also at its peak.



- **Day five: Deep renewal and change.** Your body has undergone a significant transformation: Autophagy recycled old cells to replace them with younger, high-functioning components. These cells now function as younger versions of themselves, supporting lasting benefits.

So what's my conclusion?

Well, while I didn't lose much weight - just a few pounds (to my disappointment!) But I did feel amazingly healthy and refreshed. People told me I looked really well and indeed I really felt well. I also didn't really miss the alcohol but I had planned my week so that the only socialising was meeting up with folk for a walk and a herb tea.



I plan to do it again soon, and I've realised that at around £150 it's a hell of a lot better value than taking yourself to a health farm.



If you'd like to try the ProLon Five Day Fast Mimicking Programme for yourself it's available [here](#)

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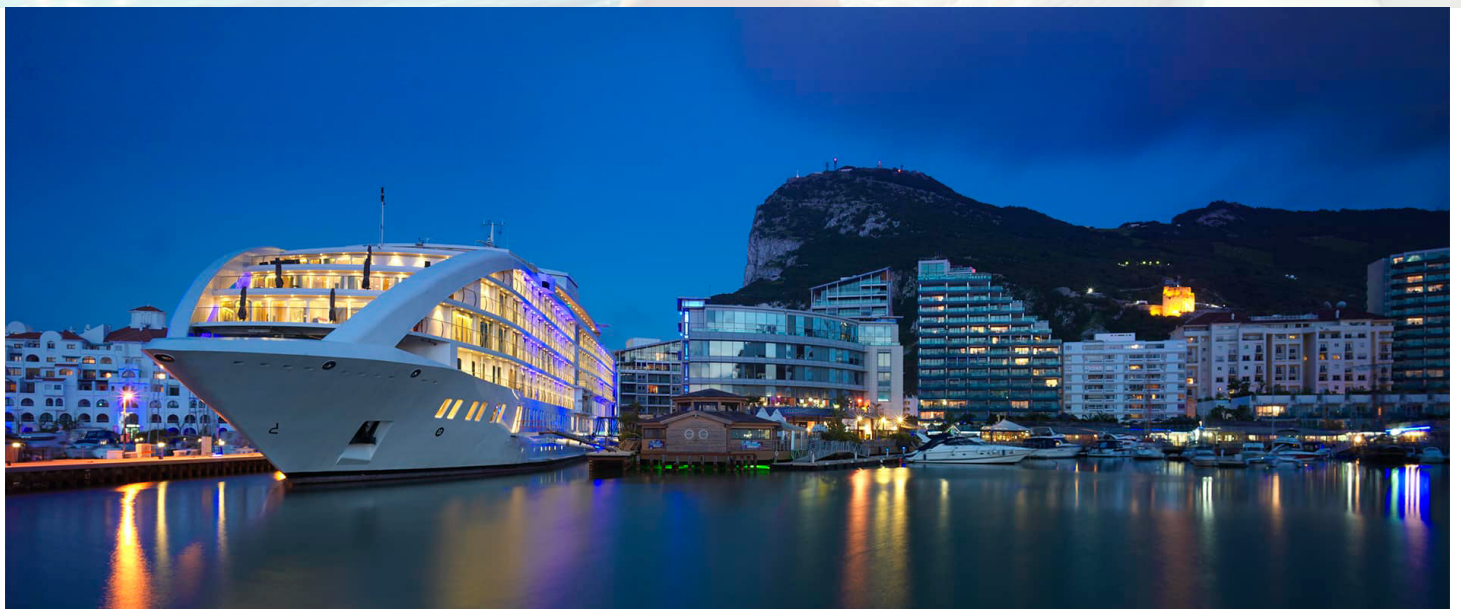
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!!!Happy Birthday Sir David!!!

By Bruce Lyons



Without Sir David and his passion for Nature we would all be less informed about the Universe, climate change and how it effects our environment, wildlife, the mysteries of the undersea and countless other revelations on his astounding Television series.

I am sure you have all been enthralled by his programmes on the Birds of Paradise



or, on Pablo, the Silver Back Gorilla, who is testimony himself to the power of wildlife care and management and even more.

Personally, and I'm only 91, I have witnessed the changes in holiday choice - less of the Sun Sea and Sand and more of the Wildlife, Adventure and Extreme activities - indeed over time on my charters to the Red Sea we were forever transporting Scuba Divers and Learn to Dive teens, who qualified in the exotic waters of the Gulf of Aqaba.

I even took, on my first safari in the Sinai, Underwater Cameramen from BBC Bristol and I have seen in recent articles that one of those very same cameramen were on Sir David's first trip with Pablo!!

Hedda, my late wife, dedicated her time in travel to curating her own Wildlife Tours which she escorted herself and even took up the charter of the Golden Cachalot, from Lars Lindblad in the 70's, and ran her own trips to Galapagos.

One of our earlier clients built his own Red Sea Desert Resort on a pristine Coral Drop Off and today specialises In Marine Biology Courses for Students from Universities from around the World, such is the interest of nature.



Now, as we all reflect on Sir David's wisdom and magical effects on so many of us, we can but hope that we will put his advice to good use. Hedda was privileged to have Jane and David as clients for a time, something I am sure she cherished.

What we have all gained is the amazing choice that my industry offers to young and old alike that barely a decade ago would have seemed unattainable. Expedition Cruises to the Arctic and Antarctic, Trekking in the Wildest of Jungles, Diving in the high inaccessible destinations and from a young age the opportunities to enjoy Wildlife holidays at affordable prices.



©Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade – www.dfat.gov.au

May is often, in East Africa, considered to one of the best months for animal watching at low season prices. The vegetation is green, the rains have passed and you avoid crowds - wild flowers everywhere, clear and colourful sunsets, happy wildlife, beautiful photo opportunities.

Soon we will be regaled by Chris Packham with nature closer to home (Spring Watch) and this last month Sir David's Secret Garden showed us what we have in our urban backyard.

But if you want some adventure stop by and discover the amazing choice that Sir David and his fellow pioneers have inspired, We'll be happy to help



58 Church St, Twickenham TW1 3NR 020 8744 0474

Labour of Love

by James Graham

The Questors at the Judi Dench Playhouse, Ealing until 9th May

What better timing is there for a political play than during local election week. Except *Labour of Love* is not “Political” political, instead the razor-sharp witty script is far more about the essential nuts and bolts of politics.

Ant Foran and Isabel Barbuick are perfectly cast as David Lyons, a keen very New-Labour MP and his long-suffering left-wing agent, Jean Whittaker. The development of their relationship over the period between 1990 and 2017 is central to the play. Their personalities and life experiences largely inform their ideological differences, and their responses to the twists and turns of the Labour party’s fortunes. It also explains their different communication styles, leading to many laugh out loud moments. Warning!: the language is in a proudly working-class tradition and not for the easily shocked.



Anne Neville’s direction uses newsreel clips to illustrate the national and world events that are the backdrop to political life in that period. And what a lot there are from the Northern Ireland Peace Accord to the Brexit referendum. Against this background, in a constituency office in Lincolnshire, an MP and his staff continue to deal with the day-to-day work of an MP, as they strive to bring new investment to the area. A cameo appearance by Yann Chow as the Chinese billionaire who holds the key to local regeneration underlines the differences apparent in the various shades of Labour.

Juliette Demoulin’s set, with its subtle touches of red, is a functional office of the time. (We even see and hear a working fax machine.)

But this multilayered play has an unusual structure. Starting in 2017, the first half works back in time to 1990 ... then starts in 1990 and works forward. This seems artificial until the end of the second Act. In the first half we meet the other characters. Then, when the chronology returns to normal, these grey ciphers become real people, as the same events are now seen through a lens of personal stories.

In spite of the tumultuous events, and the frustration of trying to make positive change needed in this constituency, the way Ant and Jean master the funny and clever Benedick and Beatrice style banter makes intriguing entertainment. This is a very funny play.



Read Polly Davies’ review at www.markaspen.com/2026/05/02/labour-love

Photography by Robert Vass



The Waste Land

by T S Eliot

Q Extra at the Questors Studio, Ealing



“Trams and dusty trees.

Highbury bore me. Richmond and Kew

Undid me. By Richmond I raised my knees

Supine on the floor of a narrow canoe.”

Cf. Dante’s *The Divine Comedy*, Canto 5, lines 133-134 of *Purgatorio*



With the world in its current state or turmoil it is important to step out of the constant news cycle now and again. Maybe this is why this workshop needed overflow seating as the audience flowed in and quickly filled the seats in this bijou space. Or maybe many in the audience had, like me, studied and loved this enigmatic poem when young and welcomed the chance to renew their acquaintance with it. In either case it worked. The intimacy of the Studio space was ideal and Guy Smith’s thoughtful introduction set out the context, discussing Eliot’s personal turmoil, the failure of his marriage, the environment of the country post-World War One and the influence of Ezra Pound on his work.

I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.

The idea to use four different voices for the dramatisation was inspired. It perfectly matched the enigmatic dream-like shifts in the text. The performance by Nick Barth, David Erdos, Wendy Megeney and Stella Robinson was mesmerising. Their emotional interpretation, use of gestures and characterisation illuminated the text, and led to a lively and educational discussion later with Prof Mark Ford, led by David Erdos.



Read Polly Davies’ mini-review at

www.markaspen.com/2026/04/28/waste-land

Photography by Valerie Kastoll



Don Quixote

by Carlos Acosta after Marius Petipa, music by Ludwig Minkus
Birmingham Royal Ballet at Sadler's Wells, Islington and on tour

Carlos Acosta's *Don Quixote* does not merely revive a beloved classic; it reimagines it with intelligence, warmth, and a palpable sense of joy.

From the opening morning market scene, the production announces its ambition. The town square is alive, bursting with bustling colourful detail. The ensemble's energy is electric, its precision razor sharp, yet nothing feels mechanical. Every dancer contributes to the illusion of a living, breathing Spanish village.



Tim Hatley's design is utterly transportive. The set attractively frames the dancers while never overwhelming them, and its backdrops lend a cinematic richness. The shifting hues of the atmospheric cyclorama lighting create a magical ambience with flamboyant sunsets. The dreamscape is especially arresting. The gauze and delicately painted vines create a layered, ethereal environment. The dryad scene beneath the willow is hauntingly serene, and its choreography feels otherworldly, suspended in time.



The orchestra, tightly integrated with the dancers, elevates key moments, and Hans Vercauteren's triumphant re-orchestration of the score breathes new life into familiar themes, adding clarity and richness.

Momoko Hirata's Kitri is a revelation of sparkling elegance, as she inhabits the role with a quicksilver intelligence and a finely tuned sense of musical phrasing. Her dancing flickers with wit, capturing Kitri's mischievous independence and irresistible charm. She converses with her steps, teasing out a playful authority.

Mathias Dingman's Basilio has a striking physical assurance that never tips into excess. His vitality has a buoyant quality, allowing moments of virtuosity to expand with thrilling ease. He shapes Basilio not just as a swaggering barber, but as a figure of warmth and sincerity, his bravado softened by an undercurrent of genuine affection.



Tzu-Chao Chou's Amor offers a beautifully judged contrast within the dream scene, a figure at once light-hearted and authoritative. There is humour and playful sharpness in his movement.

The dream scene itself is a highlight, poised, luminous, and exquisitely structured, contrasting beautifully with the earthy exuberance of the town scenes. The concluding marriage scene is pure celebration, an exhilarating explosion of colour and rhythm.

Don Quixote understands spectacle but never at the expense of substance. Acosta's assured direction and choreography creates a thoughtful, vibrant work, where classical ballet tradition meets theatrical brilliance with irresistible flair.

Read Ravenna Vale's review at www.markaspen.com/2026/04/24/don-quix-brb

Photography by Johan Persson

“Buyer Beware!”

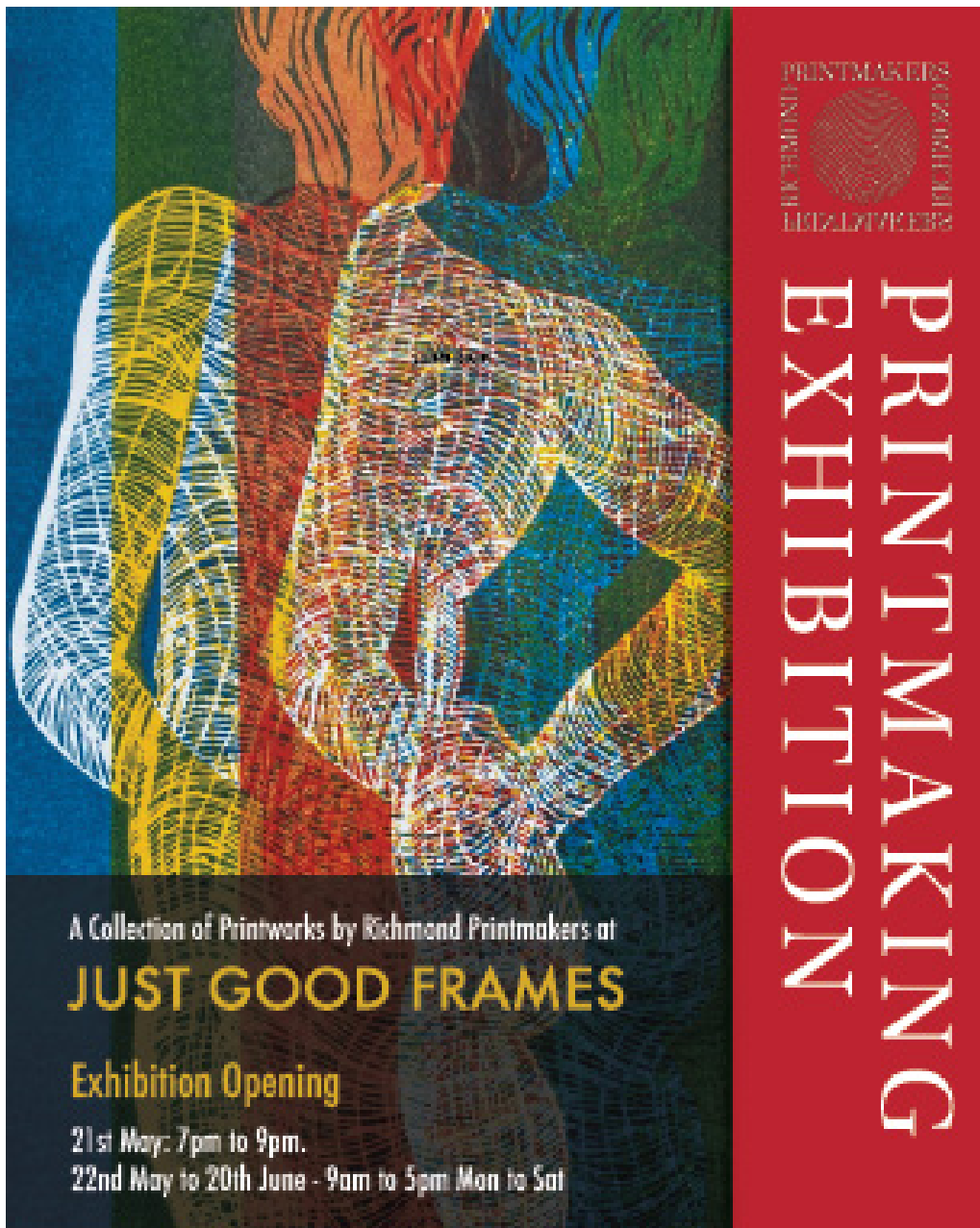
New Playwriting at the Mary Wallace Theatre. Monday, May 11th

On Monday evening the Mary Wallace will present the latest in our RSS ALIVE! programme of special events accompanying our main productions.

“BUYER BEWARE!” by Rodney Figaro examines the progress of Robert and Caroline Conway who are trying, with limited success, to sell their country house. Although they eagerly anticipate a prospective viewing, subsequent events prove unexpectedly disruptive.

“BUYER BEWARE!” is a Rehearsed Reading of this new play in the Mary Wallace bar and foyer, admission is free, and the performance commences at 7.45pm. Allcomers are most welcome - you do not have to be a member to join us.

Find the Mary Wallace on Twickenham’s Embankment, close to the Barmy Arms.

The poster for the 'Printmaking Exhibition' is divided into two main sections. The top section features a vibrant, abstract artwork composed of dense, overlapping lines in various colors (red, blue, yellow, green, black) forming a human figure. The bottom section is a dark, textured background with text in white and yellow. On the right side, a vertical red bar contains the text 'PRINTMAKING EXHIBITION' in white, uppercase letters. At the top of this red bar, the words 'PRINTMAKERS ASSOCIATION' are written in a smaller, white, uppercase font, with a circular logo in the center.

PRINTMAKERS ASSOCIATION

PRINTMAKING
EXHIBITION

A Collection of Printworks by Richmond Printmakers at
JUST GOOD FRAMES

Exhibition Opening
21st May: 7pm to 9pm.
22nd May to 20th June - 9am to 5pm Mon to Sat

Stagecoach Barnes Student, Darcey, Shines on West End Stage Alongside Rosamund Pike in *Inter Alia*

Stagecoach Performing Arts is delighted to share the incredible journey of one of talented student, Darcey, a 10-year-old from Barnes, who is currently performing in the West End's *Inter Alia* at the Wyndham's Theatre, starring alongside renowned actress Rosamund Pike.



Darcey has been a student at Stagecoach Barnes for just over a year, and in that time, she has not only flourished as a performer but also made lasting friendships and gained invaluable skills. Most recently, Darcey showcased her talents in the Stagecoach production of *Alice in Wonderland*, where she captivated audiences with her stage presence.

Her journey from classroom to the West End is a true testament to the opportunities Stagecoach offers its students, providing them with the tools they need to pursue their dreams while nurturing their passion for performance and building their confidence along the way.

"Stagecoach has been amazing for Darcey," says Emma Beet, Stagecoach Principal for Putney and Barnes. *"Not only has it helped her grow as a performer, but it's also given her a platform to learn new skills, build confidence, and connect with others who share her love for the arts. We are all so incredibly proud of her achievements, and to see her now sharing the stage with someone as esteemed as Rosamund Pike is simply extraordinary."*

At just 10 years old, Darcey's professional debut in *Inter Alia* marks an incredible milestone in her young career. Her appearance in the production has earned her rave reviews, with critics praising her talent and poise alongside the seasoned cast. This remarkable achievement highlights the power of early training, and the positive impact Stagecoach can have on young performers.

Darcey's success story is one that inspires young aspiring actors and actresses everywhere. Her passion for the performing arts, combined with the support and training she has received at Stagecoach, has propelled her to this incredible stage in her career.

With a network of over 60,000 students and more than 3,000 extra-curricular Performing Arts Schools worldwide, Stagecoach aims to make a difference in its students' lives by teaching Creative Courage for Life and many children have gone on to study and work in Performing Arts from blockbuster films to countless roles in local theatre productions.

For more information about Stagecoach Putney and Barnes email putney@stagecoach.co.uk, visit www.stagecoach.co.uk/putney



STAGE
COACH

A landscape tour of Strawberry Hill House & Pope's Grotto

From Strawberry Hill House

Step beyond the house and into the landscape that inspired it

This summer join our Guided Landscape Tour of Strawberry Hill Garden and Pope's Grotto – a chance to explore the story of this remarkable setting, from Walpole's garden to the wider Thames Arcadian landscape.

Wander through one of the earliest naturalistic gardens in England, then follow the route to Pope's Grotto via Radnor Gardens, uncovering the connections between Horace Walpole and the poet Alexander Pope along the way.

Recently restored, the Grotto reveals its original structure once more, including traces of the water features that fascinated 18th-century visitors.

Selected Sundays: inc. 17 May, 21 June, 19 July, 16 August 2026

- 10am–12pm (departing from the House shop)
- Adults £25 | Under 17s £10

Book via <https://www.ticketsource.com/popescrotto>

These tours are very popular and tend to book up in advance, so early booking is recommended.

You can also join us in the Gallery on 28 May for English Garden Eccentrics – an evening talk exploring landscapes like Pope's Grotto and Walpole's garden, and the imaginative minds behind them. strawberryhillhouse.org.uk/garden-eccentrics



Be Richmond Champions Local Cancer Support Charity The Mulberry Centre

From Be Richmond

Be Richmond, the Business Improvement District (BID) for Richmond town centre, continues to champion local charities that strengthen community wellbeing and provide vital support to residents across the borough.

Among the organisations making a profound difference locally is The Mulberry Centre, an award-winning independent cancer support charity based within the grounds of West Middlesex University Hospital.

For the past 25 years, The Mulberry Centre has supported individuals and families affected by cancer across Richmond upon Thames and West London, providing free emotional, psychological and practical support at every stage of the cancer journey.



While cancer treatment often focuses on physical care, the emotional and practical challenges can be equally overwhelming. A diagnosis can bring anxiety, isolation, financial strain and uncertainty for both patients and their loved ones. The Mulberry Centre exists to meet these needs, offering holistic support to anyone affected by cancer including patients, carers, family members and those who are bereaved.

In 2024/25 alone, the charity supported 1,555 unique individuals and recorded more than 10,000 service attendances. More than 300 Richmond residents accessed support during that period, with demand for services continuing to rise.

What sets The Mulberry Centre apart is the breadth of support available. Clients can access professional counselling and coaching, complementary therapies such as massage, acupuncture and reflexology, wellbeing classes including yoga, Pilates and tai chi, creative and social activities, welfare and benefits advice, and specialist end-of-life support through the Centre's Soul Midwife service.

Every individual receives a one-to-one assessment to ensure support is tailored to their specific

needs, whether they are newly diagnosed, undergoing treatment, living with secondary cancer, recovering after treatment or coping with bereavement.

For Be Richmond, supporting organisations such as The Mulberry Centre reflects the BID's wider commitment to strengthening community wellbeing and supporting the people who make Richmond such a vibrant and connected place.

“Supporting charities that make a tangible difference to local people is incredibly important to us at Be Richmond,” said Fay Cannings, Chief Executive of Be Richmond.

“The Mulberry Centre provides compassionate, life-changing support for individuals and families navigating the impact of cancer. Their work not only supports emotional and physical wellbeing, but also helps people feel less alone during some of the most challenging times in their lives. We are proud to highlight the incredible impact they continue to have across our community.”

The charity's impact is reflected in the experiences of those it supports. One Richmond resident described returning to work after cancer as “daunting” and credited The Mulberry Centre with helping them regain confidence and clarity. Another client undergoing chemotherapy said walking through the Centre's doors helped them feel “safe, seen and supported” during a time of overwhelming uncertainty.

Although based on NHS grounds, The Mulberry Centre receives no core statutory funding and relies on charitable income, grants, donations and corporate partnerships to continue delivering its services.

Volunteers also play a vital role in the charity's success. Last year alone, 170 volunteers contributed nearly 12,000 hours supporting everything from therapies and counselling to outreach and administration.

Be Richmond is encouraging local businesses to support The Mulberry Centre through fundraising, sponsorship, volunteering and partnership opportunities.

Businesses can support through Charity of the Year partnerships, employee volunteering initiatives, event sponsorship or direct donations, helping ensure local people affected by cancer can continue to access free support when they need it most.

The charity also has a full programme of 25th anniversary fundraising events taking place throughout 2026, including a Corporate Golf Day at Fulwell Golf Club on 11 June, an anniversary concert with the Richmond Orchestra on 16 May and a Gala Ball at The Clayton Hotel in Chiswick on 26 September.

For businesses looking to make a meaningful difference within their local community, supporting The Mulberry Centre offers an opportunity to directly impact the lives of local residents and families affected by cancer.



Squire's Twickenham Makes Community Awards to Two Local Projects

Celebrating 90 Years of Supporting Grassroots Community Initiatives

Squire's Garden Centres is proud to announce the continued support of local community gardening projects through its refreshed 'Love Where You Live' 2026 programme. Marking a special milestone as Squire's celebrates its 90th anniversary, this year's initiative is a testament to the company's long-standing commitment to nurturing and assisting grassroots community projects.

As part of the 2026 programme, 14 groups located near Squire's centres have each been chosen to receive an award in Squire's gardening vouchers, providing them with the resources to purchase plants, tools, and essential gardening supplies. **Squire's Twickenham is supporting two projects – Tudor Library Friends and Holy Trinity Church.**



Holy Trinity Church – Vicar, Simon Couper (centre) and Paul James Butler receive their award from a Squire's Twickenham colleague., Charlotte Savill



Tudor Library Friends – Helen Yarker and Jo-Anne Green receive their award from Squire's Twickenham colleague, Tabitha Sketchley-Holmes

Building on the momentum from last year's successful programme, the 'Love Where You Live' initiative continues to back projects that educate, grow produce and promote health and wellbeing through horticulture as well as bringing joy and colour to local outdoor spaces. As spring and summer unfold, these community gardens will flourish with renewed energy, fresh resources as well as dedicated volunteers, bringing positive change and greener spaces for communities to enjoy.

Each group also benefits from expert horticultural advice from Squire's knowledgeable Plant Teams, ensuring every project is set up for long-term success and lasting impact within its community.

Sarah Squire, Chairman of Squire's Garden Centres, comments: *"This year is particularly special for us, as we celebrate Squire's 90th anniversary. Supporting grassroots community projects has always been at the heart of what we do, and it's wonderful to see the passion and commitment of local groups reflected in these inspiring gardening initiatives. Through 'Love Where You Live', we are proud to give back to the communities that have supported us over the decades. We look forward to seeing how these projects grow and the positive difference they will continue to make in their communities"*

Love Where You Live 2026 Award Recipients:

- Friends of Gogmore Park, Chertsey - supported by Squire's Chertsey
- The Friends of Elm Road Recreation – Supported by Squire's Long Ditton
- Godalming Youth Service – supported by Squire's Milford
- Farncombe Community Garden – supported by Squire's Milford
- Head to Head Sensory Theatre – supported by Squire's Reigate
- Shepperton Village Conservation Group – supported by Squire's Shepperton
- Spelthorne Civic Pride Volunteers – Supported by Squire's Shepperton
- Ashford Community Garden - Supported by Squire's Shepperton
- **Tudor Library Friends - Supported by Squire's Twickenham**
- **Holy Trinity Church – supported by Squire's Twickenham**
- Peaslake Community Garden & Orchard - supported by Squire's West Horsley
- Dramatize Community Centre - supported by Squire's Woking
- Wooshill Meadows & Emmbrook Community - supported by Squire's Wokingham

SQUIRES
GARDEN CENTRES

WWII Air Force veteran marks 105th birthday

A WWII veteran has celebrated her 105th birthday at a Surbiton care home.

Joyce Greathead was joined by family and friends at Royal Star & Garter on her special day on 6 May.

The charity provides loving, compassionate care and support to veterans and their families living with disability or dementia, from Homes in Solihull, Surbiton, High Wycombe and Worthing.

Joyce was born in 1921, less than three years after the end of WWI. She lived in London and at the age of 21 joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF), where she trained as a Wireless Operator. She served for three years until 1946, at bases including RAF Westcott and Hinton-in-the-Hedges.



Now a great-grandmother, she recalled: *"I was sometimes stationed in the Tower Control where the operator kept in touch with the pilots while they were training – they were learning how to map-read and fly across the country. At other times I was working in wireless headquarters."*

Joyce demobbed in 1946 and worked in a bank. It was there that she met John, and the couple married in 1952. She moved to Royal Star & Garter in 2025.



She spent her birthday with family and friends, including her son

Richard and daughter Jill, at the Home. She also received a birthday card from Their Majesties The King and Queen.



Royal Star & Garter in Surbiton is welcoming new residents. For more information on this, its other services or to

work at the Home, go to www.starandgarter.org/surbiton



**Royal Star
& Garter**

Care with courage

Red Roses Team to Play Italy

Helena Rowland will earn her 50th international cap when the Red Roses travel to Stadio Sergio Lanfranchi to play Italy in Round 4 of the Guinness Women's Six Nations.

The versatile Loughborough Lightning back debuted for England at the same stadium in Parma back in November 2020 and has accumulated 186 points for her country to date. Rowland, who has started every match of 12 in this year's tournament, is part of a backline with two changes from victory over Wales.

Gloucester-Hartpury duo Emma Sing and Mia Venner come into the back three and Ellie Kildunne is named on the wing. Captain Jones is at outside centre while Lucy Packer and Zoe Harrison form the half-back pairing. In the pack, props Kelsey Clifford and Maud Muir start in the front row with hooker Amy Cokayne, and Abi Burton continues in the second row alongside Delaney Burns.

Marlie Packer and Maddie Feaunati, who have fond memories of winning their 100th and first caps respectively against Italy two years ago, remain in the back row, and Demelza Short completes the forwards starting her second Red Roses game at blindside flanker.

On the bench, there is a potential debut for Trailfinders Women forward Haidee Head. The England Under-21 international, who is Australian born, qualifies for the Red Roses through her mother and has impressed in the PWR since arriving in West London from Queensland Reds.

Head coach John Mitchell said: *"This week is about re-establishing our processes and sharpening our focus now that we have new purpose. We've had a deliberate reset around learning where we will need to improve, we trust the way we play, and now it's time to get back to it. We've built momentum throughout this tournament by stacking strong moments together, and that will be crucial again this week. Italy will be full of confidence after their result against Scotland, and they'll challenge us in different ways. For us, it's about staying locked in on our key actions: applying pressure and intentionally attacking the space with speed. Ultimately, it always comes down to showing courage in the moments that matter."*

Lilli Ives Champion and Sadia Kabeya continue their rehabilitation in camp, but Alex Matthews has been ruled out of the remainder of the tournament. The Gloucester-Hartpury back row will have surgery on her shoulder this week.

Red Roses team to play Italy

15 Emma Sing (Gloucester-Hartpury, 15 caps)
14 Mia Venner (Gloucester-Hartpury, 3 caps)
13 Megan Jones (Trailfinders Women, 36 caps) – captain
12 Helena Rowland (Loughborough Lightning, 49 caps)
11 Ellie Kildunne (Harlequins, 60 caps)
10 Zoe Harrison (Saracens, 68 caps)
9 Lucy Packer (Harlequins, 42 caps)

1 Kelsey Clifford (Saracens, 24 caps)
2 Amy Cokayne (Sale Sharks, 92 caps)
3 Maud Muir (Gloucester-Hartpury, 51 caps)
4 Abi Burton (Trailfinders Women, 7 caps)
5 Delaney Burns (Bristol Bears, 4 caps)
6 Demelza Short (Bristol Bears, 2 caps)
7 Marlie Packer (Saracens, 114 caps)
8 Maddie Feaunati (Exeter Chiefs, 26 caps)

Replacements

16 Connie Powell (Harlequins, 22 caps)
17 Mackenzie Carson (Gloucester-Hartpury, 26 caps)
18 Sarah Bern (Bristol Bears, 82 caps)
19 Haineala Lutui (Loughborough Lightning, 3 caps)

20 Haidee Head (Trailfinders Women, uncapped)
21 Flo Robinson (Exeter Chiefs, 3 caps)
22 Holly Aitchison (Sale Sharks, 47 caps)
23 Claudia Moloney-MacDonald (Exeter Chiefs, 38 caps)



Men's Six Nations Review

Following the conclusion of the Guinness Men's Six Nations, the RFU, with the support of external independent contributors, has completed a detailed and robust review of the campaign, informed by players, coaches and the wider back-room team.

The process included a series of in-person one-to-one conversations, enabling open, constructive and, at times, challenging discussions.

These conversations, along with other insight, helped ensure the review was grounded in honesty and a focused assessment of where things didn't go well across the Championship.

The review concluded that, despite coming off a 12-game winning run, England's underperformance across the Six Nations was not the result of a singular failure or issue.

Instead, it highlighted a number of interconnected performance areas, such as discipline, execution of opportunities and making the most of key moments, where improvement is required if England are to consistently perform at the level expected.

While performance confidentiality in a competitive international sporting environment limits the level of detail that can be shared publicly - particularly around game strategy and execution - the way in which the team aspires to play was clear throughout the review.

We recognise why supporters felt frustrated and that they expected more. That disappointment was shared internally, and it underpinned the seriousness with which everyone engaged in this process.

England Head Coach Steve Borthwick has engaged in the review with honesty and rigour, and he and his coaching team are already addressing issues identified.

Bill Sweeney, RFU CEO, said:

"This has been a thorough and honest review, and it is clear that improvement will come from addressing several areas rather than chasing one simple answer.

"We've all seen what this England side is capable of - most recently in the performance against France, and during the strong winning run before that.

"That doesn't disappear overnight. The challenge now is delivering that level consistently, and we are confident this group can do that, supported by the insight and feedback this review has surfaced. This is a young England team that is still growing and developing, and we understand progress in international sport is rarely linear.

"Steve has engaged in this process with full openness and has clear plans in place to address these findings. We are all behind him and his coaching team going into the Nations Championship and the series of matches leading into Rugby World Cup 2027."



Match Preview: Manchester City v Brentford

Written by Brentford Football Club

Brentford face Manchester City at Etihad Stadium on Saturday evening (5.30pm kick-off BST), live on *Sky Sports*.

The Bees defeated West Ham United 3-0 to keep their European hopes alive at the weekend, while City's Premier League title ambitions were dealt a blow despite securing a dramatic 3-3 draw against Everton.

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

Pre-match Analysis

Stephen Gillett, *Playmaker Stats*: The key battles in Etihad clash

Brentford head to the Etihad this Saturday for the first of two decisive away games - with Manchester City's title hopes taking a blow after a pulsating 3-3 draw at Everton.

Buzzing from a [3-0 London derby win over West Ham United](#) last weekend, the Bees sit seventh - occupying the Europa Conference League spot - ahead of the City visit. A home clash with Crystal Palace follows, before a final day trip to Anfield.

First up are the Cityzens, who simply must win on Saturday to keep the pressure on leaders Arsenal.

Winger Jérémy Doku rescued a draw against the Toffees on Monday night, but it was still a case of two points dropped for City, who sit five points behind the Gunners, albeit with a game in hand.

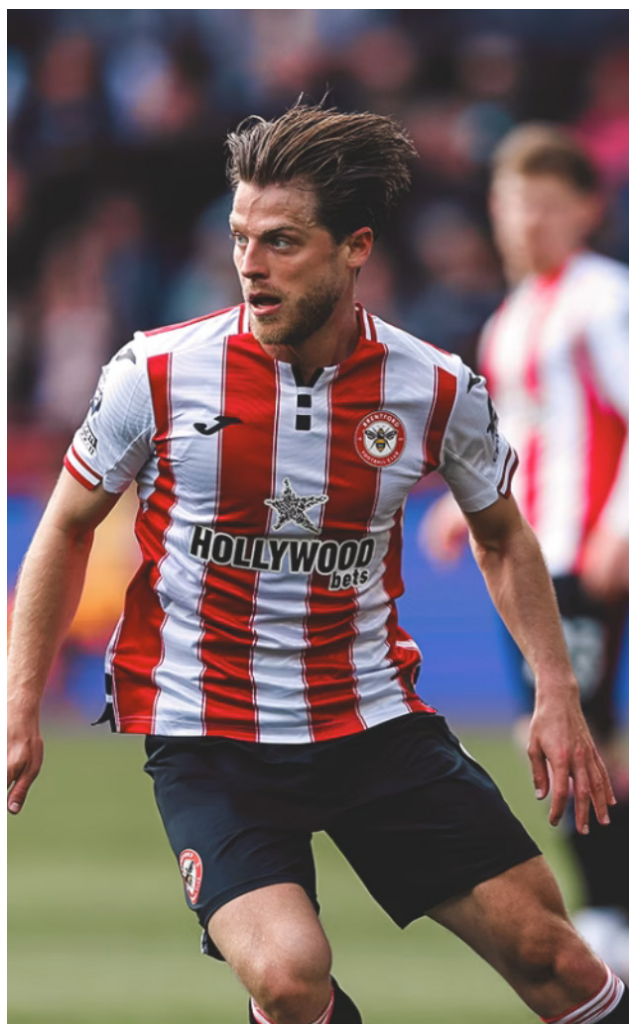
It's the business end of the season and Brentford head coach [Keith Andrews](#) will no doubt have taken pointers from how Everton set up against Pep Guardiola's men.

No teams average more aerials won per game in the Premier League this season than Everton (21.7) and Brentford (19.7), and the Merseysiders' aggressive, direct approach caused City problems.

Sub Thierno Barry's first goal on Monday night came after the Toffees regained the ball from a trademark long ball clearance from goalkeeper Jordan Pickford, although the finish owed much to an underhit back pass from Marc Guéhi.

Pickford is one of only two players to complete more accurate long passes than [Caoimhín Kelleher](#) in the top flight this term, in part because the Bees' number one has such strong aerial options ahead of him.

The prolific [Igor Thiago](#) ranks second among Premier League forwards for aerial duels won in 2025/26, with Kevin Schade fifth and Dango Ouattara (16th) also featuring highly.



Brentford's 2-1 win at the Etihad in 2022 was built on then keeper David Raya bypassing midfield to link up with two-goal Ivan Toney - and the Bees can adapt the same formula given the aerial prowess of their current forward trio.

Incidentally, the Bees were the only club to do the double over Guardiola's Treble winners in that 2022/23 season.

Brentford boss Andrews will also have noted how Everton's second came from a near-post corner, and how their third traced back to a quick throw-in that caught City on their heels.

As much as Monday night exposed chinks in City's armoury, it also highlighted the quality in their ranks.

Doku capped a man-of-the-match display with two fantastic strikes, one with either foot, and [Michael Kayode](#) can expect a busy Saturday evening. The Belgian winger leads the Premier League for successful dribbles this season (74), and also has the most carries ending in a chance (27).

Elsewhere, Rayan Cherki recorded his 11th assist of the campaign against the Toffees, and Brentford will need to guard against his ability to create a yard and fashion something out of nothing.

There is only one heavyweight clash headlining Saturday's game, however: Erling Haaland v Thiago. The Norwegian (25 goals) currently sits three ahead of his Brazilian counterpart (22) in the Premier League Golden Boot race - and who wins that particular shoot-out could define the contest.

Scout Report

Dan Long, *Sky Sports*: Maximum points required for City

In 2025/26, Man City have been the hunters and not the hunted in the Premier League.

That has come as a surprise, given the complete lack of major silverware the season prior. Standards are sky high at the Etihad and reclaiming the trophy the club won six times in seven seasons between 2017/18 and 2023/24 will always be the priority.

But two losses in the first three games provided Arsenal with a chance. And this time, they have not choked.

Since 29 November last year, City have played 22 league games and lost just one - the Manchester derby in January. They have picked up 49 of the 66 points on offer.

But, with four games remaining, they trail Mikel Arteta's side by five points. It would have been seven had Jérémy Doku not scored a 97th-minute equaliser in a 3-3 draw with Everton on Monday.

City, though, are serial winners and will fight until the end. Pep Guardiola said as much speaking to Sky Sports afterwards. "We take the point and until it's over, we're going to continue," he insisted.

"It's better than a loss. We played to win. It just shows what the team are. We tried and we have done it. It's not in our hands. Before it was in our hands. Now, no.

"We have to do it in our four games that we have in the Premier League. It will be quite similar against Brentford. We will see what happens."

There is no getting away from the fact that Arsenal are now firmly in control of the title race.

Crystal Palace, Bournemouth and Aston Villa lie in wait after Brentford's visit. Realistically speaking, only maximum points and an Arsenal slip will do. The target is clear.

The season is by no means over for Guardiola and co, though.

In March, they beat the Gunners at Wembley to win the Carabao Cup for the first time in five seasons and they have reached the FA Cup final for the fourth season running. Next weekend, they will have the chance to become reigning champions of both - as they did in 2018/19 - when they take on Chelsea.

Whatever happens from here, unlike last season, City have claimed silverware. That was key. A second barren campaign would have been wholly unprecedented.

But the focus will soon move towards planning how to get back on top in the Premier League next year. This time, for once, it is out of their hands.

In the Dugout

Pep Guardiola

Pep Guardiola was born an hour's drive from Barcelona and joined the club's La Masia academy in 1984, aged 13. He rose through the ranks and became a key part of Johan Cruyff's team in the 1990s, before later playing under Bobby Robson and Louis van Gaal at the Nou Camp.

During 10 full seasons in the first team, the midfielder won 15 trophies, including six La Liga titles and the European Cup in 1991/92. He departed after 17 years in 2001 and played out the rest of his playing days with Roma and Brescia in Italy, Al-Ahli in Qatar, and then in Mexico with Dorados, before calling it quits in 2006.

Before long, he was back in Spain as Barcelona B manager. Promotion in the first season, 2007/08, saw him selected to step up as Frank Rijkaard's successor at Barcelona and, over the next four seasons, he established himself as one of the great minds of football. His tiki-taka style of play heralded an astonishing 14 trophies, six of which they won during a mind-blowing 2009.

The serial winner took a year's sabbatical before joining Bayern Munich in June 2013. In Germany, he delivered three straight Bundesliga titles, two German Cups, one European Super Cup and one Club World Cup - the third of a career that had spanned all of six years to that point. By the end of his time in Bavaria, Guardiola already knew his next move, having signed a three-year contract in February 2016 to replace Manuel Pellegrini that summer.

In the decade since, the 55-year-old has become Manchester City's most successful manager, with 20 trophies turning them into a footballing powerhouse; one of Europe's undoubted elites. He is now the longest-serving manager in the top four divisions after Simon Weaver's Harrogate were relegated from League Two.

Guardiola reached 500 games as City boss with a 2-0 win at Leicester in December 2024 last year and the visit of Brentford will be game number 589. On the final day of the season, when City host Aston Villa, he will leapfrog Les McDowell as the club's longest-serving manager in history.



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