

# Twickenham & Richmond Tribune



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# TickerTape - News in Brief

## South Western Railway

Altered train services and buses replace trains in the New Malden area **Saturday 27 and Sunday 28 June**

The lines in the New Malden area will be closed all weekend due to maintenance work.

### Saturday

- Some **London Waterloo to London Waterloo via Richmond and Kingston** services will be **revised**.
- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will be **revised** to run **hourly**. These services will start from **Surbiton**.
- Additional services will run between **London Waterloo and Hampton Wick via Kingston**.
- **London Waterloo to Windsor** services will be **revised** to depart **London Waterloo earlier**.
- **Buses** will run between **New Malden and Surbiton**.

### Sunday

- The afternoon and evening **London Waterloo to Kingston via Hounslow** services will **not** run.
- **London Waterloo to Hampton Court** services will start from **Surbiton** and will run **hourly**.
- Additional services will run between **London Waterloo and Hampton Wick via Kingston**.
- **London Waterloo/Wimbledon to Guildford via Cobham** services will start from **Surbiton**.
- **Buses** will run between **New Malden and Surbiton**.



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darryl parkin

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# The Local Picture Postcard Page - Part 332

## The Jenny Lind Pub in Hampton Hill

By Alan Winter

For a pub that was serving the locals from its site at 80 Hampton Hill High Street for 170 years, there is very little historical information that I have managed to find on the Jenny Lind public house.



Our first postcard shows the pub to the left side. The view is looking west along the high street.

The second image is a photograph from the 1980's I'm told.

Built in 1839. It was named after the famous Swedish opera singer Jenny Lind, Johanna Maria "Jenny" Lind (Madame Goldschmidt) (6 October 1820 – 2 November 1887), was a Swedish opera singer, often called the "Swedish Nightingale". One of the most highly regarded singers of the 19th century, she performed in soprano roles in opera in Sweden and across Europe and undertook an extraordinarily popular concert tour of the United States beginning in 1850. She was a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music from 1840.

Lind lived her final years in England at Wynds Point, Herefordshire, on the Malvern Hills near the British Camp. Her last public appearance was at a charity concert at Royal Malvern Spa in 1883. She died of cancer at age 67 at Wynds Point on 2nd November 1887, and was buried in the Great Malvern Cemetery to the music of Chopin's Funeral March.

The Jenny Lind pub permanently closed in 2009. At that time, it had been owned by Enterprise Inns.



Throughout its long history, the venue served as a traditional watering hole for locals, the working-class community, and the area's railway navigators ("navvies").

In its latter years, the pub was widely remembered for its wood-panelled, three-sided central bar, a conservatory leading to a good-sized rear garden, and a cozy local atmosphere.

In the 1960s and 70s it was very well known as a top darts pub that frequently competed at the top of the local pub leagues.

The site has since transitioned into other uses. After the pub closed, the building operated for a time as a KFC (Kentucky Fried Chicken) before undergoing further renovations to become a restaurant.

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# Letters

Dear Editors:

## Twickenham Riverside

Richmond Council's Press Release dated 3 June 2026 reports the progress being made on the Twickenham Riverside development. It contains a comment by the Leader Cllr Gareth Roberts "Like many residents, I was disappointed that a small amount of opposition sought to delay the scheme, contributing to unnecessary costs for taxpayers at a time when construction costs were rising globally".

Aside from the fact that there was more opposition than support to the original scheme submitted to the Planning Committee, that has now been conveniently airbrushed, Cllr Roberts' comment above is clearly a thinly veiled statement that the action of the Twickenham Riverside Trust (TRT) in objecting to the Council's Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens (DJG) was responsible for the unnecessary costs.

I was a Trustee of TRT (a charitable trust) when the CPO was first suggested, and I wish to make clear, without revealing any confidential details of negotiations that took place, my situation as a Trustee.

"Trustees have a fundamental legal and fiduciary obligation to manage and protect trust assets strictly for the benefit of the beneficiaries" this is the opening sentence of AI's answer to the question "what are the duties of trustees". The Charity Commission's publication CC3 *The essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do*, gives further details.

Thus, it was clear to me that it was our absolute duty to protect the DJG, the Trust's asset. This had become extremely popular since its inception; events such as Borough's Best Bangers, Dog Shows, Gruffalo readings with Axel Scheffler, and Christmas events with reindeer, all free to enter, had been very well attended and much appreciated; the quiet and safe ambiance, with the commanding view of the river and Eel Pie Island, the surrounding Hornbeams and the close proximity of the Sunshine Café and childrens' playground, made it a destination for e.g. pétanque players, infant nurseries and those who wished to relax. Unfortunately, the alternative for the DJG in the new development, suggested by the Council, did not seem to compare favourably; neither did other factors seem satisfactory.

I ceased to be a Trustee in October 2020, as my allotted term of 9 years had come to an end, so I cannot comment upon what happened subsequently. However, it is clear that the decision to proceed with objection to the CPO in 2023 shows that the new Trustees agreed with our original approach. Unfortunately, TRT's appeal to the Inspector was not successful, despite being closely fought.

I accept that TRT lost the battle, but I still feel it was one we had to fight. I am sorry that the residents have lost a considerable asset, in the form of the original Diamond Jubilee Gardens; I do not believe that the suggested new demise for the DJG is fit for purpose.

I do not feel that TRT should be blamed for causing delay and excessive cost.

Jeremy Hamilton-Miller,  
Twickenham TW2

# Letters

Dear Editor,

## Vote Fair: From Twickenham to Makerfield

On Friday, I bumped into Munira Wilson outside her office in Twickenham.

We only exchanged a few words in passing, but they have stayed with me. We both briefly wondered what the Makerfield by-election really meant. For a moment, in the strange fever of British politics, it almost seemed to mean that Andy Burnham might be the saviour of the universe.

Now it is Monday, only one weekend later, and that absurd possibility already seems alarmingly on track.

That is precisely the point.

The parties, the pollsters and the press are all trying to tell us what the Makerfield by-election means.

They are rushing to the same conclusion: Andy Burnham for leader, another prime minister finished, Westminster panic, more chaos, more churn, more theatre.

I am not falling for it.

That is not what the by-election means.

That is what the Westminster bubble needs it to mean. That is what the press knows how to report. That is what party machines know how to metabolise.

But it is not the truth.

The truth is simpler, and more important.

The Makerfield by-election means that our voting system no longer captures what the country means.

That is the real signal.

Not Andy Burnham for leader.

Not sack another Prime Minister.

Not more chaos.

The electorate did not vote for any of that.

What it exposed, once again, is the absurdity of asking one local result to answer a national question. That is how the tail ends up wagging the Westminster dog.

And the public can see this now more clearly than the people paid to interpret it.

Why? Because the electorate has changed.

We have lived for years with real-time news on our screens, 24/7. We are being trained by events to understand that what happens on our television screens around the world affects what happens on our streets at home.

When a ship is bombed in the Strait of Hormuz, petrol prices move here that same week.

When bombs fall in Ukraine, families displaced by war may end up living on our streets.

When markets wobble, when supply chains break, when wars escalate, the consequences arrive in everyday life almost at once.

That is the new electorate.

It lives at two scales at the same time: the local and the global.

But our voting system still behaves as if one cross on one ballot paper can honestly express both.

It cannot.

I want to vote for somebody who can make a difference to the street I live in.

And I want to vote for a government that can protect, secure and enable the streets all of us live on.

Those are not the same thing.

But both matter, and both deserve a vote.

That is why the answer is not simply "change the leader."

The answer is: **Vote Fair**.

One vote for the person we want representing us locally.

One vote for the party or leadership we want helping to run the country.

That is not constitutional indulgence.

That is democratic common sense.

So no, I do not believe the Makerfield by-election was a coded vote for Andy Burnham.

I believe it was a much clearer vote than that:

a vote against distortion,

a vote against political compression,

and a vote against a system that no longer captures what the country means.

In short: a vote to Vote Fair.

Aubrey Ghose  
Cambridge Park, TW1

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# Row as George Street Plan Morphs into Town Centre LTN

By James Knight

A row is emerging over Richmond Council's plans for George Street, amid claims that what began as a pedestrianisation proposal is now drifting towards a Low Traffic Neighbourhood-style scheme for the town centre. The council presents the project as part of a wider vision to revive Richmond, with better public spaces, improved signage and a more attractive shopping environment.

Yet the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee suggested something more far-reaching may be under consideration. The documents and debate point not simply to nicer paving or fewer cars on George Street, but to a possible traffic-filtering system involving camera enforcement, exemptions, displaced traffic and penalties for drivers judged to be passing through central Richmond too quickly.

## From pedestrianisation to traffic filtering

The committee approved the next stage of work on the Richmond Town Centre vision, including £200,000 for traffic modelling around George Street. The council says no decision has been made, and that may be true in a formal sense.

But the published papers already refer to investigating a ban on through-traffic enforced by ANPR cameras, while the meeting itself went further. Cllr James Chard said the modelling should consider not only pedestrianisation, but also "time restrictions" and "restrictions based on dwell time".

That phrase matters. In ordinary retail language, "dwell time" means how long shoppers remain in a town centre. In a traffic context, however, it suggests measuring how long a vehicle stays inside a controlled zone, potentially to distinguish stopping and visiting from a through journey. In practice, such a system would almost certainly rely on cameras. A driver entering at one point and leaving too quickly at another could be treated as having used the town centre as a shortcut. That is why residents may reasonably ask whether George Street is being prepared for conventional pedestrianisation, or for an LTN-style traffic filter under a more attractive label.

That would mark a significant shift in how movement through Richmond is governed. Instead of roads being generally open unless there is a clear reason to restrict them, access would become conditional: permitted for some journeys, at some times, for some users, but not for others. This is the politics of permission applied to the town centre. The council would no longer simply manage traffic flow; it would decide which journeys count as legitimate, which drivers are allowed through, and which movements should be discouraged or penalised. That is why the George Street debate matters beyond one road. It points to a wider change from transport choice to transport control.



## **The enforcement lesson**

Richmond residents have seen this pattern before. The borough-wide 20mph policy was presented as a road safety and public realm measure, but across London the practical experience of lower speed limits has increasingly been one of enforcement. The Times has reported that the Metropolitan Police issued 251,000 notices of intended prosecution in Greater London in 2023 for 20mph offences, while nearly 489,000 tickets were issued on 20mph roads across the UK in 2024. The lesson is not that safety measures are wrong, but that schemes sold in the language of liveable streets can quickly become experienced by residents as penalty systems.

That is the political risk with George Street. A traffic filter may be described as pedestrianisation, air quality improvement or town centre renewal, but the public will judge it by how it works. If the scheme depends on cameras, exemptions and fines for drivers who are judged to have passed through too quickly, it will be seen less as a beautification project and more as another enforcement-led regime.

## **Lib Dem unease**

The most revealing feature of the meeting was that unease did not come only from residents or Conservatives. Several Liberal Democrat councillors appeared concerned that a major transport scheme was being carried forward under the broader and less contentious language of town centre renewal. The tension was subtle but important: the transport side of the council appears keen to maintain momentum behind George Street restrictions, while the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee seemed more alert to the political, legal and financial risks of moving too quickly.

Cllr Ehmann argued that transport issues should first go to the Transport and Air Quality Committee before financial matters came to Finance, Policy and Resources, putting the proposals before 18 councillors rather than nine. His warning that Richmond Town Centre “cannot be imposed on residents” went beyond procedure. Cllr Chard’s call to separate any future traffic order from the financial decision made the same point in more technical terms: George Street is now too contentious to be treated as a routine public realm project.

Cllr Warren’s questions underlined why. He asked whether full pedestrianisation was the only option being explored, where displaced traffic would go, which streets were being treated as “sensitive”, how wide consultation would be, and where the money would come from if costs rose. These are not design details. They are the questions of councillors who know George Street has become a traffic, legal, financial and political test for the administration.

## **“No predetermined answer”**

The repeated insistence that there was “no predetermined answer” was also telling. Cllr Katie Mansfield said there was no predetermined outcome, council leader Gareth Roberts stressed that there was no “secret list” of areas waiting to be pedestrianised, and Cllr Jim Millard said the council did not yet know what the answer was. Those reassurances may be sincere, but they land in a borough where political power is now unusually concentrated. After the Liberal Democrats won every seat on Richmond Council, formal opposition inside the chamber disappeared. Internal scrutiny by Lib Dem councillors is therefore no longer a procedural nicety, but the main safeguard against controversial schemes being pushed through too easily.

That context matters because Cllr Roberts has previously spoken openly about the advantages of a large majority. In a Lib Dem Podcast interview, he said Richmond’s majority meant that even if “one or two” colleagues disagreed, the administration still had “the numbers to get things through”, before citing the borough-wide 20mph policy as an example of a bold change the council was able to deliver. For supporters, that is decisive leadership. For critics, it explains why assurances about an open

process on George Street need to be tested against the reality of a one-party council with the votes that allow the leader to push controversial measures through.

### **Safety and the evidence base**

Safety after dark is another unresolved issue. Pedestrianisation is often presented as automatically safer, but that depends on how the space is managed. A George Street with active restaurants, good lighting, public toilets, policing and steady evening footfall could be attractive. A George Street that empties after shops close could feel very different. At present, passing traffic, buses, taxis, deliveries, pedestrians and open businesses provide a degree of informal supervision. If that movement is reduced without proper management, the street could become quieter rather than safer.

The evidence base also deserves scrutiny. Resident Martin Baker challenged the council's use of figures from the Centre Stage festival, including claims of 22,000 visitors, a 30 per cent increase in footfall and large boosts to hospitality and retail. He noted no source was given. There may be an explanation for those figures, but a one-day festival is not ordinary trading. Councillors should be cautious about using a special event as evidence that permanent or semi-permanent traffic restrictions would benefit shops throughout the year.

That caution matters because, as Michael Jones argued in last week's edition of the Tribune, Richmond does not compete in a vacuum. If the council makes the town centre more expensive, more awkward or more uncertain to reach by car, many visitors will not automatically switch to public transport. They may simply choose Kingston, Westfield, or online shopping instead. A policy intended to price motorists out of their cars may end up just pricing them out of Richmond.

### **The question Richmond must answer**

The politics of George Street did not begin with this committee report. During the election campaign, Conservative literature warned residents against the "paving over of George Street", claiming that Lib Dem plans risked traffic chaos, bus delays, harm to shops and displacement around The Green. A leaflet does not prove the council has made up its mind, but it does show that the issue was already politically live. Now that councillors are discussing time restrictions and dwell-time restrictions, that warning looks less like routine campaign rhetoric and more like a preview of the argument Richmond is about to have.

Richmond town centre clearly needs attention. Shops are under pressure, visitor habits are changing and the public realm can be improved. Better signage, cleaner streets, safer routes and support for businesses would be welcomed by many residents. But the council should be clear about the scale of what may be under consideration. Is this conventional pedestrianisation, timed closure, camera-enforced access control, or a wider traffic filter designed to remove through-traffic while preserving selected access.

The Lib Dem administration says there is no predetermined answer. The burden is now on the council to prove it. Richmond town centre needs revival, but if the council turns George Street into a camera-enforced traffic experiment, it risks turning a practical public realm scheme into a symbol of overreach.

That is the political danger for the Liberal Democrats. At the height of their power in Richmond, with every seat on the council and little formal opposition in the chamber, they may be tempted to believe that control is the same as consent. It is not. If George Street becomes another example of the council making it harder for ordinary people to get around, the Lib Dems may find that the seeds of future defeat are sown not in Westminster, but in the traffic queues, fines and diversions of central Richmond.

# Richmond's Stories Brought to Life in Landmark Town Centre Mural

From Be Richmond

A major new artwork celebrating Richmond's heritage, landscape and community stories is set to transform one of the town centre's busiest pedestrian routes this summer.

Commissioned by Be Richmond and created by London based artist duo Alice and Katie of A&K Art, the large-scale mural at 20 Hill Street will provide a bold new visual landmark in the heart of Richmond while reinforcing the town's reputation as one of London's most distinctive riverside destinations.



Inspired by Richmond's iconic landmarks, natural beauty and local stories, the mural combines heritage and contemporary design to create a striking celebration of the character that makes the town unique.

At the heart of the artwork sits Richmond Bridge, one of London's oldest surviving Thames crossings, framed by familiar scenes and symbols including Richmond Theatre, the celebrated Richmond Hill view, Richmond Park, a traditional London black cab and the classic red post box.

Hérons, synonymous with Corporation Island and the Thames landscape, also feature prominently and hold personal significance for the Wilkinson family, the owners of the building chosen for Richmond's newest mural.

The mural includes a kingfisher and commemorative blue plaque honouring the memory of the landlord's late mother Ann Wilkinson.

Ann's sons, Guy and Neil, worked closely with the artists to incorporate personal elements into the design being painted onto the building occupied by Five Guys restaurant.



The mural forms part of Be Richmond's wider placemaking programme, which seeks to strengthen local identity, enhance the public realm and encourage residents and visitors to explore more of the town centre.

Located on the busy route linking Hill Street and Castle Yard, the artwork will



transform an everyday thoroughfare into a memorable and welcoming cultural space.

*“Richmond has such an extraordinary combination of heritage, nature and creativity and we wanted to create something that reflects that in a stylish and meaningful way,”* said Fay Cannings, Chief Executive of Be Richmond. *“This mural is about celebrating the stories, landmarks and landscapes that people cherish while creating a new focal point that residents, businesses and visitors can enjoy every day.*

*“Public art has an important role to play in strengthening a sense of place and creating spaces people feel proud of,”* she added.

Artists Alice and Katie both grew up in the London Borough of Richmond. *“Growing up in Richmond, this was a particularly special project for us,”* they said.

*“We wanted to create something that celebrates Richmond’s unique character, bringing together its iconic landmarks, beautiful natural surroundings and the stories that make the town so distinctive. It was a privilege to work with Be Richmond and the Wilkinson family to incorporate personal elements into the design, and we hope the mural becomes a source of pride for everyone who lives, works and visits Richmond.”*

Guy Wilkinson of Eligo, the landlords of the building said: *“We were immediately drawn to the opportunity to support this mural because it is something that will give back to the Richmond community and create a real talking point for residents and visitors alike.*

*“Working closely with Be Richmond and A&K Art, we were able to share ideas about the landmarks, stories and personal connections that have shaped the final design.*

*“The kingfisher holds particular significance for our family as my late mother, Ann Wilkinson, lived at Kingfisher Lodge and loved watching these beautiful birds from her riverside home.*

*“When we first saw the finished design, our reaction was simply ‘wow’ – it even brought a tear to our eyes. It captures the beauty, character and spirit of Richmond perfectly, and we hope it gives people an even greater sense of pride in this wonderful place to live, work and visit.”*

Martyn Griffiths, District Manager at Five Guys, said: *“This mural will be a fantastic addition to Richmond, and we’re delighted to play a small part in bringing it to life.*

*“It’s a wonderful celebration of the area’s character and heritage, and we’re proud that our restaurant will form part of such a prominent piece of public art.”*

The project has been supported by Eligo, landlords of the Five Guys Richmond building, alongside Five Guys Richmond and a range of local stakeholders as part of a long-term vision to create new cultural landmarks and further enhance Richmond town centre.

## SAVE THE DATE

Be Richmond are excited to announce that they will be hosting a grand unveiling launch event in July. Further details and timings will be confirmed shortly.

# Live Languages: Charity French coffee morning at ETNA

From Live Languages

Calling all Francophiles! On Saturday 5 September, residents of all ages and levels of French are invited to practise their French conversation at ETNA Community Centre.

Make local friends and practise your French over tea, coffee and croissants. You'll meet like-minded French students in ETNA's café with indoor and outdoor seating areas.

Meanwhile, join a friendly local language class this summer with Live Languages mini conversation groups in French and Spanish.

All ages and levels of French are welcome. Suggested donation of £10 to go towards ETNA Community Centre.

- Date: Saturday 5 September 2026
- Time: 11.30am to 12.30pm
- Location: ETNA Community Centre, 13 Rosslyn Road, TW1 2AR

Find out more about [Live Languages French and Spanish conversation lessons and RSVP](#).



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# Is George Street Being Used to Road-Test a National Lib Dem Policy Idea?

By James Knight



After the row over George Street, a second question now hangs over Richmond Council's town centre plans: are residents being asked to fund a local improvement scheme, or to road-test a national Liberal Democrat policy idea?

The question arises because Cllr Katie Mansfield, Richmond's lead member for the redevelopment of the town centre, also chairs the Liberal Democrats' national High Streets and Town Centre Policy Working Group. She is also the party's Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Hampstead and Highgate. In other words, the councillor driving Richmond's town centre programme locally is also helping shape the party's national policy in the same field, while seeking higher office under the Lib Dem banner.

## **A Striking Overlap**

The overlap is not incidental. The national Lib Dem approach to high streets promotes many of the themes now appearing in Richmond: pedestrianisation, placemaking, active travel, cultural events, stronger town centre partnerships and more "activated" public spaces. Richmond's local vision speaks much the same language.

None of this proves wrongdoing. Councillors are entitled to contribute to national policy, and parties are entitled to develop ideas. But when the same councillor is leading a major local scheme and chairing the party's national policy work in the same area, residents are entitled to ask whether George Street is being shaped purely by local evidence, or whether Richmond is being turned into a publicly funded proving ground.

That distinction matters. A council improvement scheme should begin with local evidence, local need and local consent. A party policy project begins with an idea it wants to demonstrate. If Richmond taxpayers are paying for traffic modelling, public realm changes and possible future restrictions, they deserve to know which of those two things this really is.

### **Public Money, Political Benefit**

This is where the politics becomes uncomfortable. A successful George Street scheme would not only help Richmond Council. It could also provide a useful national example for the Liberal Democrats: a showcase of high street renewal, delivered by a Lib Dem council, led locally by the chair of the party's own policy working group, and available to be cited by a parliamentary candidate campaigning elsewhere in London.

That does not mean Cllr Mansfield is acting improperly. But it does mean the council should be unusually transparent. Public money should not be used to build a political showroom unless residents have clearly agreed that the scheme is right for Richmond on its own merits.

### **Access Already Matters**

The concern is sharpened by the council's record on town centre access. High parking charges have long been a complaint from residents and traders who fear Richmond is becoming harder and more expensive to visit by car. If the council now adds further uncertainty over access, traffic restrictions and the future of George Street, it risks weakening the very high street it claims it wants to revive.

A national high street strategy can sound benign in a conference paper. Residents experience it differently: parking costs, altered routes, longer journeys, delivery difficulties, displaced traffic and the choice between shopping in Richmond or going somewhere easier. A policy that looks tidy in a Lib Dem document may look very different to a trader watching customers drift to Kingston, Westfield or online shopping.

### **Scrutiny in a One-Party Council**

The issue is also sharpened by Richmond's political imbalance. The Liberal Democrats hold every seat on the council. There is no formal opposition group in the chamber. In such circumstances, scrutiny cannot be treated as a nuisance. When public money is being spent on a scheme that closely mirrors the governing party's national agenda, the burden of proof should be higher, not lower.

Cllr Mansfield may sincerely believe the Richmond scheme is right for the town centre. But sincerity is not enough. The council should answer a simple question: is George Street being redesigned because local evidence shows this is the best solution, or because it fits a national Lib Dem story about how high streets should be remade?

Richmond town centre needs revival. It does not need to become a political showroom. George Street should be shaped by what works for residents, traders, shoppers, buses, deliveries, disabled access and older drivers, not by what best illustrates a national Lib Dem policy paper.

# Ruth Cadbury MP comments on Government announcement on a third runway at Heathrow

From Ruth Cadbury, MP for Brentford and Isleworth

“As a constituency MP I wanted to provide an update for local residents about the potential for a third runway at Heathrow Airport.

The Government has confirmed its support for a third runway at Heathrow by launching a 10-week public consultation on a draft Heathrow Expansion National Policy statement (HENPS). Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said that expansion “has the potential to improve connectivity, strengthen resilience and support economic growth”.

However she went on to say that she has considered how the Government’s four tests for Heathrow should be applied...

1. Economic Growth across the UK.
2. Compatibility with the UK’s legally binding climate targets.
3. Keeping within legal air quality limits.
4. That noise is no worse than current levels, with reductions where possible, supported by effective mitigation.

The proposals need to be scrutinised for the likely impact of a third runway on noise levels locally including the North parts of Cranford, Heston, Osterley, Brentford and Chiswick.

The government has said that should the expansion go ahead, there will be “effective mitigation”. I will hold the Government to that commitment. The potential for a third runway to bring more traffic congestion on the M4 and M25, on local roads and on the existing public transport network needs to be examined carefully.

I have long been concerned about the impact that expansion could have on our transport network. Heathrow at its present size needs new rail links to relieve these pressures, and these links will be even more necessary should the third runway be given the go ahead. The announcement is not the final decision, and the draft HENPS is likely to be scrutinised in detail by the Transport Committee, which I chair, before a parliamentary decision is made.

In my capacity as Chair of that cross-party, collaborative Parliamentary committee, I have a duty to examine the views of Heathrow Airport and a range of organisations both supporting and opposing the third runway to assess the full range of likely national and local impacts or benefits of the scheme. This forensic assessment will provide robust evidence for eventual recommendations to Government.”

# TEDDINGTON VILLAGE FAIR



SUNDAY, 5TH JULY 2026  
UDNEY HALL GARDENS

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# Barnes mum builds village to end family loneliness

From The Village Barnes

Loneliness doesn't care if you live somewhere beautiful. Parents are standing next to each other in Barnes, on the Common, at the school gate - and they are completely alone. Chloe Stephens, a single mum with nearly 30 years in childcare, built The Village Barnes to change that.

Her new venture is launching this summer with 188 families already on the waitlist and every penny going back into the community.

Visit as it soft launches at Barnes Fair on 11 July with a Baby Quiet Zone.

[Find out more](#) and join the waitlist.



# Join us on Saturday 27 June for our next Marble Makes!

From Marble Hill House

This FREE creative drop-in requires no booking—just turn up and join in. Find us outside the Coach House Café (weather permitting) between 11am and 2pm.

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We look forward to seeing you there!



# Row over £150,000 Little Green Playground Plan

By James Knight



Richmond Council's town centre vision has already produced rows over George Street, traffic restrictions and whether national Lib Dem policy is being road-tested locally. Now a quieter proposal threatens to become just as revealing: a £150,000 children's play space on Little Green.

On paper, it sounds harmless. The council wants a small play area, aimed mainly at younger children, as part of its plan to make Richmond town centre more welcoming for families. In another location, that might pass without much fuss. But Little Green is not spare land waiting for a municipal idea. It sits within one of Richmond's most sensitive historic settings, close to Richmond Green, Richmond Theatre and the conservation area.

## Heritage is not a blank canvas

Vivian Harris, chair of Friends of Richmond Green, gave one of the sharpest interventions at the Finance, Policy and Resources Committee. Speaking for "approximately 350 households" around the Green, she urged councillors not to approve the £150,000 play space, arguing that the money would deliver "greater public benefit" elsewhere in the town centre.

Her objection was not anti-child and it was not anti-play. It was about place. Richmond Green, she said, was of "great historic value", and Little Green forms part of that setting. Play equipment, fencing, surfacing, extra footfall and noise may look modest in a committee report, but in a heritage landscape small changes can do lasting damage.

Mrs Harris also warned of pressure on trees, soil compaction, the setting of the Grade II listed

theatre, vandalism, anti-social behaviour and drug-related activity after dark. She was not easily hurried. When council leader Gareth Roberts tried to keep her to the three-minute speaking limit, she pressed on, making clear that residents' concerns could not be tidied away by the clock.

### **The missing sentence**

The most serious allegation concerned the Richmond Green Management Plan. Mrs Harris said the plan had previously included wording that a playground would not be appropriate on a site of such heritage importance. She told councillors that this wording had disappeared from the council website "without consultation or explanation."

That claim requires a straight answer. If the wording was removed, who removed it, when, and why? Was it a routine update, or did the council's own management plan prove inconvenient for the scheme now being advanced? Residents should not have to suspect that the policy ground has been softened beneath their feet.

### **Small does not mean harmless**

Cllr Katie Mansfield sought to reassure the committee. This was "not a big playground", she said, not swings, slides and climbing frames, but "a few" nature-based items for younger children. That may be so. But the issue is not just scale. It is principle. In the wrong place, even a modest intervention can change how a historic space looks, feels and is used. The question is not whether play space is desirable. It is whether Little Green is the right place for it.

Nor is £150,000 a trivial sum. Residents have raised repeated concerns about public toilets, policing, anti-social behaviour, shop vacancies, high parking charges and the basic condition of the town centre. Against that backdrop, many will ask why a new play space on Little Green has become a priority.

Richmond should be family-friendly. But families need clean toilets, safe streets, reliable transport, affordable access and a town centre worth visiting. A playground is not a substitute for getting the basics right.

### **A test of respect for place**

The Little Green proposal is smaller than George Street, but it may prove just as telling. It tests whether Richmond Council is genuinely listening, or whether "activation" has become a slogan used to justify almost any alteration to public space.

No one should dismiss the value of children's play. But not every good idea belongs in every location. Richmond Green and Little Green are part of the town's inheritance, not simply council assets to be repurposed. Before spending £150,000 in such a sensitive setting, the council should publish the evidence, explain the management plan, answer the heritage concerns, set out the maintenance and safety arrangements, and prove that this is the right site.

Richmond's historic spaces should be improved with care, not remodelled by fashion. Little Green deserves better than to become another example of the council's enthusiasm for activation outrunning its respect for place.



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# From Eel Pie to 2099: The Story Behind Vela Jones

By Rick Cassman

For many people in Richmond and Twickenham, I'm probably best known as one of The Deputies, the sixties covers band that has been entertaining audiences across South West London for more than twenty years.

The Richmond area has always held a special place in my heart. I spent several happy years living on a houseboat at Ducks Walk and have fond memories of Eel Pie Island, a place forever woven into Britain's rock and roll history. It's a part of the world where music seems to seep from the very ground, and I feel fortunate to have played a small role in that story.



My own musical journey began in the late 1960s when I played bass guitar with Ealing Art School rock band *Gnome Sweet Gnome*. In the mid-1970s I worked as a staff songwriter for Carlin Music Publishing before my career took an unexpected turn when I was discovered by local legend Pete Townshend.

Pete signed my band, Straight Eight, to his Eel Pie Records label, launching an incredible five-year adventure of recording and touring. We secured three major album deals and even toured alongside Queen. It was an exciting period that opened doors I could only have dreamed about as a young musician.

After those years on the road, I moved behind the mixing desk, running a recording studio in North West London and learning the craft of engineering and producing records for other artists. Later, in the early 2000s, I built a studio in Soho and began composing music for television, film and animation – work that I continue to enjoy today.

Alongside my production work, I've never stopped writing my own music. During the past five years I've released three solo albums: *Method and Accident*, *Solitude* and *Wonderful*.



Then, around six months ago, I decided to embark on something completely different.

The music industry has changed dramatically since my touring days. New technology is transforming how music is created, shared and experienced. Rather than seeing these changes as a threat, I became fascinated by the possibilities they offered.

That's when Vela Jones was born.

Vela is a virtual artist, created using a combination of songwriting, production, visual design and artificial intelligence. As a songwriter, I had always wanted to create a project with a strong female identity – contemporary, melodic, visually striking and free from conventional limitations.

Creating a Vela Jones track begins in a very traditional way. Every song starts with me and

a guitar, building a melody, writing lyrics and crafting a memorable chorus. The foundations are the same songwriting principles I've relied on throughout my career.

What changes is what happens next.

I imagined Vela as an artist from the year 2099 – someone who exists in a future world where music, technology and storytelling merge together. Suddenly there were no boundaries. Vela could travel through time, explore different worlds and tell stories from perspectives impossible for a conventional artist.

Even her voice begins with mine. I sing the original performance and then use modern technology to transform it into Vela's distinctive vocal character.

Some musicians remain sceptical about artificial intelligence and argue that it lacks soul. I understand those concerns. But my view is that AI is simply another creative tool. It doesn't replace songwriting, imagination or experience. It amplifies them.

The songs, melodies, lyrics and creative decisions still come from a human being. Technology simply allows ideas to develop faster and on a larger canvas. Sometimes it feels as though I'm collaborating with a room full of world-class musicians, producers and film-makers, all contributing ideas that I can shape into something uniquely my own.

The response so far has been encouraging. Vela has already released two singles, with another due later this summer. Her audience is steadily growing and she has attracted more than 4,000 TikTok followers within just a few weeks.

Of course, success in modern music is rarely instant. Millions of tracks are released every month and competition is fierce. Building an audience takes time, patience and persistence.

For me, however, the real reward is the creative freedom. Vela Jones gives me an outlet for the endless stream of songs and ideas that continue to arrive every day. It's exciting, unpredictable and enormous fun.

At the same time, nothing will ever replace the thrill of standing on stage with The Deputies, playing loud guitars and watching people dance, sing and enjoy themselves.

Whether performing sixties classics in Richmond or creating music from the imagined world of 2099, the goal remains exactly the same: connecting with people through songs.

And after all these years, that's still the best part of the journey.

### Follow Rick & Vela

Vela website: [www.velajones.com](http://www.velajones.com)

Rick website: [www.rickcassman.com](http://www.rickcassman.com)

Vela TikTok: [https://www.tiktok.com/@velajones?\\_r=1&\\_t=ZN-95nkH1V2T2c](https://www.tiktok.com/@velajones?_r=1&_t=ZN-95nkH1V2T2c)

Vela YouTube Channel: <https://youtube.com/@velajonesmusic?si=X7M5hrx3sQ0X762I>

Vela Spotify Artist: <https://open.spotify.com/album/6WllyxLEc3D2AeaSc8ipt5?si=jwMUfT53OgKnzZM0ZAZOqA>

Rick Spotify Artist: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/1jM0sLTxSpAgypzY136RHR?si=8PFc9rbjRk6f62DiyLJfqQ>



## Supper At Ottolenghi

Earlier this year I reviewed the delicious afternoon tea at **Ottolenghi in Richmond**. At the time I wondered why the deli wasn't open in the evenings, just during the day. Well, I'm pleased to announce that it is now open on certain evenings in the week (Thursday to Saturday).



Needless to say, I was keen to check it out, so I went the other evening with my Turkish friend Burcu, who is a great cook and a staunch Ottolenghi fan.

I had a Negroni - it was good, but rather "thin", lacking any of the bitter punch usually found in my favourite cocktail. It contained 58 and Co gin, Italian bitter, vault forest red vermouth and Persian lime - maybe the balance was wrong, or perhaps one of the ingredients was missing. Burcu opted for a glass of white wine. I was pleased to note that on the small, but very well composed drinks list, there are a number of non alcoholic cocktails too (including a Botivo Spritz - one of my favourite non alco drinks). There is also a non alco Negroni with 58 and Co's non alcoholic gin - perhaps that was what was in mine? (but if so, it was probably better for me!)



We started with a 'snack' of smoked labneh with za'atar pita chips. There was a subtle smokiness that added another dimension to the labneh and the pita chips were a revelation; I'm going to try making some soon.

It's very much a case of sharing a few different dishes here. I was glad to have the company of Burcu, as my husband, who was away sailing, hates sharing his food. We shared a tomato salad with mango dressing - it had a selection of heritage tomatoes and the dressing, while absolutely fabulous, was rather scant and the salad would have benefited considerably from a more liberal dressing. The toasted almonds scattered on top added another savoury note, and texture, and there was a generous base layer of fresh basil leaves.



Roasted aubergine with feta cream, za'atar tomatoes and carob molasses was liberally piled with basil, dill and mint leaves. It was fabulous, and having recently been in Greece learning about feta, where I tried many different aubergine and feta dishes, this Ottolenghi version was ultra herby aubergine heaven.

For our mains, we shared lamb kofta with amba, tahini and pickled kohlrabi. It was really tasty with the lamb boasting true earthy 'lambiness'. The pickled kohlrabi was unusual, and we'd

have loved a bigger portion of that to have been served with the kofta. The kofta itself had been cut in half and was perfectly grilled, allowing some pinkness and cooked perfectly to make the most of the top quality lamb.

The other main was a bit of a gamble for us. We chose the Al Pastor mushroom skewer with plum, annatto oil and tarragon. It sounded so unusual that we couldn't pass it by. And we were so glad we didn't...it was a triumph. Who'd have thought to put tarragon with plums and mushrooms? The kitchen of a culinary genius, of course. It's actually quite hard to describe the dish, but if you are going to Ottolenghi for dinner, I urge you to try it. It was so good.



In the interests of this review, you understand, we chose both of the desserts to try. The lemon and blueberry kataifi mess was beautifully presented. It was really refreshing and kataifi was a new find for me. Burcu tells me that she often buys it ready-made from our local Mediterranean store and that it can be used in sweet or savoury dishes. (for the uninitiated, like me, it looks like a dark fine straw, but it's a wheat pastry in really fine strands).



The other dessert, chocolate mousse orange caramel and sour cream, tasted really good and was very rich, but the kitchen might like to consider a different way of presenting it as it didn't look at all appealing in the bowl. Trust me, it was very delicious indeed but the presentation didn't really do it justice.

Wines are from £8 a glass and there is a small, but very good selection. They also have three beers, a Breton cider and two 0.5% beers plus a selection of interesting soft drinks.

The Ottolenghi menu is just right for a summer supper and I know I'll be back soon as I'm still dreaming about that mushroom skewer.

## A Cool New Product from Meaco

In this heatwave, the importance of having one or two good fans in the house becomes very clear.

Quite a few years ago now, I bought a dinky little self charging fan from a company called **Meaco**, as recommended by Alice Beer on ITV's This Morning. It was superb, and cost less than £30 and it served us really, really well for quite a few years. But sadly, it finally gave up and its inbuilt battery wouldn't recharge.

But help was at hand: Meaco is now the UK's leading air treatment and home comfort brand - a much deserved title. And with perfect timing for this hot weather, it has recently launched a new **Sefte® 6" Portable Battery Air Circulator**. This is a compact, 1.7kg rechargeable fan and air circulator for a much larger area, designed to go anywhere, delivering quiet, close-up cooling at home, at work and on the move...and it's fantastic (if you'll pardon the pun).



This new model replaces the bestselling MeacoFan 260c (my much loved one was a forerunner of that, but without a replaceable battery) and reflects Meaco's commitment to products that last longer. While many rechargeable fans treat the battery as a sealed-in part of the appliance,

Meaco has designed the Sefté® 6” so the battery can be replaced when required. Rechargeable batteries have a finite life and may typically need replacing after around two to three years, depending on usage. This means customers can keep using the fan for longer, rather than replacing the whole product, reducing avoidable plastic waste and giving better long-term value.

Designed in the UK using feedback from Meaco customers, the Sefté® 6” has been developed for flexible, personal cooling. It is lightweight, easy to carry and offers up to 26.5 hours of cordless cooling, making it suitable for desks, bedside tables, kitchens, home offices, boats, caravans, holidays and other places where quiet, portable airflow is needed. Even gardens on a hot afternoon.

You can use it plugged into the mains or run on its battery - whatever suits the location best. The battery charges to 100% in just 3.5 hours and delivers up to 40 hours of cordless use, depending on fan speed and settings of course, giving you the freedom to stay cool without being tied to a power socket.

The Sefté® 6” also introduces more proportional airflow, with lower speed settings adapted to provide even gentler cooling when the fan is used close. It will oscillate with multiple oscillation ranges to direct airflow exactly where wanted, so perfect for silent nighttime use, desk use and other situations where one wants a softer, quieter airflow. With noise levels as low as 23dB, there’s whisper-quiet cooling, including overnight, when sound, lights and ease of control matter most.

It has 12 fan speeds, plus Normal, ECO and Night modes. There’s a digital display, on/off timer, hidden carry handle and all sorts of other great technical improvements. It even has a remote control - perfect for turning it off from your bedside table at 3 a.m. when things cool down, we hope.

If needed, the airflow reaches up to 32 metres (equivalent to the length of a Boeing 737) for wholeroom air circulation while maintaining noise levels as low as just 25 dB, making it ideal for bedrooms, offices and shared spaces. Its rechargeable and replaceable battery is a standout feature, offering true portability alongside a more sustainable design—simply replace the battery, not the fan, to extend its lifespan.

We love our new Meaco fan.

You can buy one direct from Meaco [here](#) for £69.99 with free delivery.

It does everything you’d expect from a quality fan, and a lot more. And it has a free three-year warranty - to demonstrate Meaco’s high standards of product manufacture and customer care.

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# Eclipse of the Century - what it is all about

By Bruce Lyons

I didn't mean to - but it seems there is lot more to it than meets the eye (pardon the pun)  
This will be the longest Totality (as they call it)



The August 2, 2027, total solar eclipse path of totality begins in the Atlantic Ocean, sweeps across the Strait of Gibraltar, and crosses North Africa and the Middle East before ending in the Indian Ocean. The maximum duration of totality—an incredible 6 minutes and 22 seconds—will occur near Luxor, Egypt.

There is already incredible interest in this phenomenon, you won't find already rooms in Gibraltar or Luxor or Tetuan, at affordable prices.

I have been building my Cosmic Centre Window this week and by early next week we will have it finished, however many companies are sold out. Nile Cruises are almost totally booked up, hotels in Luxor and Gibraltar are simply not available at affordable prices. Most packages are sold without flights which will not come in range till middle late August. Algeria has some 8 day and 5 days small group tours which have space till now, a 9 day odyssey in Egypt which includes an awful lot is still available from £5500 - there will be some Red Sea in my Window next week but a 6 night Eclipse Special with a Professor from Iowa (author and specialist on Eclipse) in attendance - very limited space here from £730 (already in the Window) next week I will be adding Saudi Arabia and perhaps the Oman.



In discussions with Eclipse enthusiasts the main drawback is the heat! Certainly hasn't put off the Americans.

Stargazing will also be a feature, as in the Desert it will be a New Moon and the Desert is the place for Star Gazing.

Follow us in our window as interest grows, or email for any itinerary.



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# Barnum

by Cy Coleman, lyrics by Michael Stewart, book by Mark Bramble  
Bill Kenwright Ltd at Richmond Theatre until 27<sup>th</sup> June, then on tour until 31<sup>st</sup> October

Phineas Taylor Barnum, that epitome of showmanship, had an engaging personality “*There is a sucker born ev’ry minute*” was his motto, yet that only made him more likeable.

Lee Mead portrays Barnum’s passion and commitment, drawing us into his world with an enigmatic introduction, as the curtain goes up on a vibrant rich ground of trapeze artists, acrobats and circus performers, all choreographed by Oti Mabuse. Designer Lee Newby’s splendid vibrant set and costumes, flooded with atmospheric lighting by Jai Morjaria, is a spectacular sight.



Barnum’s wife Charity, played by the splendid Monique Young, sits in a box observing the whole spectacle, as she works tirelessly to keep her ambitious husband down to earth.



*Barnum, The Circus Musical*, directed by Jonathan O’Boyle, has stunning trapeze artists, and a multi-instrument playing chorus. A 160 year old woman, Joice Heth, played by monumental Dominique Planter, sings the marvellous *Thank God I’m Old*. Laura Sillett has great stage presence in a standout performance as the ringmaster.

Charity and the company sing *One Brick at a Time*, as Barnum builds his museum, soon tragically to burn down. Yet the determined Barnum finds two new star attractions, General Tom Thumb (Fergus Rattigan), and the marvellous puppet Jumbo the Elephant.

When Penny Ashmore’s Jenny Lind, the famous Swedish opera singer, appears and beautifully sings *Love Makes Such Fools of us All*, we know that Barnum would inevitably become infatuated. Indeed, he accompanies the singer on tour.

Barnum’s incredible tightrope walk, the pre-interval climax, has a cool and collected Mead bringing the house down.

Opening with Barnum’s number, *Black and White*, the show gains momentum. He vows to live a sedate existence after an emotional reunion with Charity. However, his clockworks’ business fails, as does his short political career. Then Charity dies, leaving Barnum bereft.

Musical director Kevin Oliver Jones also has the role of James Bailey, who offers Barnum a lifeline. Their duet *Join the Circus*, features Jones’ excellent banjo playing. Together, they found the famous Barnum and Bailey Circus.



With its glittering and splendid finale, we find ourselves with Barnum and his performers all the way, in an exciting, toe-tapping spectacle.

Read Heather Moulson’s review at [www.markaspen.com/2026/06/25/barnum-wt](http://www.markaspen.com/2026/06/25/barnum-wt)

Photography by Pamela Raith



## Cluedo

by Jonathan Lynn and Sandy Rustin

Questors Productions at Walpole Park, Ealing, until 27<sup>th</sup> June

There can be very few people who have not, at some time, played the board game *Cluedo*. But Questors is not afraid of subverting traditional whodunnit concepts. Instead of a dark and stormy night, think beautiful summer evening in the park.

*Cluedo* is a paean to the great Agatha Christie murder mysteries, its premise instantly recognisable. Six people are invited to the house of a Mr Body, who has news to their advantage. Each of the six hides a guilty secret. Each guest adopts a pseudonym, namely the recognisable personae of the board game, masking who they truly are. It gradually becomes clear they are all being blackmailed by the same man.



Then, there's the staff; Wadsworth, a butler who might not be all he seems, Yvette, a French maid whose lapses into estuary English hint at a past, and a cook.

One person is discovered murdered, and what follows is a board-game turned comedy thriller, with its tongue very much lodged firmly in its cheek, as the characters move room to room, hurling accusations, inviting or dodging suspicion, and trying to avoid being murdered.

The set is divided into one main playing area, delineated by three exit spaces in black and white art deco designs. It becomes variously conservatory, ballroom or lounge.

The playful nature of the approach is exemplified by use of simplistic cardboard drawings of props, whether that be a wireless, wine glasses, dinner plates or the usual array of murder weapons. Another inventive touch is adroit use of a black sheet by the stage crew whenever a nefarious murder takes place.

Rachel Moorhead's direction is on the button. She keeps the action fluid, adding to the fast-moving and strong acting. The hard-working cast uniformly rise to the occasion, delivering a series of amusing, engaging and entertaining characterisations, steering clear of parody whilst maintaining a healthy disregard for stuffy pretension, and helped along by an ensemble with beautifully timed knowing nods and winks.



This is not *King Lear*. There is nothing subtle here, nothing to really think about, no final message, and that is entirely the point. It's a feel-good confection ideally suited to a relaxed post-picnic entertainment on a hot summer's evening.

Read Harry Zimmerman's review at [www.markaspen.com/2026/06/20/cluedo-2](http://www.markaspen.com/2026/06/20/cluedo-2)

Photography by Carla Marker

## Allegra

by Peter Quilter

Thomas Hopkins at the Theatre Royal, Windsor and on tour until 8<sup>th</sup> August

Stop Press: National treasure and grande-dame of the theatre, Maureen Lipman has succumbed to an acute case of Tourette's.

Not the swearing tic type, but the saccharine nice-as-pie version that sees her bursting into uncontrollable singing mode: at the butcher's, the baker's, the Indian eatery, the petrol station. Probably the undertakers wouldn't be out of bounds to this enthusiastic song thrush and eponymous star of *Allegra*.

*Allegra* dances a fine line between froth, fun and absurdity. She is also touchingly vulnerable. At times her crazed behaviour is near to making your teeth ache, at others you just want to hug her for bringing so much joy.



*Lipman's timing, on and off stage, is sublime. This is the first time in twenty years she's toured the UK, a milestone marked by her shifting seamlessly into her ninth decade during the run. There's hardly a breath between musical numbers.*

*Allegra is mystified by the response to her singing, which is sometimes just in her head, but mainly very out loud. You'd think choirs would be happy to enrol her, but no, she's been banned by four. Allegra's unalloyed lust for life, her questionable habit of keeping her dad's ashes in a cocoa tin, and assorted eccentricities put her at odds with the rest of society and it falls to her brother to somehow control her habits without destroying her spirit.*



**John Middleton** is an excellent foil as Ronen, loyal and protective of Allegra, driven by frustration with a system that seeks to deaden his sister's exuberance with a court-imposed drugs regime. He recruits Anna, a carer who brings with her Czech pragmatism (and delicious dumpling cookery). **Elizabeth Bower** portrays Anna with great sensitivity and humour, as establishing a strong rapport with her charge. **Bailey Patrick plays** the hapless village plod, who veers between anger, exasperation and sympathy for Allegra, even joining in the odd singing, dancing and spoon playing.

Designer Justin Williams creates colourful contrasts of chintzy décor, swirling rainbow knits, cosy purple robes and an ensemble fit for Ascot.



*Allegra's* director and choreographer Stephen Mear balances pathos and humour with raw emotion. It's part comedy, part musical, part fantasy with a pinch of social commentary, but mainly it's about a dotty old lady.

Read Gill Martin's review at [www.markaspen.com/2026/06/16/allegra](http://www.markaspen.com/2026/06/16/allegra)

Photography by Marc Brenner

## Once

by Glen Hansard and Markéta Irglová, book by Enda Walsh  
Teddington Theatre Club at the Hampton Hill Theatre until 27<sup>th</sup> June

We see a tender friendship develop, both heartwarming and bittersweet, in the story of *Once*, which follows the fate of Guy an Irish busker, during one momentous week.

To set the Dublin craic, a cast and audience sing-along of favourite Irish ballads precedes the show. The on-stage band, lead by musical director Nic Luker, provides high-quality accompaniment. It's great way warm up the audience, but it might be a bit disconcerting for those who linger too long in the bar!

The musical stands and falls by the performance of the actor playing the demanding role of Guy, and Jacob Taylor's beautiful and interesting voice complements his sensitive portrayal of a street musician whose talent is unrecognised. Guy's wistful love songs are composed between his prosaic day-job as a vacuum cleaner repair man and his nights thinking of his lost love who has moved to New York.



A chance encounter with a Czech immigrant, known only as Girl, leads him to rethink his life, leave the repair shop and embark on a career as musician and songwriter in the USA. Ellie Armstrong's Girl is convincing in her empathy with Guy's compositions, is the inspiration he needs to move away to pursue a serious career in music. Ellie's delightful voice fits with her character's love of music and her drive is evident. Brooking no dissent, she determinedly persuades him to make a recording, finance it and leave for New York to seek his fortune.

An authentic set by director Wesley Henderson Roe serves as a Dublin street scene, music shop, Guy's bedroom, Girl's flat, and a bar, without a single scene change.

Credit goes to the Czech players, especially the convincing drunks. It's a nice touch to include the Czech lyrics to the songs, as is the playful translation of the Baruska-Guy dialogue.

The contrast of the gently developing romantic relationship between the lead characters, and the everyday life and partying of the other characters, mirrors the contradicting and potentially life-changing decisions faced by Guy.

The production is fun. The dancing, and the music ensemble's excellent performance, recreate the lively atmosphere of a good Friday night in an Irish pub.



Read Polly Davies' review at [www.markaspen.com/2026/06/24/once-2](http://www.markaspen.com/2026/06/24/once-2)

Photography by Kim Harding

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Arlen - Somewhere Over the Rainbow  
Mancini - Moon River

*and more .....*

**Saturday 4 July 2026, 7.30pm**

*Musical Director - Emma Warren*

*Accompanist - Pam Kent and professional soloist*

All Saint's Church, The Avenue, Hampton, TW12 3RG



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

Charity Number 261788

# Free lunch at community days at the Ellera Centre!

Over the next few weeks, The Ellera Centre is hosting **three** events that are open to the entire local community. All are free and they all include a delicious home-cooked lunch. Although the centre is extending a warm welcome to everyone living in and around Teddington, they are especially eager to welcome those who live alone or are vulnerable.

**All they ask is that you reserve your place by telephoning the centre on 020 8977 0549. Numbers are limited, so do call quickly!**

## Wednesday, July 1st: Make a Difference Day

During the morning the team at the Ellera Centre will be joined by year 9 and 10 students from Radnor House School for their annual 'Make a Difference Day'. They will be helping to run the Ellera Social Club's activities and games programme including refreshments at 10.00 am followed by skittles at 11.00 am. At 12.30 pm everyone will come together for a delicious and nutritious home cooked lunch. The day's events finish with a musical performance from the very talented Radnor House students.

**Numbers are limited, so please call the centre on 020 8977 0549 to reserve your place!**

It's a great opportunity to find out about the new Ellera Centre and get a taste of just how much fun there is to be had at The Ellera Social Club. It's open every weekday and provides its members with a variety of classes and activities to keep them fit, healthy and entertained. Pick up a leaflet while you're there!

**THE ELLERAY CENTRE, 23 NORTH LANE,  
TEDDINGTON, TW11 0HJ  
CHARITY NO. 1150261**

**THE ELLERAY CENTRE IS EXCITED TO HOST  
RADNOR HOUSE TWICKENHAM FOR THEIR ANNUAL  
MAKE A DIFFERENCE DAY!  
1ST JULY 2026**

**MORNING TEA AND ENTERTAINMENT  
FREE LUNCH PROVIDED BY THE ELLERAY CENTRE WITH  
THE SUPPORT OF SURPLUS TO SUPPER**

**10:00 REFRESHMENTS  
11:00 SKITTLES  
12:20 LUNCH  
13:00 MUSIC PERFORMANCE**

**WE HAVE 40 SPACES AVAILABLE SO PLEASE SIGN UP BY  
FRIDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE TO SECURE YOUR PLACE!  
EMAIL [AVC@ELLERAYCENTRE.ORG](mailto:AVC@ELLERAYCENTRE.ORG) OR CALL US ON 020 8977 0549**



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ENJOY A DELICIOUS FREE 2 COURSE MEAL,  
FRIENDLY CONVERSATION, AND A WARM WELCOME.  
EVERY FIRST TUESDAY OF THE MONTH STARTING  
7<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2026

LUNCH SERVED PROMPTLY AT 1200

40 SPACES AVAILABLE SO PLEASE CALL 020 8977 0549 TO PRE BOOK

THE ELLERAY CENTRE, NORTH LANE,  
TEDDINGTON, TW11 0HJ

EVERYONE WELCOME

**GOOD FOOD • GOOD COMPANY •  
•COMMUNITY SPIRIT •**

WITH THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS




## Tuesday, July 7<sup>th</sup>: Free Community Lunch at 12 noon

The first Tuesday in July marks the first of The Ellery Centre's Free Community Lunches. They will then take place on the first Tuesday of every month.

This free lunch is organised in partnership with Surplus To Supper, a local charity committed to tackling food waste and food poverty. As well as a delicious two course meal, there will be a warm, friendly welcome and plenty of good company! Everyone is welcome, and especially those who live alone or are vulnerable. Please call the Ellery Centre for details and to reserve your seat: 020 8977 0549.

## Friday, August 7<sup>th</sup>: Free Staycation Party 10.30 am – 2.30 pm

We all know how expensive it can be to take a break in the school holidays! So why not book your place at the fabulous Staycation Party that

the Ellery Centre has lined up! The party fun starts with Games in the Garden (or inside if it's too hot or too wet!) followed by a nutritious and delicious home-cooked two course lunch.

After lunch, the Rah Rah Theatre Company will treat you to a performance of *'Summer Singing Sensations'*, a lively show packed with sunshine, singing and laughter. Everyone will also receive a free ticket in the raffle – you could win a great prize!

The Staycation Party is free, but numbers are limited, so advance booking is requested. Please contact the centre for further details or to reserve your seat at what promises to be a very entertaining day!  
Tel: 020 8977 0549 or email [avc@elleraycentre.org](mailto:avc@elleraycentre.org)



### The Ellery Centre

North Lane, Teddington TW11 0HJ

Tel: 020 8977 0549

[www.elleraycentre.org](http://www.elleraycentre.org)

The Ellery Centre and Ellery Social Club are managed by a local charity, Ellery Community Association, Charity Number 1150261



# TwickFolk



## Autumn / Winter 2026

Gigs most Sundays at the Cabbage Patch  
 67 London Rd Twickenham TW1 3SZ  
 Walking distance from Twickenham Station  
 and 267, 281, 490 and R68 bus stops  
 Doors open 7.45pm – music from 8.00pm

Under 25s pay only £5	Richmond Card holders get a £1 discount at the door, except on singers' nights / singarounds, when it's £5 for everyone
-----------------------	---

6 Sep	<b>Singaround</b>	Bring a pair of songs, tunes or poems you've learned or written over the summer and share them with the circle.	£5
13 Sep	<b>Nancy Kerr &amp; James Fagan</b>	Giants of English folk, Nancy has few equals as a singer, songwriter and fiddle player, while James is an outstandingly talented bouzouki player, guitarist and singer.	£21
20 Sep	<b>Luke Daniels</b>	Grounded in traditional Irish music, award-winning Luke has created a niche for himself over the course of eight solo albums as an interpreter of traditional music with a modern twist.	£15
27 Sep	<b>Women of Folk</b>	Lizzy Hardingham, Louise Hatch, Rebecca Mileham and Linda Moylan draw on traditional English and Irish sources, Greenwich Village and Laurel Canyon to deliver a unique performance.	£15
4 Oct	<b>Kathryn Roberts &amp; Sean Lakeman</b>	Kathryn and Sean recently celebrated 30 years as a revered, award-winning folk duo with a live album, 'Another Day at the Circus', which makes us look forward to this gig even more.	£22
11 Oct	<b>Singaround</b>	This month's chance to bring a pair of songs or poems to the circle for us all to enjoy, or just come along and listen.	£5
18 Oct	<b>Jack Rutter</b>	Jack applies his soaring vocals, powerhouse bouzouki and guitar work and engaging stage presence to masterful arrangements of traditional songs and contemporary covers.	£17
25 Oct	<b>Luke Jackson</b>	He effortlessly entertains the Royal Albert Hall as support to Jools Holland, but we prefer it when Luke his brings his gigantic voice and wonderful songs to a packed Cabbage Patch.	£18
1 Nov	<b>Johnny Campbell</b>	Johnny's narrative material has a strongly rural feel to it, whether he's recording on Nolsoy in the Faroes or on the hills of counties from which he's gathered his songs.	£15
8 Nov	<b>Closed</b>	<i>Closed for the rugby.</i>	N/A
15 Nov	<b>Hunter Muskett</b>	An acoustic-electric outfit playing original songs in a uniquely folk / blues / Americana style.	£15
22 Nov	<b>Singaround</b>	The final opportunity this year to bring a pair of song, tunes or poems to the circle, or just pull up a chair and listen.	£5
29 Nov	<b>Closed</b>	<i>Closed for the rugby.</i>	N/A
6 Dec	<b>Jackie Oates &amp; John Spiers Christmas Show</b>	A captivating evening of carols, wassails and festive tunes from across the British Isles and beyond, set to a soundscape of fiddle, melodeon, percussion, recorders and stomp box.	£21
13 – 27 Dec	<b>Closed</b>	<i>We're closed for Christmas and New Year. We'll start 2027 with a rousing singaround on 3 Jan.</i>	N/A

Tickets can be bought in advance at a discount from [WeGotTickets.com/TwickFolk](https://www.wegotickets.com/TwickFolk)

Please check online for updates and information

[www.twickfolk.co.uk](http://www.twickfolk.co.uk) | Facebook: @TwickFolk, @TwickFolk Friends

Instagram: @TwickFolk

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**St Mary the Virgin Mortlake  
&  
Mortlake Community  
Association**

**invite you to**

**A Garden Party**

**with tea, homemade cakes  
and live music**

**in St Mary's Churchyard**



**Sunday 28th June 2026  
from 3pm to 5pm**

# Local cancer charity marks 25th anniversary with new public-facing name

A leading local cancer support charity is marking its 25th anniversary by introducing a new public-facing name, Mulberry Cancer Support, helping more people understand the free support available to anyone affected by cancer.

**Mulberry  
Cancer  
Support**  
For anyone affected by cancer



Since opening in 2001, The Mulberry Centre has provided emotional, practical and wellbeing support to thousands of people affected by cancer across West London. In the last year alone, the charity supported 1,482 people and delivered 9,776 attendances across its range of services.

Support includes counselling, complementary therapies, wellbeing classes, support groups, information and advice for patients, carers and family members.

The introduction of Mulberry Cancer Support as the charity's public-facing name reflects a desire to make its purpose immediately clear to those seeking help.

Raj Athwal, Chief Executive of The Mulberry Centre, said:

*"For 25 years we have been supporting people affected by cancer across our local communities. Last year alone, 872 people newly*

*registered with the charity, demonstrating the ongoing demand for free emotional, practical and wellbeing support for those affected by cancer.*

*As we look to the future, we want to ensure that anyone who comes across our charity can immediately understand who we are and the support we provide. While our public-facing name is changing, our mission remains exactly the same, ensuring that no one faces cancer alone."*

The charity's legal name will remain The Mulberry Centre and there will be no changes to the services it provides.

As it celebrates its 25th anniversary, the charity is also looking ahead to growing demand for cancer support services, including the expansion of cancer treatment facilities at West Middlesex University Hospital, and continuing to ensure that local people affected by cancer can access free support when they need it most.

**Mulberry  
Cancer  
Support**  
For anyone affected by cancer



A DAY OF FUN, MUSIC & COMMUNITY

# SUMMER FETE

**SATURDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JULY**

**11:00AM TILL 16:00PM**

OVER 50 STALLS & A HUGE VARIETY OF  
ACTIVITIES FOR ALL AGES

FREE  
ENTRY

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ON BEHALF OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES COLLEGE

# OPEN AIR CINEMA

**FRIDAY 17<sup>TH</sup> & SATURDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JULY**

**17:30 TILL 21:30 PM**

VARIOUS PACKAGES AVAILABLE



Richmond upon  
Thames College

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EVENTS.COM](mailto:INFO@VELOCITY-EVENTS.COM)

# St Mary's University

## St Mary's Announces Appointment of New Vice-Chancellor



St Mary's University, London has today announced the appointment of Dr Øystein Lund as its new Vice-Chancellor following an extensive international recruitment process.

Øystein brings with him extensive experience in higher education, diplomacy and ministry that will be a significant benefit to the University community.

He is currently Counsellor for Research and Education at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in London, where he has worked on UK-Norway cooperation in higher education, research, innovation and skills since 2022.

Øystein succeeds Professor Anthony McClaran who will be leaving the University at the end of academic year, and he will be formally joining the University at the start of August.

Previously he held senior leadership roles at NOKUT, the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Higher Education from 2014-2022. He worked at MF Norwegian School of Theology, Religion and Society in Oslo from 1993 until 2014, initially as an associate professor before becoming Director of Academic Affairs in 2004 and Dean of Studies and Deputy to the Rector in 2009.

Outside of his academic and diplomatic work, Øystein is a Catholic priest in the Diocese of Oslo. He was first ordained in the Church of Norway in 1994, before being received into full communion

with the Catholic Church in 2009. He was ordained deacon in 2013 and priest in 2014.

Archbishop Richard Moth and St Mary's Chair of Governors, said, *"On behalf of the Board of Governors, I am delighted to welcome Rev Fr Dr Øystein Lund as our new Vice-Chancellor. His experience in academia, diplomacy, and leadership will be of enormous benefit to the university community. St Mary's University is at an exciting time in its development following many significant achievements under our outgoing Vice-Chancellor Professor Anthony McClaran, whom we wish well for all his future endeavours."*

*"The St Mary's Community came together last year to reflect on our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and celebrate all that has been achieved so far by our remarkable university community. We now look ahead to important initiatives like the opening of the School of Medicine and the Dubai Campus, which will deepen our impact and broaden our global reach. I am confident that Øystein is the right person to lead the University into this next stage of our academic journey and I will be praying for his and the University's success."*

Speaking of his appointment, Dr Øystein Lund said, *"I am honoured to have been appointed to such an important role in Catholic higher education in the UK. What draws me most to St Mary's is its ability to combine academic excellence with a genuine commitment to human flourishing, rooted in the Church's long tradition of learning, scholarship and inquiry."*

*"Professor McClaran has overseen considerable success during his time as Vice-Chancellor, and I look forward to building on this in the future. I am eager to begin working with colleagues, students and partners to strengthen the University's impact and expand opportunities for future generations. I am excited to help shape the next chapter in St Mary's story, serving communities locally, nationally and internationally."*



St Mary's  
University  
Twickenham  
London

The Barnes Choir Presents

Cecilia McDowall - *Ave Maris Stella*

Arvo Pärt - *Spiegel im Spiegel*

Russell Hepplewhite

- *Endless Time and Leaving*

Duruflé - *Requiem*

Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> June 2026 at 7.30pm

All Saints Church, East Sheen Avenue

East Sheen, SW14 8AX

Conductor: Julian Collings

Mezzo Soprano: Judy Louie Brown

Baritone: Jon Stainsby

Cello: Rebecca Hepplewhite

Piano/Organ: Peter Jaekel

Tickets £20 (under 16s go free)

From [www.barneschoir.org.uk/tickets](http://www.barneschoir.org.uk/tickets).

Doors and bar open from 7:00pm

THE  
BARNES  
CHOIR



# Creative Students Shine at Orleans House Gallery

On Friday 12 June, Orleans House Gallery in Twickenham became a vibrant hub of creativity as students from Richmond upon Thames College (RuTC) showcased their work across art, media, music, dance and performance.

## Showcasing Creative Excellence

Set within the historic gallery, the event featured an Art Exhibition of Level 3 students' final pieces alongside a Pop-Up Media Exhibition of dynamic projects. Visitors explored a wide range of work, from painting and textiles to photography and mixed-media installations, highlighting both technical skill and personal expression.

Themes such as identity, mental health, culture and the environment ran throughout the showcase with the exhibition marking an important milestone for students preparing for higher education or creative careers, offering valuable experience of presenting work in a professional setting.



## Bringing the Arts to Life

Alongside the visual arts, audiences enjoyed a varied programme of performance. This included a student adaptation of *The Importance of Being Earnest* in the Grade II listed Octagon Room, live music featuring original compositions, and expressive dance performances. *All The Things*, an interactive exhibition, encouraged visitors to engage directly with the work.

Level 3 Performing and Production Arts student O'Shai Linton said:

*"During the Orleans House Showcase, I was thrilled to see all students showcasing their work. It was great to see what everyone has been working on, and I was proud of my peers. It was a new and thoroughly enjoyable experience, and I'm extremely grateful for the opportunity."*

## Community Celebration

The event was attended by the Deputy Mayor of Richmond, Councillor Matthew Wherry, alongside RuTC Principal Gavin Hughes, Vice Principal Kai Barnes, and members of the local community.

Orleans House Gallery provided an ideal setting for the opening of the month-long exhibition, highlighting the importance of partnerships that support the creativity and potential of young artists.



Another highlight of the showcase was the contribution of RuTC Construction students, who worked collaboratively with Creative Arts learners to design and build sets for the performances and exhibitions.

Jo Terrell – Head of School for Creative Arts at Richmond upon Thames College said:

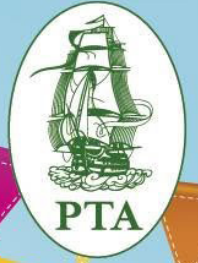
*"This showcase has effectively been six years in the making. It's fantastic to see how far we've come since the first group exhibited in 2021, with the college now presenting work of much greater scale, ambition, and quality. I'd like to thank our Creative Industries team for their dedication and hard work in delivering this showcase in such a short time, while managing assessments and complex logistics.*

*Most importantly, this would not be possible without the commitment, creativity, and resilience of our students at Richmond upon Thames College. They should be immensely proud of what they have achieved - well done."*



**Richmond upon  
Thames College**

TRAFALGAR  
SCHOOLS



# SUMMER FAIR

SUNDAY 28th JUNE  
12-3.30pm

TRAFALGAR SCHOOL, MEADWAY

Entrance: Adults £1 • Kids FREE

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  - DISCO TENT
  - SILENT AUCTION
  - TUG OF WAR
  - RAFFLE
  - FACE PAINTING
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  - CAKES & REFRESHMENTS
  - TOMBOLA
- and more...



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# RFU confirms Landmark Four-Year Contract Framework with the Red Roses through to 2030

The RFU has confirmed a new four-year contract framework developed collaboratively with the Red Roses and their exclusive commercial representatives, Team England Rugby (TER), covering the 2026–2030 Rugby World Cup cycle.



This agreement represents a significant further investment in England's women's rugby programme, reinforcing the RFU's long-term commitment to building a world-leading performance environment while accelerating the global growth of the women's game.

Aligned to the ambitions set out in the RFU's women and girls strategy Every Rose: Our Time, the framework reflects a close and

constructive dialogue between the RFU, players and TER over the past year.

It ensures the Red Roses remain at the forefront of the sport on and off the field, through enhanced player support, increased earning potential and continued pathway investment.

Together, the RFU, players and TER have agreed a package that includes:

- A guaranteed minimum of 32 full-time contracts and the continuation of transitional contracts for emerging players.
- A substantial uplift in player salaries, match fees and commercial opportunities.
- The introduction of a Rugby World Cup selection bonus, recognising the achievement of representing England on the sport's biggest stage
- A formal mid-cycle review mechanism ensuring player pay and wider support arrangements are reviewed if the commercial performance of the women's game materially exceeds expectations.

This new framework builds on the progress made since the introduction of full-time contracts in 2019 in England, which has transformed the professional landscape of the women's game and reinforced England's positions as world leaders in this space.

While the women and girls' game continues to experience rapid growth across participation, audiences and commercial revenues, it remains in a critical investment phase.

Over the last four years, the RFU has invested significantly ahead of revenues, reflecting a deliberate and long-term strategy to unlock sustainable growth.

This approach has already delivered tangible impact, with England leading globally in participation, fan engagement, attendance and elite performance alongside the Red Roses' position as the world's number one ranked team.

The new agreement sits within a broader ecosystem of RFU investment, including the £24m commitment to Premiership Women's Rugby over ten years - the largest union investment in a domestic women's competition worldwide.

Together, these commitments provide a truly world-class environment for current and future players, ensuring the Red Roses are not only positioned to sustain success, but to continue shaping the future of the sport globally.

Bill Sweeney, RFU CEO said:

*"This agreement represents another major step forward for the women's game in England. We are making a deliberate, long-term investment in building the strongest and most sustainable environment for our players to succeed."*

*"The Red Roses set the standard globally, not just through their performances, but through the role they play in inspiring the next generation. This framework reflects both our ambition to remain number one in the world and our responsibility to grow the game for the future."*

Meg Jones, Red Roses Captain said:

*"As Red Roses our goal is always to be the number one team in the world on the field and off it. The investment into our programme and our pathways is critical to that and so this is an important moment for the group and for the game in England."*

*"The progress we've seen in recent seasons has been incredible, and this takes things another step forward. It gives players greater security, more opportunity and recognition for what it means to represent England."*

*"Just as importantly, it's about the future - continuing to invest in a strong pipeline of players, and making sure the next generation has an even stronger platform to come through and succeed."*

Alex Teasdale, RFU Executive Director of Women & Girls' Rugby said:

*"We are building something genuinely special in the women and girls' game and this agreement is a clear signal of our intent to keep pushing boundaries."*

*"Our focus is not only on supporting the current Red Roses squad, but on strengthening the entire system around them, from grassroots participation through to the elite environment."*

*"By continuing to invest with purpose and discipline, we are creating a model that is both world-leading and sustainable, ensuring the game continues to grow for generations to come."*



# England squad named for Nations Championship

England Rugby senior men's head coach Steve Borthwick has named a 36-player squad for the inaugural Nations Championship.



The squad, which includes five uncapped players – Noah Caluori, Greg Fisilau, Benhard Janse van Rensburg, George Kloska and Vilikesa Sela – is captained by Jamie George and will train at England's Performance Centre at Pennyhill Park until Wednesday before departing for South Africa, where they begin their campaign against the Springboks at Ellis Park, Johannesburg, on Saturday 4 July.

England will then return for an 'away' fixture against Fiji at Everton's Hill Dickinson Stadium in Liverpool before travelling to Argentina to face Los Pumas at Estadio Único Madre de Ciudades, Santiago del Estero in Round 3.

All matches will be broadcast live on ITV Sport.

*"We've selected a squad with a good blend of experience and emerging talent,"* said Borthwick.

*"The Nations Championship presents an exciting challenge for this group. We will face strong opposition in demanding environments, with extensive travel, and changes in climate all testing the squad throughout the tournament."*

*"I am sure by preparing well and continuing to demand the highest standards from one another every day, we will be well placed to meet the challenge of a very demanding summer schedule."*

Nations Championship squad:

## **Forwards:**

Ollie Chessum (Leicester Tigers)  
Arthur Clark (Gloucester Rugby)  
Alex Coles (Northampton Saints)  
Luke Cowan-Dickie (Sale Sharks)  
Tom Curry (Sale Sharks)  
Theo Dan (Saracens)  
Ben Earl (Saracens)  
Charlie Ewels (Bath Rugby)  
Greg Fisilau (Exeter Chiefs)  
Ellis Genge (Bristol Bears)

Jamie George (Saracens) – captain  
Joe Heyes (Leicester Tigers)  
Ted Hill (Bath Rugby)  
George Kloska (Bristol Bears)  
George Martin (Leicester Tigers)  
Beno Obano (Bath Rugby)  
Asher Opoku-Fordjour (Sale Sharks)  
Guy Pepper (Bath Rugby)  
Henry Pollock (Northampton Saints)  
Vilikesa Sela (Bath Rugby)

## **Backs:**

Seb Atkinson (Gloucester Rugby)  
Noah Caluori (Saracens)  
Immanuel Feyi-Waboso (Exeter Chiefs)  
George Ford (Sale Sharks)  
Tommy Freeman (Northampton Saints)  
George Furbank (Northampton Saints)  
Benhard Janse van Rensburg (Bristol Bears)  
Alex Mitchell (Northampton Saints)

Cadan Murley (Harlequins)  
Max Ojomoh (Bath Rugby)  
Henry Slade (Exeter Chiefs)  
Fin Smith (Northampton Saints)  
Marcus Smith (Harlequins)  
Ben Spencer (Bath Rugby)  
Freddie Steward (Leicester Tigers)  
Jack van Poortvliet (Leicester Tigers)

# Sovereign Grant recalculated as Buckingham Palace Reservicing Programme concludes

- Sovereign Grant will be reset to £99.9m next year, down from £137.9m this year.
- Change reflects lower funding requirements following the completion of the 10-year Buckingham Palace Reservicing Programme next year.
- Percentage of The Crown Estate's profits used to calculate the sovereign grant will also be set at 20.5% from 2027-28.

The Royal Trustees have today (25 June) concluded their review of the Sovereign Grant, which assessed the proportion of Crown Estate profits used to calculate the Grant supporting the Monarch's official duties and maintenance of occupied Royal Palaces.

The Trustees – made up of the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, the Chancellor Rachel Reeves, and the Keeper of the Privy Purse James Chalmers – have concluded that the overall level of the Sovereign Grant should be reset to £99.9m from 2027-28, which equates to 20.5% of The Crown Estate's profits.

This reflects lower funding requirements following the completion of the 10-year Buckingham Palace Reservicing Programme next year and the outlook for The Crown Estate's revenues over the coming years.

As announced in The King's Speech, a Sovereign Grant Bill will be brought forward during the current session of Parliament to bring these changes into effect, as the existing statutory framework prevents the Sovereign Grant from decreasing year on year, even where the Royal Household's expected costs have reduced.

The 2026 Review also took into account the Royal Household's expected income and expenditure over the period from 2027–28 to 2031–32, alongside the level of the Sovereign Grant Reserve.

The new legislation will establish a new baseline level of the Grant and update the percentage used in its calculation for the next review period, ensuring a sustainable and proportionate funding framework going forward.

The Sovereign Grant funds the monarch's official duties, include staff costs, official visits and maintenance of occupied royal palaces.



HM Treasury

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or

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

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