

Twickenham & Richmond TRIBUNE

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Berkley Driscoll
Teresa Read



28th October 2022

T&RT

Sunrise over Twickenham (Heathrow to Gibraltar)

Photo by Berkley Driscoll

TickerTape - News in Brief

When do the clocks go back in 2022?

In autumn 2022 the clocks go back on Sunday 30th October at 2am.

Off The Record Twickenham seeks part-time Assistant Administrator

OTR Twickenham is recruiting for an experienced and skilled part-time (10 hours over 2 days a week) Assistant Administrator.

The purpose of this role is to support the efficient running of the office and to support OTR's counselling and information services for young people.

Find out more information about the role and apply [HERE](#)

Skylarks Charity is recruiting!

Are you looking for a new role in the voluntary sector? Would you like to work for an award-winning dynamic charity based in Twickenham supporting families who have children with disabilities?

Skylarks are currently recruiting for four available jobs, including newly-created roles, at their fast-growing charity.

The roles available include: Head of Fundraising / SEND Education Adviser / SEND Careers Adviser / Communications Specialist

Find out how to apply for the the roles [HERE](#)

Richmond welcomes SW London's first whisky club!

Love whisky? Join the Club!

Richmond is to become the home of South West London's first whisky club!

From Thursday 10 November, whisky fans will be able to meet monthly at The Greyhound pub on the beautiful Kew Green to sample some top drops, trade tasting notes, and meet the makers.

The club kicks off with special guest, Bill Shearer, brand ambassador from the innovative Islay distillery, Bruichladdich. Learn more about the club [HERE](#)

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COVID-19

Teresa Read

World Health Organization

Weekly epidemiological update on COVID-19 - 26 October 2022

Data as of 23 October 2022

At the country level, the highest numbers of new weekly cases were reported from Germany (498,787 new cases; -23%), France (307,610 new cases; -22%), China (285,348 new cases; -13%), the United States of America (255,116 new cases; -1%) and Italy (252,777 new cases; -12%).

The highest numbers of new weekly deaths were reported from the United States of America (2,538 new deaths; similar to the previous week), the Russian Federation (636 new deaths; -9%), Italy (586 new deaths; +23%), France (484 new deaths; +21%) and China (469 new deaths; +9%).

European Region

In the European Region, the number of new weekly cases decreased by 23% as compared to the previous week, with over 1.4 million new cases reported.

Three (5%) countries reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater, with the highest proportional increases observed in Monaco (87 vs 66 new cases; +32%), Malta (184 vs 147 new cases; +25%) and Spain (25 422 vs 20,652 new cases; +23%). The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Germany (498,787 new cases; 599.7 new cases per 100,000; -23%), France (307,610 new cases; 473.0 new cases per 100,000; -22%) and Italy (252,777 new cases; 423.8 new cases per 100,000; -12%).

Over 3,500 new weekly deaths were reported in the Region, a 24% decrease as compared to the previous week. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from the Russian Federation (636 new deaths; <1 new death per 100,000; -9%), Italy (586 new deaths; 1.0 new death per 100,000; +23%) and France (484 new deaths; <1 new death per 100,000; +21%).

IN THE NEWS THIS WEEK

NBC News: Omicron subvariants pose a new threat to people with immune deficiencies - New versions of the omicron virus show resistance to the antibody drugs many need for extra protection against Covid.

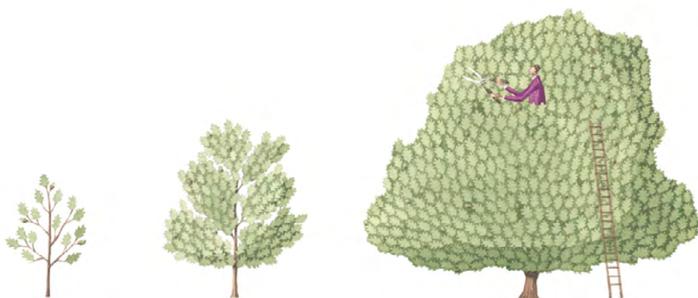
World Health Organization: ACT-Accelerator launches six month plan as world transitions to long-term COVID-19 control (WHO ACT-ACCELERATOR Report is at the back of the Tribune)

Toronto.ctvnews.ca: Ontario adds 121 deaths to its COVID-19 tally as one epidemiologist warns of 'tough winter' ahead

Government of Western Australia: WA Health is reporting a total of 5,823 new cases in the past week to 4pm 27 October 2022.

Aljazeera: Chinese cities tighten curbs on growing COVID outbreaks - China reported a third straight day of more than 1,000 new COVID-19 cases nationwide on Thursday.

WIONews, The Netherlands: New COVID-19 wave to hit Europe 'in coming week', warns watchdog



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The Tree Agency

Daring female swindler

By Simon Fowler

A story in the Surrey Comet for 29 April 1876 was picked up by newspapers across Britain. It was about a Teddington family who had been the victim of a female con artist. The piece must have resonated among respectable readers. Unfortunately, we do not know her name.

It appears that few days ago, a 'well-dressed and lady-like young woman,' called on Mr. John Pattinson, a gentleman living in Teddington, and announcing herself as 'Lady Bective,' began, in touching manner, to give utterance to the most benevolent and large-hearted sentiments respecting an erring servant girl Elizabeth, Reston, formerly in his employ. She informed him that the girl was present in a 'home' in Gower-street, but, owing to the terrible obduracy of a certain 'Sister Zillah,' darkly hinted at by 'Her Ladyship,' that she would have to leave 10 o'clock that night, and hence it was desirable to raise £5 to place her in another institution for years.



*Caption Teddington Parish Church in about 1900, by E Brabone.
Credit: London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames/Orleans House Collection (ref LDORL: 00720)*

At no time did Mr Pattinson query his visitor's credentials for he vaguely knew the Earl of Bective.

Of course, the persuasions of the apparently 'real life lady' proved wellnigh irresistible, and it seems tolerably certain that Mrs. Pattinson ultimately parted with 30. for the furtherance of the supposed charitable object.

As 'Lady Bective' was leaving, she took occasion to complain of the cold, and Mrs. Pattinson in the most confiding manner at once lent her a valuable Astrakhan jacket (worth £6).

One need be very little surprised to learn that no such person as Sister Zillah was known at the institution mentioned, and that 'Her Ladyship' paid her next visit (which occurred on the following day) when Mr. and Mrs. Pattinson were away.

By the dint of exhibiting the most affecting solicitude respecting 'poor Mary,' the former domestic, and other ingenious expedients, the 'lady' induced the servant to show her over the house, and took advantage of the opportunity to walk off with various 'unconsidered trifles' in the shape of a silver cup, mother of pearl card case and field-glass. The servant's suspicions being at length aroused, however, the police were communicated with. When the woman was searched, the missing property was found upon her.

From this circumstance, it may be inferred that the institution upon which, she said, she spent 'one third of her income' did not benefit to any very extent from her liberality. It turned out that she, herself, had absconded from the 'Refuge' and was traced to a room in St Giles. At the present time she is engaged in a 'little job,' in one of Her Majesty public buildings, which will take her least six months. The defendant left the court not displeased.

Society will have to mourn for that period under the loss of her active and overwhelming benevolence.

LBRUT RESIDENTS ONLY GIVEN UNTIL MONDAY TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON A RAFT OF ADDITIONAL PLANS FOR TWICKENHAM RIVERSIDE

Many residents have said that they have NOT been notified

1-1C King Street, 2-4 Water Lane, The Embankment And River Wall, Water Lane, Wharf Lane And The Diamond Jubilee Gardens, Twickenham

https://www2.richmond.gov.uk/lbrplanning/Planning_CaseNo.aspx?strCASENO=21/2758/FUL

The decision date for the Council's Twickenham Riverside plan is listed on the LBRUT Planning site as follows: Decision due: 25/11/2021

However, the Tribune has been told by concerned residents that the Council has added an estimated 1,000 pages of amendments allowing only two weeks to comment and these must be with the Council by 31 October 2022.

This Council, has a number of councillors said to be "green" who perhaps do not realize that once a tree is cut down it releases into the atmosphere carbon stored as CO2 – and here we have 66 trees that the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames intends to destroy.

To return to the Council's planning application which is currently subject to various Public Enquiries, as well as the recent addition of a raft of reports, not all the residents who have objected to this scheme have been informed.

At the time of writing there are 346 Objections - to the original plans - 53 Observations and 234 Support documents. It should also be remembered that some members of the majority political party of the current administration sent out biased information to many residents showing a photograph of a derelict Council car park with information about the "derelict site". This also appeared on Facebook as a paid advertisement by one of the LBRUT councillors. However, in reality the "site" is a very much appreciated public space overlooking one of the best views of the River Thames – an idyllic spot enjoyed by many residents and visitors as envisaged when the Council bought the land in 1924 for public walks and pleasure grounds.

Of course, housing is needed, and it is to be provided on the Council's derelict car park to one side of the site but the public land which is so highly desirable is to be the site for a block of luxury flats to be sold by a West End estate agent.

It seems to residents who have contacted the Tribune that this Council just does not care and will do whatever they wish without, in some cases, even giving residents the right to make their voice known. As one of their erstwhile leaders said when residents voted in a Referendum NOT to have housing built on this site This Is a Disgrace.

Help shape the future of Richmond Council Leisure Facilities

Richmond upon Thames are encouraging people to take part in a survey to improve leisure facilities. Everyone who submits a response can enter a prize draw to win a free 3-month membership.

Richmond Council is currently undertaking a review of its [leisure facilities](#) in light of significant changes in behaviour of users following the pandemic, as well as ever increasing financial challenges. As part of this, the Council has launched a consultation to hear views and inform the priorities of the Leisure Facility Strategy. Those living, working or exercising in the borough are encouraged to take part to help shape the priorities of our leisure facilities, even if they use private facilities, exercise outdoors, or are not currently exercising.

Councillor Julia Neden-Watts, Chair of the Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Services Committee said:

“We know that physical exercise improves health and wellbeing so Richmond Upon Thames is on a mission to get everyone moving more.

“We want to hear from those who live, work or exercise in borough so we can plan for the future, so I encourage all to get involved and help create a healthier borough for everyone.”

The Council operates six centres across the borough serving just under 2,000 members. The Council’s Sport and Leisure team is committed to offering the full range of services for all users and improving accessibility to their facilities for those who are not currently members.



As the review is in the early stages of gathering information, the Council is encouraging people, whether they currently use Council leisure facilities or not, to take five minutes and fill out the survey.

To encourage participation, every respondent will also be entered into a prize draw to win a 3-month membership at a leisure centre of their choice.

[Have your say](#)

The Leisure Facility Strategy will follow a comprehensive audit and assessment of the existing provision of all types of open spaces, sport and recreational facilities, including the quality of supply and their condition. The consultation will help the Council plan for the future and the needs of residents.

Dear Editors

Trees - Twickenham Riverside

Your readers will be aware that there have been recent additions (dated 17 and 18 October 2022, amounting to more than 1000 pages of Reports) to the planning application for the redevelopment of Twickenham Riverside.

I pointed out in an earlier letter (10 September 2021) that the original plans showed that there would be wholesale destruction of trees on the site; very few would remain. I lodged an objection on the planning portal, and met with two Councillors from the Green Party to express my concerns about this situation; I had hoped that the revised plans might bring some relief.

However, reading the revised Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Arboricultural Survey Reports (the originals from August 2021 have been removed from the list) it is clear that the new proposals are even more disastrous than before.

There are 68 trees on the site; 66 of these will be felled. The only two that will survive are:

- * one hornbeam
- * the oak tree at the top of Water Lane.

The original plans were that two hornbeams from the existing row of four would remain, and the black poplar and 11 of the pleached planes that shelter the present pétanque pitch would be “relocated”. Now these will be lost, except for the one hornbeam. The removal of the black poplar is a particular blow, as this was a gift from her late Majesty Elizabeth II, planted by HRH Princess Alexandra to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee.

There will apparently be many other trees planted, but it will be several years before they come to maturity; these will be a poor substitute for the present ambiance of the Diamond Jubilee Gardens. The deadline for objections to the revised plans is 31 October.

My great-great-grandfather, Henry Russell, wrote the music of the famous Victorian music hall song “Woodman Spare that Tree” (1873), whose sentiment I now repeat.

Jeremy Hamilton-Miller,
Twickenham TW2

Dear Editors,

Twickenham Riverside Planning Application

I have been looking at the extra 1000+ pages that have just been added to the Twickenham Riverside Planning Application. The few people who were told about it last week have been asked to submit comments by October 31st. Why did they limit the circulation? Why so short a time?

The two things that immediately jump out are that nothing has been added to help the boatyards and businesses on Eel Pie Island – in fact things have worsened. This is the most important point.

And, quite disgracefully, there is still no sign of a proper Road Safety Audit for the area at the bottom of Water Lane where lorries and articulated lorries will have to perform 3 point turns when exiting the site, especially during the construction period. It has already been noted by Council Officers that it is a matter of concern, but I can only think that they are finding the problem insoluble.

In February 2022 a safety audit took place at the Slough office of a company called Project Centre. It was given drawings and documents by the Council to look at and comment on. Then (and you couldn't make this up!) the team from Slough actually visited the site on Wednesday, 2nd February between the hours of 16.00 and 17.00. They found that the footway and part of the carriageway alongside the river Thames was flooded, the water was not deep and vehicles were observed driving through the flooded area. They noted that this was an existing issue! Why on earth didn't they return in full daylight, and when the tide was out, to make a proper assessment of a serious problem?

There is no mention of how safe it will be for rubbish lorries, articulated lorries etc to perform dangerous manoeuvres in a busy area where there are children feeding the ducks, and pedestrians and cyclists moving around. An alarming Swept Path Analysis (which shows how a vehicle performs when entering and exiting a site) shows a large lorry, its back overhanging the slipway, trying to turn round during the time when refuse lorries are parked alongside the river.

It is hoped that Planning Permission will not be sought until safety guarantees can be given on the proposed dangerous road junctions around the Twickenham Riverside site, but I don't hold out much hope. And the boatyards and businesses on Eel Pie Island?!

Best wishes,

Sue Hamilton-Miller
Twickenham

Looking at the Past to Decide the Future

Teresa Read

This week our Council sent out a press release to ask residents to consult about new leisure facilities in the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, an initiative prompted by the Covid-19 pandemic – Help Shape the Future of Richmond Council Leisure Facilities.

I would like to draw attention to the Comments of the longest consultation in the Borough with regard to outdoor swimming.

The Change.org petition has **4,807 signatures and thousands of comments**. Suggestions from present residents and residents who have lived in the Borough – we know at the Tribune that many people who lived here still keep in touch with current events, even a few who may have moved far away – and you may know them too.

Twickenham Lido www.twickenhamlido.com made some suggestions some years ago for a new lido and the way it could be organized. There was also a plan for a lido on the site put forward in the first LBRUT competition but again this can be viewed as one possible suggestion.

To see how many outdoor swimming venues the Borough has had in the past has been explored in a Heritage Lottery Project www.lidosalive.com

I think it is useful to see what the residents of the Borough have had to say over the years.

https://www.change.org/p/london-borough-of-richmond-upon-thames-cllr-roberts-accept-the-twickenham-alive-proposal-to-reinstate-a-lido-on-twickenham-riverside?recruiter=34-4638519&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=copylink&sharecordion_display=highlight_active_card



A message from Richmond Council's new Chief Executive

I would like to introduce myself to you, as the new Chief Executive of Richmond Council.

While I only officially started in the role on Monday, since my appointment in July I have spent time getting to know the borough of Richmond upon Thames and have started to meet some of the people outside of the Council who are instrumental in making it the place it is.

I am joining Richmond after spending the last four years at Bristol City Council, helping lead the city through Covid and probably the most tumultuous period in its recent history (some of you may remember the images of the toppling of the Colston Statue). Prior to that, I was CEO at North Somerset for five



years, and have had a range of leadership roles across local and central government. I lived in London for over 10 years earlier in my career and always hoped to get a chance to return – it is fantastic to be doing so in such a unique role, and across such a diverse, dynamic and indeed iconic part of the capital.

I am very conscious that few, if any, of the key outcomes Richmond Council seeks to deliver can be achieved by acting alone. Partnership working is key to making progress and it has been made abundantly clear to me how successful this is in Richmond. The voluntary sector in this borough is something that your elected members are incredibly proud of and I look forward to seeing first-hand the work that you do to serve our communities and hopefully meeting soon.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Jackson

Hallowe'en Mini Disco on Diamond Jubilee Gardens

Sunday 30th October, 4:00 – 7:30pm



It's Hallowe'en, and you're all dressed up and looking for somewhere to go?

Bring your spookiest dance moves down to Diamond Jubilee Gardens on Twickenham's Embankment.

Tented disco (rain will NOT stop play!), complete with sparkly lights and a soundtrack to get every skeleton in town rattling their bones.

FREE mask-making craft activity.

FREE event with no need to book - just turn up ready to dance!

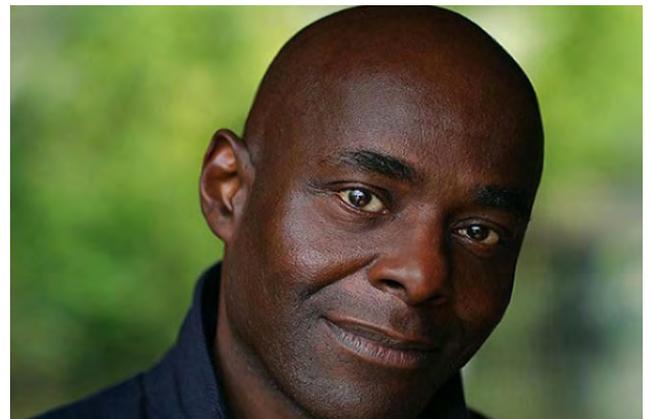
The Diamond Jubilee Gardens are just around the corner from nearby Church St - so you can join in all the Hallowe'en fun there, too.

This FREE event is jointly sponsored by the Twickenham Riverside Trust and Discover Twickenham

Arts Richmond President Series: Paterson Joseph on his debut novel

Join acclaimed British actor Paterson Joseph as he draws from his highly-anticipated debut novel to tell the extraordinary story of 18th-century writer, abolitionist and composer Charles Ignatius Sancho.

Paterson is a beloved British actor and writer. Recently seen on 'Vigil' and 'Noughts and Crosses', he has also starred in the iconic 'Peep Show', 'Law & Order UK' and will play Arthur Slugworth in the forthcoming 'Wonka' movie. The Secret Diaries of Charles Ignatius Sancho is his debut novel.



Charles's story began with his birth on board a slave ship in c.1729, before being orphaned and sold into slavery.

Transported across the Atlantic to Britain at the age of two, Sancho spent his childhood and teens in the household of three English sisters, before escaping enslavement and developing a career as a businessman, writer and composer who sat at the very heart of Georgian London – becoming the first black person to vote in Britain and leading the fight to end slavery.

This talk will be held at The Exchange in Twickenham from 7.30pm on Wednesday 2 November.

[Book tickets for the Arts Richmond President Series.](#)

New wildlife haven officially opens in Heathfield

The Mayor of Richmond upon Thames has officially opened Jubilee Meadows in Heathfield Ward. The meadow has been open to the public since July and is already well used by local people seeking somewhere for a quiet walk in a natural setting.

The new area of 1.8ha of parkland was acquired by Richmond Council as part of the development of Turing House School. The new meadow was named to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of Queen Elizabeth II. This is the second celebration in the park linked to a royal occasion. On 10 May 1937, to mark the coronation of King George VI, the borough of Twickenham planted Coronation Walk, an avenue of oak trees at Heathfield Recreation Ground. The Meadow is accessed from Heathfield Recreation Ground and is being managed as a natural meadow, to increase habitats and biodiversity in Richmond upon Thames.

Cllr Julia Neden-Watts, Chair of the Environment, Sustainability, Culture and Sports Committee said: *“Our goal is to make the Meadow a haven for wildlife. Currently it’s not that interesting to wildlife, but with careful ecological management we hope to increase the diversity of wildflowers alongside planting of tree, hedges and crop cover which will provide food for birds. We will also be introducing features aimed at amphibians, reptiles, bees, stag beetles and other invertebrates. The meadow will become a wildlife haven over the next few years and I hope residents will come here to enjoy it.”*

Cllr Julia Cambridge, Mayor of Richmond upon Thames, said: *“I am delighted to have been invited to open the Jubilee Meadow. I hope that for many years people will love and care for this place, in memory of Queen Elizabeth’s service. It is great to see that children from local schools have been so involved in creating this space and I hope they will return regularly to learn about our local ecology and take part in activities that will enhance the biodiversity of the site.”*



The official opening on Friday 21 October included a welcome by the Friends of Heathfield Recreation Ground and Environs and a ribbon cutting by the Mayor. The ceremony included community activities such as building insect hotels and ‘hogitats’ built by Twickenham School and Heathfield Junior School students. Both schools, along with Turing House School are committed to being involved in the long-term management of the space.

Richmond Borough Mind staff also attended the ceremony, as there are plans for Richmond Borough Mind volunteers and service members to use the site as part of their programme to encourage access to nature.

Kamala James, Engagement Officer, said on behalf of Richmond Borough Mind: *“We’re very excited to be working together with Friends of Heathfield Recreation Ground and Environs (FoHRGE) and Richmond Council’s Friendly Parks for All project to help maintain this conservation area of Jubilee Meadows. Spending time in nature, being part of a community and working together to care for the environment can support one’s wellbeing and help with mental health issues including anxiety and depression. This is a fantastic project for people who use our services and our volunteers to be involved with.”*



HALLOWE'EN MINI DISCO!

MARQUEE! DISCO LIGHTS!

SUN 30 OCT 4.00-7.30PM

(SUITABLE FOR 11 YEARS OLD AND UNDER)

FREE MASK-MAKING ACTIVITY!

**DIAMOND JUBILEE GARDENS
TWICKENHAM EMBANKMENT**

Unveiling of the Virginia Woolf Statue in Richmond

The sculpture will be located on the upper terraces at Richmond Riverside following a five-year fundraising campaign.

Virginia Woolf was named an icon of the 20th Century by the BBC. A century after she lived and worked in Richmond with husband Leonard, this world-famous writer and champion of women's rights is now being honoured with a public statue in the town where they lived from 1914 to 1924.

A recent audit of statues in London showed that there are more monuments depicting animals than there are in honour of named women. Aurora Metro Arts and Media Charity has dedicated five years to fundraising and campaigning for the funds to create a memorial.

Many people have supported the concept, including: Margaret Atwood, Caitlin Moran, Jodi Picoult, Deborah Frances-White, Elizabeth Day, Caroline Criado Perez, Mark Haddon, Sarah Gristwood, James O'Brien, Phillip Pullman and Neil Gaiman. Local MP Sarah Olney, Lord Zac Goldsmith, and many Richmond Councillors have all endorsed the project too.

The public have expressed overwhelming support for the project with over 250 individual donations and thousands of likes and positive engagement on social media so far.

Richmond Council held two public consultations, which showed support for the project, with 83% and 92% in favour of the project.

Award-winning sculptor Laury Dizengremel has been commissioned to create the artwork. The piece will feature Woolf in repose on a bench, where people can sit next to her while enjoying the Richmond riverside.



Aurora Metro Arts and Media is a registered charity led by Cheryl Robson, based in Richmond-upon-Thames, championing diversity and equality through arts and educational projects both locally and globally. The charity is sister company to Aurora Metro Publications, a local publisher with three decades of publishing original voices, championing diversity and equality, and promoting work in translation.

The charity is located in a new local bookshop, Books on the Rise, where all things related to Virginia Woolf will be available, including books, maquettes, and merchandise.

Richmond Council joins campaign to stop discrimination against renters in Richmond upon Thames

Richmond Council is joining forces with Citizens Advice Richmond to help stop discrimination against renters who receive benefits.

Every year large numbers of residents are unfairly locked out of the private rental market for homes simply because they receive some benefits to pay towards their housing costs.

Research by Citizens Advice Richmond shows that many landlords and letting agents refuse to consider tenants as soon as they discover that they receive benefits. Residents are often confronted with a blanket 'No DSS' (Department for Social Security), 'No Universal Credit', or 'No Benefits' policy even when they can demonstrate they can afford the monthly rent. This is unlawful.

The joint campaign to End Benefit Prejudice against renters launches today and aims to raise awareness that any policy that automatically outlaws benefit claimants discriminates and is unlawful.

More than four in ten Richmond residents who receive benefits are working.

'No Benefits' discrimination forces many residents to remain in unsuitable and unsafe accommodation and can lead to homelessness in the borough.

Lorna Reid, Chief Executive of Citizens Advice Richmond said:

"We know that long-standing myths about tenants receiving benefits are standing in the way of Richmond residents accessing the homes they need and can afford. We are calling on landlords and their letting agents to keep an open mind and treat all prospective renters fairly,"

"Too many local people come to us unaware that the barriers they face finding a safe and suitable home are discriminatory and unlawful. This campaign will share stories of good tenants, with regular, reliable income who can afford the rent being asked and will pay on time and show landlords there is no reason to discriminate."

Cllr Jim Millard, Richmond Council's Spokesperson for Housing, said:

"All residents need fair and equal opportunities to rent local homes and should not be excluded simply because they receive some form of benefits. We are calling on landlords to assess tenants' ability to pay as fairly as possible and to avoid discriminating against them"

To find out more about Citizens Advice Richmond's campaign on private sector housing and for case studies, please [contact the Citizens Advice campaigns team](#).



Hampton North Ward News

Councillor Geoffrey Samuel

111 Bus – meeting with TfL and Abellio

Our GLA member, Nick Rogers, arranged a meeting for us with both TfL and Abellio, which took over the route earlier this year. This followed complaints from residents about the decline of the service including passengers being turned off buses. We had a useful meeting with the four officers whom we met at TfL offices in Southwark. Nick Rogers had full details of the service decline. The basic problem is that Abellio is 60 drivers short. Although this is an improvement on earlier in this year it is the basic cause of the problem. It is, of course, therefore surprising that they took over this route. There is a problem with ‘bunching’. If two [or more] buses are very close together they may decide that one of them should return to base. However passengers should be turned off ONLY if there is another bus immediately behind. Abellio confirmed that drivers should only change their route [eg along Acacia Road – another cause of complaint] if they have received specific authority from Control – although, of course there may be occasions when a blockage to the normal route is known in advance.

111 Bus – and now!

I have asked for a real improvement in information for passengers – both on the website and on the buses during the journey. I have also asked to visit the local Control Centre in Twickenham. I now have the contact details of senior Abellio official and will pass on any complaints to him. So: do send me the full details of any problems you encounter and I will pass them on in batches.

COUNCIL MEETING

At the last Council meeting I asked for – but did not receive- an assurance that the Council would provide funds to enable **The White House** to offer a full range of services. In reply to my Question about traffic and parking in **Hanworth Road**, I was told that the former petition failed to attract the required support but that the Council would look again at these problems

SCAMS – BEWARE

Many residents are victims e.g. the resident who gave a plausible, well-dressed man a £20 note and those who receive e-mails purporting to come from a relative or friend in a crisis situation. Beware!

HAWTHORN CLOSE

After complaints from residents that people are simply ignoring double-yellow lines, leading at times to actual confrontations, at my request the Council will step up enforcement. I have also asked both Buckingham School and the Police for help in dealing with this problem.

ALL SAINTS CHURCH (News from outside organisations is always welcome)

Final funding is awaited to improve the Community Hall: work starts in the New Year. The Church is introducing the Living Space Project to provide warm spaces, activities and refreshments (further details on the website) The Annual Light Party [a safe option for children at Halloween) will be held on Sunday at 430pm and an Ethical Christmas Craft Fayre at a later date. Watch the website www.allsaintshampton.co.uk/whats-on

THE YEOMANRY BAND

I attend most of their enjoyable performances –although, with regret, not the next one. This will be their Christmas Concert to be held at St. James's Church, Park Road, Hampton Hill at 3pm on 4th December. Highly recommended!

SHORTER ITEMS

- I am dealing with several housing issues for local people: one a deserving housing application, the other a request to downsize which has been ignored for too long even though it would be of benefit
- The Planning application for a house in **Broad Lane** is, in my opinion, an overdevelopment of the site and also unneighbourly. I support local residents who are objecting
- I keep in contact with senior staff at both our major housing associations, RHP and PA, on behalf of local residents. Complaints include fly-tipping, a fence and a botched kitchen for RHP and anti-social behaviour in **Fulmer Close** for PA
- As a result of my intervention there has been action on drains in **Uxbridge Road** and so no repeat of the flooding which used to occur so often after rain
- The traffic scheme for **Burtens Road** remains a key issue for local residents. The scheme is subject to review and objectors are advised to send in their objections
- I still receive many complaints about the refuse and recycling service and for green waste collections for which residents pay. Let me know if you have a problem
- A resident living in a road off **Fearnley Crescent** writes: "generally this whole area is looking really run down and pretty awful these days". Do you agree?

Unless you tell me to the contrary, I may forward any of your comments/complaints to the relevant councillors and Council officers.

Keep in touch with me by phone or gjshn@btinternet.com: tell me of issues which concern you: I am here to help

Protecting local wildlife this autumn

220 cameras have been deployed across Richmond upon Thames in 2022, from April to November. This project is part of an internet of things scheme, which is run across five south London boroughs known as the South London Partnership (SLP). The projects must be resident-focused and in Richmond the venture supports the SLP's response to the climate emergency.

Why do we need to help wildlife?

The hedgehog population has dramatically dropped in recent years and our spiky friends are now listed as vulnerable. It's a very important time of year for hedgehogs when they feed to improve their body weight and condition before winter.



As Bonfire Night approaches, it's important to check if hedgehogs are in piles of leaves and twigs. Bonfires in particular provide excellent shelter

for hedgehogs during the day and should be taken apart and checked before lighting.

Did you know hedgehogs are excellent climbers?

They can even be hidden away at different levels of your bonfire. Plus, frogs, toads, slow worms and plenty of other urban wildlife like to conceal themselves in the stack.

How do the cameras work?

The internet of things wildlife monitoring project uses trail cameras to collect wildlife data across the borough's parks, conservation sites and other potential wildlife corridors. Richmond Council has partnered with the Zoological Society of London in understanding hedgehog/wildlife distribution.

Images are captured and uploaded within minutes to a private cloud portal, meaning that priority species and the exact location is recorded. Each camera is strategically placed at low heights, away from pathways and people so no personal data is collected.

How does this help?

Combined with surveys of the borough's habitats and species, this project helps inform decisions on nature recovery in the borough including the management of existing sites, responding to climate change and protecting important habitats that help wildlife move around.

RCVS Online Trustee Recruitment Event

Thursday 10 November 2022, 6.30pm - 8pm

Join us to hear from some amazing local community groups
and about the difference you could make as a trustee



Register for your free place now
at www.richmondcvcs.org.uk



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DIWALI THIS WEEK...

...But what is it REALLY about?

By Deep Patel



Everybody who is anybody knows that Diwali is one of the biggest religious festivals of one of the oldest religions in the world... Hinduism...but what does it mean? Sure everyone says the famous line "it's the festival of lights isn't it"...I used to explain it that way for years growing up, but what does that even mean? Ok, so I am not going to make this another one of those standard articles telling the story of Diwali as I think that is what Google is for. So what am I going to write about here? Well, I want to talk about what Diwali means to me...and for everyone... whether Hindu or not...all can definitely benefit from this festival...

You may be having a s**t day or a terrible time recently with life in general, family issues, work issues and all sorts of drab making you feel like you are living the worse possible life, take a deep breath and reflect on the true meaning of Diwali...Diwali teaches that there can be no life without struggles, but for those who persevere, with good intent and faith in a higher energy, and for those who keep going about their daily lives with courage whilst performing acts of kindness without expectation, good karma will flow and things will get better....light will overcome dark...That is why it is aptly named "The Festival of Light"...because no matter how dark the night is...the sun WILL always rise again...No matter how bad your life situations may seem...through performing acts of kindness, good karma and continuing with faith in a higher energy at work...things WILL get better again...and in a nut shell... that is what Diwali is all about, sure we light candles and oil lamps and the kiddies love a bit of firework madness, but it's all to remind us...light always wins...a tiny candle in a dark room can break the darkness of the entire room...

Therefore, Diwali teaches us to never lose hope...to fight our struggles with good intentions and faith in a higher energy and bigger plan...to let go of our self centered egos that are constantly telling us that we are the cause of EVERYTHING (good and bad)...always remember that...after every dark night... the sun always rises again.

So carry on and harness the energy of Diwali this week for your daily battles...carry out good deeds for others in need. As you know, I always say these deeds don't have to be huge, you don't need to try and compete with Mother Teresa or anything, just be KIND. To everyone and to everything.

Like I always say, even picking up a slug off a pavement with a leaf and moving it over a wall counts as a good deed. Choosing a kind way to stop ants (like talcum powder around where they come but not on them) counts as a good deed. Ditching the mouse poison and using a live capture trap to release them away in a wooded area counts. Even avoiding sweeping/washing the garden patio too often helps save countless tiny almost invisible little lives that live there (particularly under large pots in the garden, hence I say gently lift the pots if you need to move them rather than dragging them to avoid crushing little lives). Avoid sweeping too close to the edges of the garden borders as that's where lots of little lives live...for every life you save...you will accrue good karma that will unexpectedly help you when you least expect it in your own lives...

So there we have it...the key to our own happiness lies in the happiness of others...humans and insects...big and small...it all counts as karma and light always wins in the end...May this journey of good karma start for you today! Happy Diwali to everyone reading this right now!

For any specific questions, don't hesitate to contact me through my Facebook page: "KIND WORLD" or thedeepatel@gmail.com

A VINE ROMANCE IN RURAL DORSET

We've had a week in Dorset recently, relaxing and catching up with old friends who've moved out from the 'burbs to the country. I took the opportunity to visit **Langham Vineyard**, home of some of my favourite English sparkling wines. I like to think that I know a bit about sparkling wines, having worked with a leading champagne house for many years, and I have to say that I'm pretty blown away by the quality of the Langham English sparklings.



The vineyard is not far from Dorchester, and open to the public for tours, tastings Wednesday to Sunday with an onsite cafe too, (a separate enterprise) where visitors can enjoy light meals (that can, of course, be accompanied, by a glass or two of the wines).



We were shown around by Fiona, (a mine of information), and the vineyard was positively buzzing with people helping pick this year's grapes. She told us that lots of locals come and pick, and they're paid by the hour - not piecework as is the case in many vineyards. This means that pickers can take their time, and only pick the best quality grapes. Pickers can also opt to be paid a proportion of their earnings in wine at a discount too, so word has obviously got around - hence there were plenty of helpers! Every tenth row of vines is left unmown to encourage wild flowers for diversity. After the amazing summer we've had, I wasn't at all surprised to be told that this year's grape yield is likely to be almost double the average yield, and all from the same vines. But they've recently planted an additional 45 acres and have added some Pinot Gris vines. Langham also produces some still wines, and I'm told that its Pinot Noir sells out extremely fast, (no doubt re-ordered swiftly once folk have tasted it!)

With its south facing slopes, chalky soil and unique microclimate, the Langham vineyard is perfectly situated for growing the classic grape varieties that comprise champagne. Of course they can't call their sparkling wine (made, too, from Chardonnay, Pinot Meunier and Pinot Noir grapes, as is champagne) champagne. But to all intents, purposes and palates, this English sparkling wine gives champagne a damned good run for its money!



The grapes are picked and pressed - within hours - each October, and left in temperature controlled steel tanks or barrels (including some used French barriques) till the following August when it's blended and bottled.

With bottling and maturing it's actually three years from picking to popping the cork.





There are five different sparklings produced by Langham, and having had the chance to taste almost all of them now, I rate them very highly. There's the **Culver Classic Cuvée NV** (51% Pinot Noir, 35% Pinot Meunier, 14% Chardonnay) and the **Corallian NV** (81% Chardonnay, 11% Pinot Noir, 8% Pinot Meunier) both at £29.50. Then the **Rosé NV** (a base vintage from 2018, blended with 15% reserve wine and juice from all three grape varieties grown at Langham; 46% Pinot Noir, 18% Pinot Meunier, 36% Chardonnay £32.50). The **Blanc de Blancs 2018** is 100% Chardonnay and absolutely delicious at

£38.50. Finally the **Pinot Meunier 2018** - from an exceptional year and 100% barrel fermented - the priciest, but a really fab wine at £47. We tasted four of these wines with Fiona at the end of our tour, sitting in the sunshine at the edge of the vineyard, and they really are fabulous!

If you're visiting Dorset, I'd urge you to add Dorchester to your itinerary and include a visit to Langham. But if not, you can buy the wines online directly from [Langham](#) or Lea & Sandeman (in Chiswick and Barnes, plus other locations)

HALLOWEEN 'FUN'

I can't believe it's Halloween again! But time is marching on, and it will soon be Christmas! There are some Halloween spectaculars happening locally this weekend - at Chiswick House and Hampton Court Palace



Chiswick House has a new experience this year; an immersive illuminated trail through haunted woods, filled with creepy neon cobwebs, ghastly ghouls and wicked witches! The illuminated after-dark trail, which casts the 18th century property in an eerie light, runs from **21-31 October 2022** and enables visitors to wander from one ghostly space to another. Along the way they'll glimpse a headless horseman, live actors, fire performers and be sure to watch out for the witch and other characters lurking



in the shadows. Adding to the atmosphere, listen out for shrieks in the night, witches' cackles, sudden screams and thunderclaps. Then enjoy a hot toddy (you'll need it!) or devilishly decadent hot chocolate. (both are charged separately) £16.50 per adult, £12 per child (3-16 years), Further info and tickets on website [here](#)

Visit **Hampton Court Palace** at Halloween. If you're brave enough to explore [Henry VIII's](#) notoriously haunted palace at the spookiest time of the year. This Halloween for two nights only, visit Hampton Court Palace after dark for a spooky adventure. You can lose yourself in atmospheric projections



and creepy sound effects to bring the spirit world closer than ever before. Then head to the Gallery of the Damned where eerie portraits come to life, or stop by the Council Chamber to take part in a spine-tingling séance. As you tiptoe through the dark winding corridors and courtyards you'll feel the chilling presence of the infamous ghosts hiding around every corner. It's apparently designed to put you on edge, rather than push you over it, [Hampton Court Palace Halloween tickets here](#)



The Hypochondriac

by Molière adapted by Richard Bean

Richmond Shakespeare Society at the Mary Wallace Theatre until 29th October

Put on your scrubs and surgical mask to examine pompous doctors taking advantage of gullible patients. Set in the era of Louis XIV of France, this classic farce is a clever scathing satire brim-full of trickery, greed and strong characters. It's no place for the squeamish as there's a bottomless joke pit of anal examinations, enemas, stool examination and urine drinking in director Maxina Cornwell's production of *The Hypochondriac*.



In an explosion of wheezes, coughs and phlegm, a miserly hypochondriac, swathed in dressing gown and nightcap, slumps in a bathchair-cum-commode over his candle-lit writing desk as he works out the bottom line of his rectal obsession.



Beating heart of this blistering play is Argan (Daniel Wain), the pitiable hypochondriac who imagines he has every disease under the sun, spending a fortune on quacks, hocus pocus pills and dodgy doctors. He is so fixated with illness he is willing to force his daughter Angelique (Olivia Jackson) into marriage with a mediocre medic.

'You don't have to be an expert to be a doctor. Just a white coat. And a beard,' says Beralde (Michael Andrew), Argan's suave brother, who gets some of the loudest laughs as he berates the medical profession who have purged and

leached Argan for everything from depression and insomnia to worms. He ridicules those who seek a cure in dandelion sap, bug oil and ferret saliva.

The set, designed by Junis Olmscheid, is lavish; all resplendent rococo gold and duck egg blue, Corinthian columns, chandeliers, tassels and swags. The costumes too are magnificently extravagant as befits the reign of the Sun King.

Molière's maxim was: 'It is important to teach but especially to please.' The hugely talented cast of this energetic, exuberant production live up to his motto in style.



Read Gill Martin's review at www.markaspen.com/2022/10/23/hypochond

Photography courtesy of RSS



It Could Be Any One of Us

by Alan Ayckbourn

SMDG at Hampton Hill Theatre

Alan Ayckbourn is one of Britain's most prolific playwrights, but not known for murder mysteries. *It Could be Any One of Us*, set in a creaky country house during a raging storm, is not one of his best. Lacking Ayckbourn's normal sparkling wit and pace, it flounders under its own weight. Maybe it's showing its age, like the decrepit old house and its depressing inhabitants, siblings of the Chalke family.



This is a house of failures, a composer Mortimer whose music will never be heard in a concert hall, painter Brinton whose pictures will never grace a gallery, an author Jocelyn who never finishes a book and her daughter Amy, who eschews everything artistic in favour of eating cake ... lots of it. Toss into this dysfunctional soup Jocelyn's partner Norris, a detective who never solves a case.

The twist in this whodunit is that the crime has yet to be committed. But murder is on the cards as the family fights over a will. The house is owned by big brother Mortimer, who threatens to disinherit them all in favour of a former piano pupil Wendy. So who is about to be murdered? Mortimer for his vicious tongue and cruel plan? Or the interloper who threatens to make the siblings homeless if she takes over the house to set up her King Charles spaniel sanctuary? ... and who will commit the dastardly deed?

The gloomy house looks ripe for scenes of blood, with its menacing maroon walls and heavy furnishings. And there's plenty of stormy side effects with things that go bump in the night.

Director Helen Smith and her company try to inject some tension into the action but, despite their sterling efforts, the outcome is flabby. The technical team work overtime, actors pump up the energy levels, but AA lets them down.

'It's not a bundle of laughs!' commented one theatregoer heading for the bar. The line: 'I remember you as having very little talent ... but I may have over-estimated you,' won that bundle of laughs.

Read Gill Martin's review at

www.markaspen.com/2022/10/21/any-one

Photography by Donald Palansky





Reboot Festival 2022

Week Two

Barons Court Theatre until 29th October

Barons Court Theatre is bijou indeed, tucked below stairs at the Curtain's Up, a pub in W14. The lit square stage and the darkness of the auditorium brought back memories of disco days. However, thankfully the audience declined to dance and instead we watched six short plays by emerging writers that comprised Week 2 of the *Reboot Festival*.



My Beautiful Distraction

The Son of Man. A homeless man encounters a charismatic woman who promises – or threatens - a higher level of life. With undertones of *Squid Game*, it spirals into macabre as she retrieves items from a bottomless bag.

Possum Trot. Finely crafted, we are drawn to this lonely woman as she unravels her story. A fine one-woman performance from Gerrie Skeens was highly watchable.



My Beautiful Distraction. Packed tight with mind games, sexual frustration, lust and nostalgia, this is a beautifully written piece, with razor sharp performances and very intelligently directed. Volumes of subtext were spoken, against highly emotional incidental music, sharp turning points, and painful revelations that left a lump in the throat.

Moon Child. With natural dialogue, bleak humour and genuine tenderness, this play brings bees on the moon, a thwarted Roman soldier and a touching end. The piece is interjected with great comic performances by Romulus Hotea.

Soprano

The Soprano. Nicely crafted, unravelling with deep tender moments, this sharp and gripping two-hander tells of an orchestral conductor on the verge of losing everything due to allegations revealed for a young opera star.

Winter Tales. The real depths only just start to unravel before a bewilderingly untimely end. However, strong performances make this very short piece a classy production.

Do go along the *Reboot Festival 2022* and catch these talented works. If you miss this run, Week 3 performances start on 29th November. Put it in your diaries now!

Read Heather Moulson's review at www.markaspen.com/2022/10/26/reboot-fest2

Photography by Kibo Productions



Moon Child

Jekyll & Hyde

by Gary McNair, based Robert Louis Stevenson

Reading Rep at Reading Rep Theatre until 29th October

“I am not the good guy!” Audrey Brisson starts. “But you’re going to like me.” This is the keystone of the play, and while it is hard to like the character of Hyde, that wasn’t really the point. Very few of us are the good guys, yet we still like ourselves (mostly)!

Reading Rep Theatre have had quite a coup in staging the world premiere of *Jekyll & Hyde* Gary McNair’s quirkily comic adaptation of Stevenson’s iconic gothic novella, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.



McNair has achieved an unlikely mix of horror and humour that is truly gripping. He has peeled open Dr Jekyll’s mind to find the convolutions he makes to hide his dark secrets ... perhaps just like us good guys.

But the second coup is getting Olivier and Grammy award-nominated Audrey Brisson to star in this show. French-Canadian Brisson is renowned as a singer, an actress, an aerialist and more across many theatre genres. The third coup is teaming Brisson with RSC director Michael Fentiman, a well proven partnership that has netted Olivier and Grammy nominations for them both, notably in *Amélie*, which ran in the West End.

Brisson made her entrance via a side door at the back of the stage, and as soon as they saw her the audience fell strangely silent. Everyone was expectant.

There were no other performers in this production, which for a play like *Jekyll & Hyde* is a tall order for any actor. But there was no need for others. I doubt that many other actors could have carried this off quite so well. By the end of the play I was totally hooked, and the dramatic final scene sent genuine shivers down my spine.

Read Nick Swyft’s review at

www.markaspen.com/2022/10/14/jekyll-hyde-rr

Photography by Harry Elletson



Next week the world will be watching events in Sharm El Sheikh at the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference.

The twenty-seventh United Nations Conference of Parties on Climate Change, more commonly referred to as COP27, will be held from 6 to 18 November 2022 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

COP27 aims to bring governments together in global efforts to confront the climate crisis; this year's meeting is particularly important due to the acceleration of climate change.

The world's press will be attending the conference with invitations sent to a variety of news organizations; the Twickenham & Richmond Tribune received an invitation but are unable to attend on this occasion.

The UK's prime minister has been urged to honour the UK's climate pledges.

EGYPT <https://worldinfozone.com/country.php?country=Egypt>



Egypt was one of the early World InfoZone country studies. Originally the website displayed photographs courtesy of the Egyptian Tourist Office of some of Egypt's greatest historical treasures. This content from an early version of the website (originally the WTech Gateway) was featured on one of the first BBC Click programmes aiming to introduce people to the use of the internet. (Click Online started in April 2000).

Local bereaved teenagers sign up to a festive Santa Fun Run for Princess Alice Hospice

Secondary school pupils, Ruby and Talulla, whose mum, Sharon, was cared for by Princess Alice Hospice, are donning their best Elf outfits and taking part in this year's Santa Fun Run in Bushy Park, helping to raise much needed funds for the local charity.



Ruby, age 15, said: "I'm doing the Santa fun run to give back to the people at Princess Alice Hospice who gave so much to us when they cared for my mum."

Ruby and Talulla, with their dad Manek, attend the Hospice's Dovetail bereavement group regularly, which provides creative activities and the opportunity for children, young people and their parents or carers to share

their own experiences with other people who have also lost a loved one.

Manek said: "The Santa fun run is a joyful way to mark my wife Sharon's passing at the end of November 2020 and I know she would be really pleased to see us raising money for the Hospice. They do so much for the local community and those who are impacted by losing loved ones."

The Hospice is organising two 5k runs in Bushy Park on 4 and 11 December, both starting at 10.30am. If running isn't quite your thing, you can jog, walk, or skip, it's entirely up to you. You can choose to dress up as Santa or in your own fancy dress. Bring the buggy and the dog along, too! The festive season is fast approaching and we're aiming to get 1,000 Santas signed up to our fun runs this year – why not get your festive celebrations off to a great start by getting your family and friends to join the fun, too?

It costs the Hospice more than £10m every year to provide outstanding end of life care to the local community, free of charge. Their care area covers 600sq miles and includes approximately one million people.

For information on how to join in the festive fun, visit www.pah.org.uk/santafunrun.



148 police constables have completed Police Now's National Graduate Leadership Programme academy

During the seven-week residential academy, the officers have developed the knowledge and skills required of a police constable, and put their learning into practice during a handful of field training shifts in their respective police forces.

To mark their final day, the academy delivered several sessions and activities, including hosting a 'Policing for Change' panel with three senior guests:

- Assistant Commissioner Nick Ephgrave QPM of The Metropolitan Police Service – currently seconded to the NPCC and responsible for the Criminal Justice Portfolio
- Garry Shewan QPM – Senior Lecturer at Liverpool John Moores University and former Assistant Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police
- Simon Rose – Cambridge Centre for Evidence Based Policing and former Detective Chief Superintendent of The Metropolitan Police Service

The panel discussed the use of 'stop and search' and explored ways to increase public confidence and trust in these statutory police powers, such as ensuring proportionality and continually monitoring effectiveness.

Richard McCann, motivational speaker and founder of the iCan Academy, delivered an inspiring and thought-provoking session, sharing insights into his personal experiences with the police and commending the cohort on their chosen career path.



Deputy Chief Constable Tyron Joyce, NPCC Lead for the Police Race Action Plan, led an informative session to highlight the importance of the national plan and provide an insight into the current workstreams. He closed with: "I want to congratulate you on getting to this stage. Please make sure you look after yourselves and each other. This Police Now programme and its potential is massive – you can deliver the change."

Addressing the participants remotely, Deputy Chief Constable Vanessa Jardine of West Midlands Police, said: "Huge congratulations on completing the Police Now academy training, it's a magnificent achievement and I just want to welcome you all into the police service as you go out into your individual forces across the country. For those 18 officers joining West Midlands Police – we'll see you soon."

Jonathan Hinder, head of this year's academy closed the day by reminding the cohort that the team are here to support them every step of the way. He said: "We know you're brilliant police officers, now go and show everyone else."

The officers will now have a rest week before being deployed into their respective police forces to complete the Police Now programme – tackling crime and anti-social behaviour and working to increase public confidence in policing.

POLICE:NOW
INFLUENCE FOR GENERATIONS

Brentford v Wolves matchday guide

Coming to the Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday? Here's everything you need to know

Written by Brentford Football Club

Wolves are the visitors to the Gtech Community Stadium on Saturday (3pm kick-off). Here's what's happening around the ground...

Rainbow Laces

The Premier League and all 20 clubs will be demonstrating their ongoing support for LGBTQ+ inclusion by celebrating Stonewall's Rainbow Laces campaign this weekend.

Rainbow-themed captain's armbands will be worn while ball plinths, handshake boards and LED perimeter boards will also highlight important messages.

This year, the Premier League is encouraging fans to play their part by holding conversations about what we can all do to support LGBTQ+ people and help create environments where everyone feels welcome.

Bees fans from the LGBeeTs will join us pitchside for a pre-match chat with Stu Wakeford.

Got, got, need...

Get down to the Family Stand and pick up a free Panini World Cup 2022 sticker album and some stickers before the game and get your collection started.

Just a Bus Stop in Hounslow - book signing

Best-selling author and Brentford fan Greville Waterman will be showcasing his book, *Just a Bus Stop in Hounslow: Brentford FC's 2021/22 Season in the Premier League*.

Greville will be in the Legends Lounge before the game from 12.30pm until 2.45pm and post-match in the Dugout from 5pm to sign copies of the book and meet supporters.

The book will be available to be purchased on Saturday in the Dugout and Legends Lounges, priced £12.99.

Roadworks continue on the M4

The M4 Chiswick Flyover will be reduced to one lane again heading Westbound causing significant delays. Please leave more time for your journey as a result.

Countdown to kick-off – the timings you need to know

- 9am: Bees Superstore opens
- 12.30pm: Box Office opens
- 12.30pm: Hospitality opens
- 1.30pm: Turnstiles open
- 3pm: Kick-off



England to wear names on shirts in Autumn Nations Series

England will have names on their shirts in their upcoming Autumn Nations Series fixtures.

The 23-player men's squad will all wear their names on the backs of their shirts from their opening game against Argentina at Twickenham Stadium on Sunday 6 November (2.15pm KO).

Ellis Genge, Jack Nowell and Marcus Smith posed with their new shirts at their training camp in Jersey, where England are preparing for the four games.

Bill Sweeney, RFU Chief Executive Officer said;

“We are delighted to be featuring player names on the back of England shirts for our men's international Test matches this autumn. We hope this will lead the way for us to consider names on shirts to further promote our world class England international players participating in other international tournaments across the men's and women's game.

“While fans and players will always take ultimate pride in flying the flag and wearing the Rose to support England rugby teams, we think player names on shirts may have the potential to bring fans closer to the international stars of our game and we look forward to seeing the reaction to this initiative.”

Following the Argentina game, Eddie Jones' side will then play Japan (Saturday 12 November, 3.15pm KO) before taking on New Zealand (Saturday 19 November, 5.30pm KO) and South Africa (Saturday 26 November, 5.30pm KO).

Limited tickets for England v Argentina are available to buy from www.EnglandRugby.com/Tickets.



RFU Statement

Following a meeting of the RFU's Club Financial Viability Group today, the RFU can confirm the suspension of Wasps from Gallagher Premiership Rugby and Premiership Rugby Cup for the remainder of the 2022/23 season.

The RFU's Club Financial Viability Group is encouraged by the progress made by the administrators and it has taken the decision to suspend the team in order to support the prospect of securing a deal with the right investor and giving the club the best chance for a long term sustainable future.

Any potential investors and management will require due diligence and approvals from the RFU and PRL. A condition of any potential deal will include a requirement for the payment of all rugby creditors.

The decision also gives certainty to PRL and Premiership rugby clubs to protect the integrity of Gallagher Premiership Rugby and allow clubs and their teams to plan for the rest of the season.

Under RFU Regulations, Wasps will be relegated from Gallagher Premiership Rugby, and therefore if investors can be secured, the club will restart in the Championship in season 2023/24. The club is able to appeal this decision if it can show there was no fault insolvency.

ENGLAND WOMEN'S RUGBY LEGENDS IMMORTALISED WITH MURALS ACROSS THE UK

As they chase glory with the Red Roses in New Zealand, three legends of England Rugby, including captain Sarah Hunter who is set to break the record for most test caps this weekend, have been immortalised in inspiring murals at sites across the country.

Sarah Hunter, Red Roses captain, alongside centre and record point scorer Emily Scarratt, and prop Shaunagh Brown, whose off-field work has been an inspiration for many, have had their portraits created in Newcastle, Leicester and South London – all key locations that played a big part in their early rugby careers.

The Red Roses have recorded 28 consecutive victories, the most of any male or female rugby team in history, and are currently competing against the world's top sides in New Zealand.

The murals were supported by O2, principal partner for England Rugby. They were created by England Rugby licensee and renowned street artist collective, MurWalls, whose artists also created the player street art in Twickenham Stadium ahead of the 2022 Guinness Six Nations Championship.



The trio are not the only ones in the spotlight; to further celebrate the individual roots of each squad member currently in New Zealand, England Rugby has launched an out-of-home campaign honouring each player across 127 sites throughout the country including their hometowns. The campaign will run until the end of November.

Rose Roses Captain, Sarah Hunter, said: "You can't be what you can't

see, so I hope every young girl who drives past these murals on their way to school, or when they walk to rugby training is inspired, knowing that they too can one day play on the world stage.

“Novocastrians RFC will always hold a special place in my heart. It’s where I first realised I might be better suited to the forwards, and so moved from inside centre to the backrow!”

“While it’s my face up there on the side of the clubhouse, it’s also a celebration of the legacy of every woman who’s pulled on an England jersey.”

Red Roses Vice-Captain, Emily Scarratt, said: *“Growing up, it was my dad and brother who I looked up to, but I’m so happy that any girl who plays for Leicester Forest RFC and across the broader area now has a woman to look up to.”*



Red Roses Prop, Shaunagh Brown, said: *“While we don’t always ask to be role models, as professional athletes playing on the other side of the world we are, so I’m incredibly proud that aspiring young girls and boys, especially those of colour, can look to me in a very real way for inspiration.”*

Ewan Turney, England Rugby Marketing Director, said: *“We’re delighted to have created permanent*

artworks to hero three of our senior Red Roses in locations that played a significant part in their rugby journey. We’re confident they will inspire the next generation of players to pick up a ball and try the sport.”

Marie Houlgate, Head of Sport Partnerships and Sponsorship at Virgin Media O2, said: *“The Red Roses are inspiring a nation of fans and proving why they are currently the number one team in the world with their performances in New Zealand. Through O2’s partnership with the Red Roses, we’ve championed the team as one that everyone should know about and these murals at locations across the UK will help increase awareness of these incredibly talented and inspirational players.”*

Mural Locations

- Sarah Hunter: Novocastrians RFC, The Drive, Longbenton, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7SZ
- Shaunagh Brown: Kennington Oval, London SE11 5SS
- Emily Scarratt: Leicester Forest RFC, Hinckley Rd, Leicester Forest East, Kirby Muxloe, Leicester LE3 3PJ



James Haskell and Mike Tindall Rekindle Players' Love for Rugby in a one-off match of a lifetime

James Haskell and Mike Tindall returned to the pitch alongside a star-studded squad of former England internationals and grassroots players in a celebration of rugby's ability to create communities, forge lifelong friendships and keep players physically active.

The England stars were joined by Phil Vickery, Tom Wood, Matt Banahan, Lee Mears and Delon Armitage at the latest event in England Rugby's 'Play Together, Stay Together' campaign.

Aylesbury Rugby Club played host to the one-off match that saw this clash of titans end in a nail-biting 36-36 draw with Tindall scoring the final equalising try. The match also saw standout tries from Mike Durose, Mike Phillips, Ben Pope, Delon Armitage and Alex Ingles.

However, it wasn't the final score that was of ultimate importance to the teams. Instead, it was the camaraderie and simple act of returning to the pitch and reuniting with old friends that marked victory, whether at a grassroots or professional level.

"It's that feeling of belonging, and creating something together, and carrying the lessons and friendships built by rugby throughout the rest of your life that's so important," said Tindall.

"Whether you played as a teenager at school or a club and transitioned into adult rugby, or got into the sport through friends, just getting involved and sharing the love for the game is what counts."

"The 'Play Together, Stay Together' initiative is a great way for us to inspire people to play rugby, whether they're coming back to the game or are fresh to it, looking to be more active and make some great mates along the way. It's also a great way to escape from everyday stresses and unwind."

For those looking to get back into the sport, whether it's been a few months, or a couple of years due to the pandemic, the RFU has a wide range of resources to help players as part of the 'Play Together, Stay Together' campaign, supported by The National Lottery.

Resources include a Return to Rugby guide, the Activate Injury Prevention exercise programme to improve functional and core strength, balance and agility to prepare bodies physically, access to exercise videos curated by England Rugby's Strength & Conditioning coach Robin Eager, and nutrition advice and recipes for all ages to ensure players can perform safely and at their peak.

The RFU hopes that this star-studded match, created with The Good, The Bad & The Rugby will encourage players to lace up their boots once more.

World Cup winner Phil Vickery added: *"It was great to be back on a rugby pitch, playing alongside old friends and new ones, all of whom I have met through the sport. We had a lot of fun out there*

today playing for and against each other, always in good spirits, and then being able to enjoy a drink with everyone afterwards in the clubhouse is what rugby is all about.

“I’ve made some of my best friends through this sport and it’s offered me so much more than just a game on a weekend.”

In order to maximise game time for players, the RFU has enhanced its Game On initiative to allow greater flexibility for teams to complete matches.

The emphasis is on making sure players can still play even if teams don’t have 15-a-side. As long as teams have between 10-15 players, games can go ahead and count as a full 15-a-side match in leagues where Game On applies.

Matches can be anywhere between 40-80 minutes and there are flexible options at scrums and lineouts depending on what suits players.

Clubs are also encouraged to consider flexibility of fixture timings, such as midweek or and Friday evening games if players aren’t able to commit to traditional weekend fixtures slots.

Steve Grainger, RFU Director of Rugby Development, commented:

“While many areas of the community game have responded well after the pandemic, there are areas of concern in the adult men’s game and around Colts transitioning into adult rugby.

The national participation campaign ‘Play Together, Stay Together’ is one element of a package of measures we have introduced to help reboot participation at this level.

While it’s still early days, there have been promising signs of progress over recent weeks and it is encouraging to see match completion rates moving in the right direction. We will continue to monitor these closely.

“While the women’s game has stayed flat at a time when growth was planned, we are confident in our planned interventions through Allianz Inner Warrior player recruitment campaigns aligned to the Rugby World Cup in which the Red Roses continue to inspire a new generation of players.

“We hope the whole rugby community will get behind ‘Play Together, Stay Together’ as the game works together to encourage more players back to their local clubs, and we thank The National Lottery players for again supporting our national participation campaign.”



RFU

Allianz Cup Update: University of Worcester Warriors and Wasps

The RFU is pleased to confirm that having received the necessary assurances, both the following fixtures in Round 5 of the Allianz Cup will go ahead this weekend.

- Gloucester-Hartpury vs University of Worcester Warriors, Saturday 29 October 2022, 16:00 KO, Alpas Arena
- Wasps vs Saracens, Saturday 29 October 2022, 13:30 KO, Twyford Avenue

Background:

The Regulation 6 suspension related to University of Worcester Warriors has been temporarily lifted due to certain conditions being met, however, it remains in place for the men's team. Funding and insurance for the women's team has been secured and has therefore enabled the team to continue playing under a temporary licence whilst the administrators continue their work on a sale of the wider club. Home matches will continue to be played at Sixways which remains under the control of the administrators. Interim funding which is being underwritten by a local company to take the team through to Christmas, will allow time for a longer term deal to be agreed for the wider club.

Wasps, who were not suspended pursuant to Regulation 5, are able to continue playing at their ground at Twyford Avenue on the basis that they remain part of the amateur club Wasps FC and have confirmed they will continue to meet the relevant minimum operating standards. The required insurance cover is provided within the community insurance provision.



England squad update

Owen Farrell (concussion), Jonny May (elbow) and Henry Arundell (foot) have withdrawn from the England squad who will travel to Jersey today after sustaining injuries in their weekend games.

Tom Roebuck has been called up to the England squad for the first time. Adam Radwan and Henry Slade also make a return to the side.

Owen Farrell will progress through his graduated return to play protocols at home.

Henry Arundell will travel to Jersey for rehab, along with Will Stuart who is recovering from a knee injury.

Charlie Atkinson, who is currently unattached, will join up with the England squad as a training player.

England will spend five days in Jersey as they continue their preparations for their four Autumn Nations Series fixtures at Twickenham Stadium.

They will first take on Argentina, with limited tickets still available, on Sunday 6 November (2.15pm KO).

They will then host Japan (Saturday 12 November, 3.15pm KO) followed by New Zealand (Saturday 19 November 5.30pm) and South Africa (Saturday 26 November, 5.30pm KO).



ACT-Accelerator launches six month plan as world transitions to long-term COVID-19 control

- Plan sets out the partnership's key priorities and ways of working, as countries transition to managing COVID-19 as a long-term public health issue
- The plan's focus is on vaccinating high-risk populations, introducing new treatments, boosting testing and securing sustained access to COVID-19 tools
- The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator is a global collaboration to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines.

The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator today launches its plan for the next six months, setting out how, as a partnership of global health agencies working alongside government, civil society and other partners, it will support countries as the world transitions to long-term COVID-19 control.

Recognizing the evolving nature of the COVID-19 virus and pandemic, the plan outlines changes to ACT-A's set-up and ways of working, to ensure countries continue to have access to COVID-19 tools in the longer term, while maintaining the coalition's readiness to help address future disease surges.

Developed through a consultative process with ACT-A agencies, donors, industry partners, civil society organizations (CSOs) and Facilitation Council members, the plan summarizes priority areas of focus for the partnership's pillars, coordination mechanisms and other core functions, and highlights the work to be maintained, transitioned, sunset, or kept on standby. The transition plan supports the work of ACT-A agencies as they evolve the financing, implementation and mainstreaming of their COVID-19 efforts.

The next phase of ACT-A partners' work will centre on three overarching areas:

- **Focusing research and development (R&D) and market shaping activities** to ensure a pipeline for new and enhanced COVID-19 tools
- **Securing institutional arrangements** for sustained access for all countries to COVID-19 vaccines, tests and treatments, including oxygen
- **Concentrating in-country** work on new product introduction (e.g., new oral antivirals for those at highest risk) and protection of priority populations (e.g., full vaccination of health care workers and older populations), in support of national and international targets

"As the world moves towards managing COVID-19 over the long-term, ACT-A will continue to support countries by providing access to vaccines, tests, and treatments," said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. "But as this plan lays out, we still have a lot of work to do to achieve equitable access to these life-saving tools, with health workers and at-risk

populations as our top priority.”

Other changes outlined in the plan include the transition to a new ACT-A Tracking and Monitoring Taskforce, co-chaired by senior officials of India and the US, with the political-level Facilitation Council going into ‘standby’ mode, with the capacity to reactivate if needed due to a surge in severe disease.

ACT-A agencies have driven resource mobilization efforts and this plan sets out the shift to mainstream partnership-level financing and resource mobilization into the regular work of each agency going forward. Based on the three over-arching areas of work outlined above, existing financial commitments and country demand for tools, the ACT-A agencies require an estimated US\$400 million for their transition work over the next six months. The ACT-A hub will continue to provide a transparent view of ACT-A agencies’ financing situation during this period.

The ACT-Accelerator is the world’s only end-to-end solution for accelerating the development of, and equitable access to, COVID-19 vaccines, tests and treatments. This partnership has played a key role in facilitating access to COVID-19 countermeasures for low- and lower-middle-income countries throughout the pandemic, most notably:

- Providing more than 1.8 billion doses of vaccine to 146 countries and territories – including 75% of the vaccines deployed in low-income countries and the majority of doses supplied to Africa – through COVAX, the vaccines pillar led by CEPI, Gavi, WHO and UNICEF.
- Delivering over 161 million tests, more than halving the cost of rapid tests to under \$1 per test, and supplying around 80% of tests used in Africa in the first year of the pandemic through the Diagnostics Pillar led by FIND and the Global Fund.
- Delivering over 40 million COVID-19 treatment courses, investing an unprecedented US\$ 1 billion in expanding sustainable oxygen access in LMICs, and initiating the delivery of new antivirals, through the Therapeutics Pillar, led by the Global Fund, Unitaaid and Wellcome.
- Delivering over 2 billion items of personal protective equipment (PPE), supporting health systems to deliver COVID-19 tools, and boosting their laboratory, waste management and treatment capacities, through the Health Systems and Response Connector, led by the Global Fund, WHO and the World Bank.

The Transition Plan can be accessed [here](#).



**World Health
Organization**

Tuberculosis deaths and disease increase during the COVID-19 pandemic

An estimated 10.6 million people fell ill with tuberculosis (TB) in 2021, an increase of 4.5% from 2020, and 1.6 million people died from TB (including 187 000 among HIV positive people), according to the World Health Organization's [2022 Global TB report](#). The burden of drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) also increased by 3% between 2020 and 2021, with 450 000 new cases of rifampicin-resistant TB (RR-TB) in 2021. This is the first time in many years an increase has been reported in the number of people falling ill with TB and drug resistant TB. TB services are among many others disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, but its impact on the TB response has been particularly severe. Ongoing conflicts across Eastern Europe, Africa and the Middle East have further exacerbated the situation for vulnerable populations.

“If the pandemic has taught us anything, it's that with solidarity, determination, innovation and the equitable use of tools, we can overcome severe health threats. Let's apply those lessons to tuberculosis. It is time to put a stop to this long-time killer. Working together, we can end TB,” said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

Continued challenges with providing and accessing essential TB services have meant that many people with TB were not diagnosed and treated. The reported number of people newly diagnosed with TB fell from 7.1 million in 2019 to 5.8 million in 2020. There was a partial recovery to 6.4 million in 2021, but this was still well below pre-pandemic levels.

Reductions in the reported number of people diagnosed with TB suggest that the number of people with undiagnosed and untreated TB has grown, resulting first in an increased number of TB deaths and more community transmission of infection and then, with some lag-time, increased numbers of people developing TB.

The number of people provided with treatment for RR-TB and multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) has also declined between 2019 and 2020. The reported number of people started on treatment for RR-TB in 2021 was 161 746, only about one in three of those in need.

The report notes a decline in global spending on essential TB services from US\$6 billion in 2019 to US\$5.4 billion in 2021, which is less than half of the global target of US\$13 billion annually by 2022. As in the previous 10 years, most of the funding used in 2021 (79%) was from domestic sources. In other low- and middle-income countries, international donor funding remains crucial. The main source is the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund). The United States Government is the largest contributor of funding to the Global Fund and is also the largest bilateral donor; overall, it contributes close to 50% of international donor funding for TB.

“The report provides important new evidence and makes a strong case on the need to join forces and urgently redouble efforts to get the TB response back-on-track to reach TB targets and save lives,” said Dr Tereza Kasaeva, Director of WHO's Global TB Programme. “This will be an essential tool for countries, partners and civil society as they review progress and prepare for the 2nd UN

Small gains

In the midst of stalling progress, there are some successes. 26.3 million people were treated for TB between 2018 and 2021, still far short of the 40 million targets set for 2018–2022 at the UN High-Level Meeting on TB. Of the 30 high TB burden countries, those with the highest levels of treatment coverage in 2021 included Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Uganda and Zambia. The number of people provided with TB preventive treatment rebounded in 2021 to close to 2019 levels, but the cumulative total of 12.5 million between 2018 and 2021 was still far from the target of 30 million by the end of 2022.

More positively, TB preventive treatment for people living with HIV has far surpassed the global target of 6 million in the period 2018-2022, reaching more than 10 million in only 4 years. Seven countries – India, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe – collectively accounted for 82% of those started on preventive treatment in 2021.

Seven high TB burden countries in the region - Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia- have reached or surpassed the 2020 milestone of a 20% reduction in the TB incidence rate compared with 2015.

Countries are also increasing the uptake of new tools and guidance recommended by WHO, resulting in early access to TB prevention and care and better outcomes. The proportion of people diagnosed with TB who were initially tested with a rapid diagnostic increased from 33% in 2020 to 38% in 2021. 109 countries were using all-oral longer regimens (up from 92 in 2020) for the treatment of MDR/RR-TB, and 92 were using shorter regimens (up from 65 in 2020).

There has been increased access to shorter (1–3 months) rifamycin-based regimens for TB preventive treatment. In 2021, 185 350 people in 52 countries were reported to have been treated with rifapentine-containing regimens, up from 25 657 in 37 countries in 2020.

The report reiterates its call for countries to put in place urgent measures to restore access to essential TB services. It further calls for increased investments, multisectoral action to address the broader determinants that influence TB epidemics and their socioeconomic impact as well as the need for new diagnostics, drugs and vaccines. To intensify vaccine development, building on lessons from the pandemic, WHO will be convening a high-level summit in early 2023.

The 2022 report features data on trends of disease and the response to the epidemic from 215 countries and areas, including all 194 WHO Member States.



**World Health
Organization**

TAG-VE statement on Omicron sublineages BQ.1 and XBB

As part of its ongoing work to track variants, WHO's Technical Advisory Group on SARS-CoV-2 Virus Evolution ([TAG-VE](#)) met on the 24 October 2022 to discuss the latest evidence on the Omicron variant of concern, and how its evolution is currently unfolding, in light of high levels of population immunity in many settings and country differences in the immune landscape. In particular, the public health implications of the rise of some Omicron variants, specifically XBB and its sublineages (indicated as XBB*), as well as BQ.1 and its sublineages (indicated as BQ.1*), were discussed.

Based on currently available evidence, the TAG-VE does not feel that the overall phenotype of XBB* and BQ.1* diverge sufficiently from each other, or from other Omicron lineages with additional immune escape mutations, in terms of the necessary public health response, to warrant the designation of new variants of concern and assignment of a new label. The two sublineages remain part of Omicron, which continues to be a variant of concern.

This decision will be reassessed regularly. If there is any significant development that warrant a change in public health strategy, WHO will promptly alert Member States and the public.

XBB*

XBB* is a recombinant of BA.2.10.1 and BA.2.75 sublineages. As of epidemiological week 40 (3 to 9 October), from the sequences submitted to GISAID, XBB* has a global prevalence of 1.3% and it has been detected in 35 countries. The TAG-VE discussed the available data on the growth advantage of this sublineage, and some early evidence on clinical severity and reinfection risk from Singapore and India, as well as inputs from other countries. There has been a broad increase in prevalence of XBB* in regional genomic surveillance, but it has not yet been consistently associated with an increase in new infections. While further studies are needed, the current data do not suggest there are substantial differences in disease severity for XBB* infections. There is, however, early evidence pointing at a higher reinfection risk, as compared to other circulating Omicron sublineages. Cases of reinfection were primarily limited to those with initial infection in the pre-Omicron period. As of now, there are no data to support escape from recent immune responses induced by other Omicron lineages. Whether the increased immune escape of XBB* is sufficient to drive new infection waves appears to depend on the regional immune landscape as affected by the size and timing of previous Omicron waves, as well as the COVID-19 vaccination coverage.

BQ.1*

BQ.1* is a sublineage of BA.5, which carries spike mutations in some key antigenic sites, including K444T and N460K. In addition to these mutations, the sublineage BQ.1.1 carries an additional spike mutation in a key antigenic site (i.e. R346T). As of epidemiological week 40 (3 to 9 October), from the sequences submitted to GISAID, BQ.1* has a prevalence of 6% and it has been detected in 65 countries. While there are no data on severity or immune escape from studies in humans, BQ.1* is showing a significant growth advantage over other circulating Omicron sublineages in many settings, including Europe and the US, and therefore warrants

close monitoring. It is likely that these additional mutations have conferred an immune escape advantage over other circulating Omicron sublineages, and therefore a higher reinfection risk is a possibility that needs further investigation. At this time there is no epidemiologic data to suggest an increase in disease severity. The impact of the observed immunological changes on vaccine escape remains to be established. Based on currently available knowledge, protection by vaccines (both the index and the recently introduced bivalent vaccines) against infection may be reduced but no major impact on protection against severe disease is foreseen.

Overall summary

The Omicron variant of concern remains the dominant variant circulating globally, accounting for nearly all sequences reported to GISAID^[1]. While we are looking at a vast genetic diversity of Omicron sublineages, they currently display similar clinical outcomes, but with differences in immune escape potential.

The potential impact of these variants is strongly influenced by the regional immune landscape. While reinfections have become an increasingly higher proportion of all infections, this is primarily seen in the background of non-Omicron primary infections. With waning immune response from initial waves of Omicron infection, and further evolution of Omicron variants, it is likely that reinfections may rise further.

The role of the TAG-VE is to alert WHO if a variant with a substantially different phenotype (e.g. a variant that can cause a more severe disease or lead to large epidemic waves causing increased burden to the healthcare system) is emerging and likely to pose a significant threat. Based on currently available evidence, the TAG-VE does not feel that the overall phenotype of XBB* and BQ.1* diverge sufficiently from each other, or from other Omicron sublineages with additional immune escape mutations, in terms of the necessary public health response, to warrant the designation of a new variant of concern and assignment of a new label, but the situation will be reassessed regularly. We note these two sublineages remain part of Omicron, which is a variant of concern with very high reinfection and vaccination breakthrough potential, and surges in new infections should be handled accordingly.

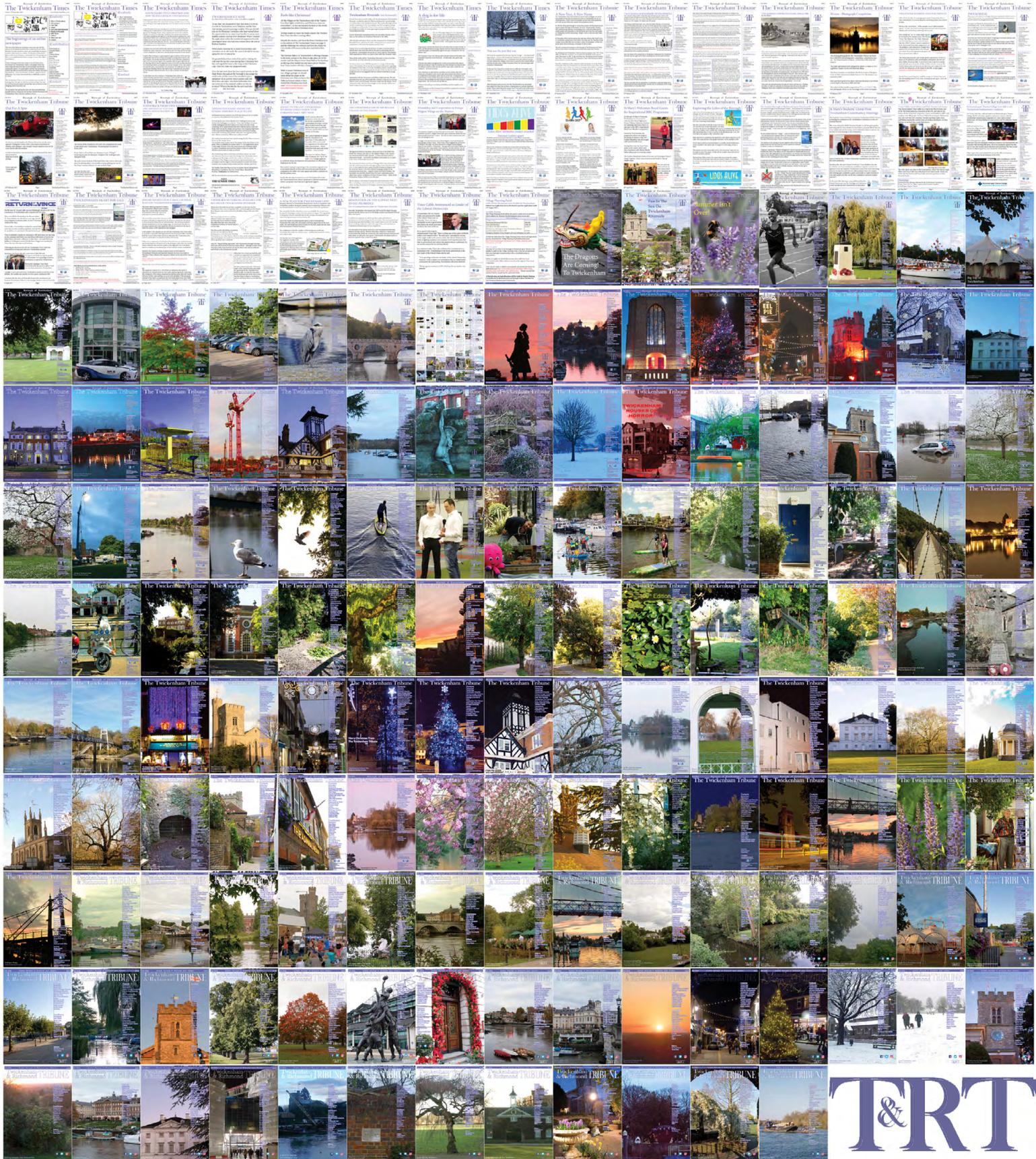
While so far there is no epidemiological evidence that these sublineages will be of substantially greater risk compared to other Omicron sublineages, we note that this assessment is based on data from sentinel nations and may not be fully generalizable to other settings. Wide-ranging, systematic laboratory-based efforts are urgently needed to make such determinations rapidly and with global interpretability.

WHO will continue to closely monitor the XBB* and BQ.1* lineages as part of Omicron and requests countries to continue to be vigilant, to monitor and report sequences, as well as to conduct independent and comparative analyses of the different Omicron sublineages.

The TAG-VE meets regularly and continues to assess the available data on the transmissibility, clinical severity, and immune escape potential of variants, including the potential impact on diagnostics, therapeutics, and the effectiveness of vaccines in preventing infection and/or severe disease.



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Published by:

Twickenham & Richmond Tribune (in association with World InfoZone Limited)

Registered in England & Wales

Reg No 10549345

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

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