

THAMES DITTON TODAY

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THE MAGAZINE OF THE
THAMES DITTON & WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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THAMES DITTON TODAY

Published quarterly since 1970

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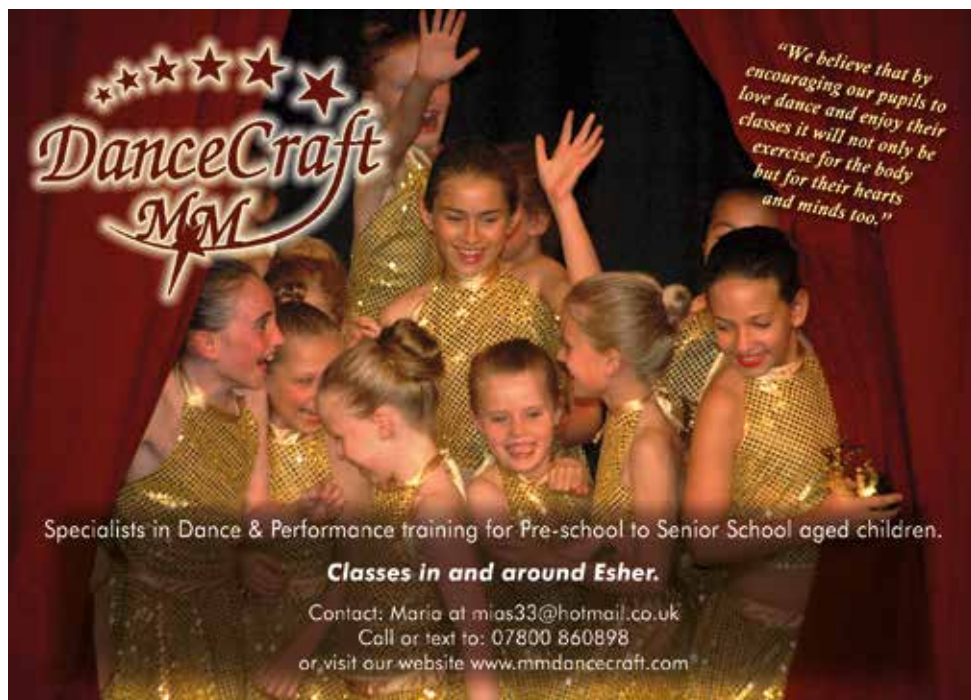
News from Residents' Association	7
Update from your Residents' Associations' Councillors at Elmbridge Borough Council.....	12
Update from Nick Darby, our Surrey County Councillor.....	15
Local Plan, Wood Thinning and Flood update	17
Your Residents' Association in Action 2024-2025	24
Thames Ditton Pharmacy.....	29
Living History on the Thames	33
Paint All Saints appeal	37
Winter crossword solution.....	42
Spring crossword	43
Services, Clubs, Societies and Groups	44
Theatre in Thames Ditton	46

Cover: *Thames A Raters sailing on the river near Surbiton*
See story on page 33

www.residents-association.com

Officers and staff of the Association are volunteers, but we must fund costs of this magazine, administrative and election expenses, and other expenses such as spring bulb-planting and village Christmas trees. The subscription is only £5 per household. If you can contribute more, please do so. Subscriptions can be paid via our website www.residents-association.com; subscriptions (in an envelope please) may be left at View, 34 High Street, Thames Ditton or Thorkhill Road Pharmacy, 94 Thorkhill Road, Thames Ditton. Or mail to Membership Secretary Peter Haynes at 6 Onslow Gardens, Thames Ditton KT7 0JJ. Thank you.

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THAMES DITTON AND WESTON GREEN RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting

8pm on 18 March 2025

At Vera Fletcher Hall

Agenda:

1. Minutes of the 2024 AGM meeting and matters arising
2. Chairman's Annual Report: Receive, discuss and adopt the Annual Report for 2024
3. Accounts: To receive the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024
4. Appointments: To receive nominations and appoint officers and an auditor; President; Chairman; Vice Chairman; Hon. Secretary; Hon Treasurer; Auditor
5. Local elections: No local elections scheduled for 2025. Due to local government reorganisation and devolution
7. Resolutions: To consider any resolutions submitted in writing to the Secretary by 4 March 2025
7. Guest Speaker Emma Macfarlane, lead volunteer at the St Nicholas Community Hub

President: Martin Wilberforce

7 River Avenue,
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Vice President: Ruth Lyon,

11 Riversdale Road,
Thames Ditton 0208 398 3396

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27 Lower Green Road, Esher 020 8398 2484

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12 Basing Close, Thames Ditton 020 8398 2382

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Thames Ditton 07710 943140

Caroline James,
Laurel Cottage, 20 High Street,
Thames Ditton 07970 672723

Elaine Sesemann,
14 Ennismore Gardens
Thames Ditton 07801 943392

Hinchley Wood & Weston Green Borough Councillors

Gill Coates,
The Oaks, Orchard Gate,
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Janet Turner, 2 Montgomery Ave,
Hinchley Wood 020 8398 1565
James Crawshaw 07500 688632

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Thames Ditton 020 8398 4962

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1 Boyle Farm Road, Thames Ditton 020 8786 6882

Flooding: Tony Thompson,
Willow End, River Bank, Thames Ditton 07736 677671



THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE

Tuesday 18 March AGM 8pm - Vera Fletcher Hall

Tuesday 29 April 8pm - Vera Fletcher Hall

Tuesday 24 June 8pm - Imber Court

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News from the Residents' Association to end-February



Thames Ditton Today

Included with this issue of the magazine is our 2025 Residents' Association Subscription slip, requesting payment of just £5 per to support and help the RA in the year ahead. While officers and supporters are all volunteers, the subscription fee covers basic admin and election costs - needed for the RA to function. We also ask subscribers to make an additional contribution: this can go towards publishing this magazine (our advertising income doesn't fully cover it) or to a contingency fund which supports community enhancement projects. The Residents' Association and RA Councillors are here to help everyone in the community - your continued support is much appreciated.

Community Spirit Awards



TD litter pickers

The Thames Ditton Gin Community Spirit Awards, celebrate and acknowledged the unsung heroes in the local community, who give their time and selfless support to others. Congratulations to this year's worthy winners, who are: Al Habbooby from Café Noir; Will and Trish Bland;

Barbara Gostling from Boomerang Bags; the Thames Ditton litter pickers; Suzan Baker from Ditton Scouts; the Reverend Andrew Cowie of St Nicholas Church; Vicky Zadeh from Waste To Plate and Laura Pring of the Village Hub.



Libby is pictured with her award with Gavin Bacon of TD Gin

Last but not least recognition for **Libby MacIntyre**, who as well as being voluntary Chairman of Lynton Sheltered housing has been editor of Thames Ditton Today (along with Sandra Dennis) for the past 10 years.. Without fail, she has got the magazine to press every quarter, ensuring it continues to be a source of news and information for the community. A huge thank you from everyone connected with the Residents Association. We are pleased to welcome Paul Ovington, as our new editor.

British Empire Medal

Alaa Mohammed Ali Habbooby (known to most of us as just Al) is also to be congratulated on his very deserving award

of the British Empire Medal for services to the community in Thames Ditton. Al's cheerful and friendly disposition has brightened many people's day each morning at Cafe Noir in Thames Ditton station and afterwards at Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club, where he continues his coffee-shop service. Our appreciation of Al has been demonstrated over the years by his nine Elmbridge Retailer awards.

Local residents Swim the Channel



Well not exactly. Cloe Dwelly (right) and Jan Hardy swam the 22 miles of the Channel in the Excel pool to raise money for Aspire (a charity that helps those suffering from back injuries) and for their parish, All Saints Weston Green. The two inspirational women - Cloe is in her eighties and Jan is in her sixties, together raised over £3,200. Jan was the fourth highest fundraiser nationally for Aspire.

Ember Sports Club

This summer Ember Bowls Club will be celebrating its 75th anniversary with several special events so if not already a member, it's a great time to join to not only play but enjoy the club's social activities too. New players can take part in a free training course starting in early May. For more information contact Pat Cooke on 07984714061 or look at the Ember Sports Club website. As an alternative Ember Croquet Club has four taster sessions in April on 17, 19, 27 and 29. Each session

starts with a group game which is easy to pick up, and fun to play. To find out more email Simon Charrington croquet@embersportsclub.org.uk

2025 Dittons' Fair

Roll up, roll up for all the fun of the Dittons' Fair on Sunday 11 May. The biggest annual community event in Thames Ditton has been taking place on Giggs Hill Green for 60 years. Arrive hungry for the start at 1pm - perennial crowd pleasers include the Bachmann's Tea Tent and a smokin' BBQ manned by the Dittons Scout Group's volunteer leadership team, who organise the day. Enjoy performances by local dance and martial arts groups, visit 25 classic fair games at pocket money prices - think crazy golf, a coconut shy and a tombola packed with great prizes from local businesses - as well as a fun fair, plant sale, pig racing and Soak the Leader, while not forgetting the Dotty Dog Show. Keep your eyes peeled for Platinum sponsor John D Wood & Co's estate agent boards, which will start creeping up around the village to remind everyone to save the 11 May date.

Secret Gardens



Secret Gardens of Thames Ditton returns on Sunday 8 June, from 2pm to 5.30pm. This

much-loved spectacle sees up to a dozen local gardens throw open their gates to raise money for the Christmas trees that brighten our High Street over the festive period. Discover hidden garden gems in our lovely village, pausing only to feast on home-made cakes and teas at Lynton in St Leonard's Road. Why not combine a garden visit to one of our hostelrys, or visit one of our shops to keep our High Street buzzing? Tickets will be on sale at View Gifts and Gallery and The Secret Garden florist in the High Street from 19 May. If you could open your own garden (they do not have to be Chelsea-standard!) please e-mail carolinejames1@gmail.com

Damage to Golf Club

Damage to the Thames Ditton and Esher Golf Club course has taken place recently when a swastika was carved on one of the greens. It is believed riders on two dirt bikes are responsible for the damage which occurred in January with previous damage being caused in November. Unfortunately, there is no description of the vehicles or those involved. If you can help identify those involved or provide any other information, please contact the Police quoting crime ref PR/45250018945. If you do not wish to leave your name, you can contact Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Fifty years of conservation



Protecting the historic centre of our village was recognised just over 50 years ago when a formal Conservation Area was established

in Thames Ditton. We'll be featuring 'then' and 'now' photos to show how in some places, little has changed in the village, in the Summer edition. Of the 58 original photographs, one view has not been found. It is shown here. If any reader knows the location do email editor@residents-association.com

Dates for your diary

Farmers' Market

Mercer Close Car Park (by the library)
fourth Saturday of the month

Dittons' Fair

Giggs Hill Green
Sunday 11 May from 1pm

Esher May Fair

Saturday 17 May from midday

Secret Gardens of Thames Ditton

Sunday 8 June, from 2pm to 5.30pm
Tickets (from 19 May) from View Gifts
and The Secret Garden florist

Weston Green Litter Pickers

Meet at Marneys pub on the first
Saturday in the month at 10.30am

Thames Ditton Litter Pickers

Meet at Thames Ditton Tennis Club car
park on third Saturday of the month at
10.45am

Seniors Coffee Morning

Every Wednesday from 10.30am at
Vital Village, Mercer Close

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Update from your Residents' Association

Thames Ditton Ward



Elaine Sesemann
TDWGRA



Caroline James
TDWGRA



Alex Batchelor
TDWGRA

Local Plan News

RA Councillor Caroline James gives an update on Elmbridge's Local Plan to manage the scale of development in the borough over the next 15 years, on page 17.

Community Services Transformation programme Public Engagement

Community support services are valued by the people who access them, but they represent less than 2 per cent of the borough's residents. Yet independent research shows that almost 10 per cent of residents need some kind of help. However as there is no more money to finance this help, the aim is to do things differently within the budget available. So EBC is currently engaging with residents with the aim of identifying what kind of support will be most helpful to re-imagine the services, so they reach more people. If you wish to contribute to the debate and have not yet done so, contact Councillor Gill Coates directly for details as the consultation closes soon.

Local Government Reorganisation – an Elmbridge perspective

Local Government Reorganisation is happening whether we like it or not. We believe that local services are best in the hands of local people. EBC only gets 10% of all Council Tax paid, but for that we get our waste collection, housing, planning, green spaces, cemeteries, leisure centres, car parks, community support services and financial support for charities, local groups and businesses through grants schemes and Community Infrastructure Levy. However, that is going to change. Surrey is in the first wave of authorities to become Unitary Authorities (one Council under Mayoral leadership.) There is a lot still to be discussed in Surrey because across the county many other borough councils are in financial difficulties and, in the case of Woking, bankrupt. Surrey CC itself is in financial difficulty and proposing savings across all services. County-wide talks are taking place with a view to agreeing a draft proposal by 21 March and final proposals sometime in May. Updates will be available on the EBC and RA websites.

Residents' Association

www.residents-association.com

or follow us on *X@TDresidents*

Councillors at Elmbridge Borough Council

Hinchley Wood and Weston Green Ward



Gill Coates
TDWGRA



Janet Turner
HWRA



James Crawshaw
HWRA

Pharmacy Provisions in Thames Ditton

The RA is supporting the call by residents for the pharmacy in the village high street to be reinstated. We are aware of an interested pharmacist who has started the process of trying to get a licence from the NHS. He would then need to secure a lease for the property. Many residents have written to express the problems they experience since Boots closed a year ago. There is a petition asking SCC's Health & Wellbeing Board and the NHS to recognise the need for a pharmacy in the high street regardless of the findings in the draft Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment that there are NO gaps in local pharmaceutical provision. Karen Randolph gives the full story on page 29).

Summer Road Playground

We are delighted that following consultations with many residents, the Greenspaces Team at Elmbridge Borough Council has completed the installation of brand-new play equipment and new bouncy ground covering. We hope our local children will love it! New signage has also been installed and the old noticeboards removed.

Bike shelters in Thames Ditton

We have applied for funding from the Southwestern Railway Customer and Infrastructure Fund to replace the rain cover for the bike racks at Thames Ditton Station. In addition we are pleased to report that Elmbridge has new cycle racks for Ashley Road car park. We are awaiting confirmation of the location for the new EV charging points in the car park before they can be installed. We hope to receive the go ahead very soon.

Planning application updates

As we go to press, Aldi have not submitted a planning application for the Guy Salmon site despite the public information session in December. There is no open planning application for the Café Rouge site either. The Molesey Venture planning application is being considered by the Planning Committee on 11 March. We have not heard anything about what is intended for the Marquis of Granby site.

HJC

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Update from Nick Darby, our Surrey County Councillor



Following the success of the parking changes in Watts Road, I have been in discussions with Surrey Highways officers to consider a similar scheme in Station Road, which has become increasingly unsafe with cars mounting pavements and speeding down the road.

They agreed to look at putting in double yellow lines, for in effect four cars, in a section between Basing Way and Basingfield Road, to allow for vehicles to pull in to allow those with right of way to continue towards the village without mounting the pavement. I have also asked for additional 20mph roundels to be painted.

I have been assured that work on improving road markings and 20 mph roundels at the Station Road end of Speer Road and the Summer Road mini roundabout will be done.

Following a request from residents for a Pelican crossing to be installed on Station Road by the railway station close to Basingfield Road, I had a meeting with county council highways officials. In principle, there was support for the scheme but further discussions will need to take place.

In the meantime it is hoped that a school crossing officer can be recruited to help improve the safety for children from Thames Ditton Infants and Junior Schools crossing the road during the day.

There are still problems relating to Thames Water. The inconvenience of the closure of Speer Road has at last ended following work to repair broken sewage pipes that caused a small sink hole to appear.

Finally - and as reported nationally and locally - the Government has taken the decision to postpone Surrey county council elections this year. Discussion will now take place as to how Surrey will be split up. It means

I will continue to be your county councillor for another year at least until elections in May 2026.



*Surrey County
Councillor, (The Dittons)
Nick Darby*

Nick Darby
Surrey County Councillor for the Dittons

020 8398 2382
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Local Warm Welcome Venues

SCC works with partners to run a Warm Welcome scheme – local venues, where people can come to warm up, get a hot drink for free and socialise. Local venues are:

Dittons Library, Mercer Close
Tuesday to Saturday 09:30 – 17:00
Vital Village, Mercer Close
Mondays 09:00 – 12:00
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Local plan, Wood thinning and Flood update



Local Plan News Update

Elmbridge Council withdrew the Local Plan at its meeting at the end of February. If it had not done so the Planning Inspector would have found it unsound in its current form.

This is hugely disappointing and not what any of us wanted. The Inspector believed that given the housing pressures, particularly the lack of affordable housing in the borough, the council should have considered green belt release. Residents who took part in various consultations made it very clear to councillors and officers there should be no green belt release, fearing that once some Green Belt is released it would open the flood gates for more and more.

In her initial findings the Inspector stated there was a way to make our plan sound with modifications and asked us to confirm if this could be done within 6 months. Following on, the council wrote to her outlining and committing to a 12-month timetable (this was the minimum time it would take) with a detailed work programme to complete the additional work required to address the issues identified. She refused and said it would be inappropriate to apply 'Inspectors discretion'. Despite our protests and lobbying both the planning inspector and the Minister of State for Housing and Planning urging a 12-month extension, this has been refused. It is not what any of us wanted but we are where we are, there has been a call for sites and work is already underway.

A new Local Development Scheme (timetable) has been produced and if approved the new Local Plan should be implemented by 2028. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has made it very clear that local government reorganisation must not hinder producing a local plan and work must continue. I do wish to be very clear to everyone that it is inevitable there will be some Green Belt release. I know this sounds alarming but Green Belt and our green spaces are different; Green spaces are parks, recreation grounds, our woods and commons and these remain protected from development. I appreciate this is a complex issue. I would therefore be happy to speak to anyone who has questions about this.

Caroline James
carolinejames1@gmail.com

Ditton Common Woodland Thinning Update

Following many complaints about the severity of the clearance work on Ditton Common, the RA has been in touch with Elmbridge's Countryside Team for an update on the thinning operation – the first for 30 years - which was completed in early February.

Recently the path surfaces have been scraped with a small excavator and the natural paths have had holes and ruts flattened. These will continue to be muddy – not helped by the heavy rain we are having this winter - but they will dry out come summer. The increased light and glades that have been created by the thinning will encourage some important woodland



The photo shows how the woods have been cleared

ground flora to establish. Brambles will be keen to regrow but this is an opportunity for Lords and Ladies, snowdrops and celandines to spread. We may also see more vetches, sedges, wood millet, wood melick, wild onions, St John's Wort and possibly even bluebells and lilies of the valley.

The woods will now be left to regenerate naturally. The Countryside Team will be monitoring the area over the next two years to see what comes up and consider what, if anything, needs to be planted in autumn/winter 2026/7.

Some residents have also raised concerns about the state of the fence along the railway line, which is more visible now

the undergrowth has been thinned. The fence is the responsibility of Network Rail. The RA is taking the matter up with them while residents can also do so via www.networkrail.co.uk/communities/contact-us/

Thames Ditton Flood Group

The Flood Group is pleased to report that the application for a Permit to use temporary flood barriers in 'at risk' areas near the river in the village was granted by the Environment Agency in February. Having arranged for £25,000 funding we can now proceed to purchase the four barriers and be trained in their use.

Two of the barriers will fit over gates joining relatively low lying gardens in



This photo shows how the barriers work

Alexandra Road and the other two will be deployed at the river end of Queens Road, adjacent to the Albany Reach apartments, and across River Bank at the rear of the Summer Road Recreation Ground. When positioned, they lay flat on the ground and are raised up by flood water to keep it back.

While we have been waiting for the Permit, those of you who live close to the River Thames and have signed up for Flood Warnings will know that, unlike last year, we have had a couple of Flood Alerts, but no Flood Warnings. If you haven't signed up - but want to - the easiest way is to phone the Environment Agency Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or search for Flood Warnings on the Internet. For Thames Ditton the most relevant area to sign up for is Thames Ditton Island as that is more appropriate for the main 'High Risk' area.

The Environment Agency (EA) spent two years investigating a possible permanent means of providing flood defences in Thames Ditton. They reached some interim conclusions last year but then said they had

no funds to continue the investigation. We hope to have further discussions.

We also want to have a 'Plan B', should there be no agreement for a permanent scheme. We are therefore pleased to report that in discussions, Surrey County Council has said it will be seeking funding for Property Flood Resilience (PFR) for properties in all areas in Surrey that are at risk of flooding, including Thames Ditton. The Flood Group has already carried out an initial survey of properties in the 'High Risk' area which produced an encouraging 75 positive responses. We are now seeking funding for further surveys, supported by Surrey Council, but will not know the outcome until July.

Following a very well attended exhibition and talk about Temporary Flood Barriers in November, the Flood Group will hold another public meeting when following delivery, it will demonstrate the new barriers.

Tony Thompson, Flooding Convenor



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The Royal Cambridge is certainly a well-known fixture in the local area but now sporting a 32-bed care home with a spectacular south facing garden. Each bedroom has a walk-in wet room and ensuite toilet. Enjoying all the benefits of life in a fabulous location in East Molesey, Surrey on the edge of the Thames and a 10-minute stroll from Hampton Court to which they are frequent visitors.

The new home also boasts a mobility scooter storage in their back garden for residents still enjoying their independence.



They have a Monday-Friday activities team who are supported by visiting professional musicians and arts and crafts specialists, which enables the Home to provide a full diary of events amidst much laughter and atmosphere. They have their own minibus which is often seen in the local area as they visit many local attractions and enjoy group lunches out at various local garden centres plus the occasional pub lunch.



The Royal Cambridge Home is a delightful place to spend your latter years, sharing good times with friends or family and enjoying plenty of activities and hobbies or simply sitting back in a comfy chair in one of their many lounges, all of which enjoy a garden view.

If you are looking for a period of respite or a permanent new home for yourself or your relative or friend then it has never been a better time to find out more about this prestigious, yet homely, independently run, not-for-profit care home in the heart of East Molesey.



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Email: enquiries@royalcambridgehome.org

Web: www.royalcambridgehome.org

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Downsizing for a better quality of life makes sense, but bungalows are scarce and command such premium prices that you're unlikely to be able to free up enough money to enjoy that dream retirement. Then there's stamp duty, legal fees, and the likelihood you'll have to spend more money on whatever you buy to make it suitable to grow old in – all this means many end up staying put.



Birchgrove's retirement communities are designed to offer more than just accommodation; they provide an improved lifestyle. Their properties range from 1, 2, and 3-bedroom self-contained apartments, each thoughtfully designed to combine comfort with modern accessibility. The on-site facilities are nothing short of exceptional, featuring a club room, library, restaurant, licensed bar, and wellness suite, all set within beautifully landscaped gardens for gardening enthusiasts.

Resting across 1.6 acres, Hampton Court Estate is located close to a magnificent stretch of the River Thames and half a mile from the world famous palace. It's elegantly laid out across three low-level buildings offering 78 purpose-built apartments each thoughtfully designed with innovative and subtle features that make living in later life easier.

Ranging in size from one to three bedrooms, each carefully prioritises both space and natural light. Parking is plentiful with 61 spaces discreetly located in the undercroft.

Renting in retirement opens up all sorts of possibilities for people. The appeal may take time to be apparent to those accustomed to home ownership. Still, for various reasons, it can uplift your whole quality of life and be liberating.

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Many people put off planning for their later years for one reason or another, often saying that it isn't time yet. Some hesitate, remaining at home in a large family house that is often not suitable for their needs as they age. So it's not until a crisis, ill-health or the devastating effects of loneliness and isolation that they start to think seriously about the decision.

Birchgrove communities are designed to help you stay healthier, happier and stronger, both physically and mentally, for longer.



To find out more about to explore your options, please contact the team on **020 3929 5599** or visit www.birchgrove.life



Your Residents' Association



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Regular Open Meetings to engage with the community on important topics

Constant vigilance Conservation Belt and our Th

Notified residents of key planning applications

Twitter (X) residents

Organised clearance of vegetation overgrowth around Milbourne Pond

Active R.A Councillors representing residents helping residents with issues

Pressed SCC to improve maintenance of Highway trees

Secret Gardens of Weston Green 2024

Website maintained as resource for all residents

High Street Christmas trees & lights

Supported residents' objections to inappropriate development

Supported Thames Ditton High Street retailers

Continuing pressure for maintenance to prevent flooding at Esher station, and to resolve other long-standing flooding problems

Lobbied for bridge maintenance at Esher Station bridge

Road resurfacing in Thames Ditton and Weston Green



tion in Action 2024-2025



ance to protect
Areas, Green
ames Riverside

(K) to keep
informed

Secured funding to purchase
temporary flood barriers to
protect vulnerable areas.
Held a Flood-Risk Reduction
Exhibition and drop in event

Keeping pressure on Thames
Water to replace the broken
sewer in the High Street

Applied for funding to replace
the cover of the bike rack at
Thames Ditton station

5000 copies of Thames Ditton
Today distributed quarterly in
Thames Ditton, Weston Green
and Molesey

Petitioning Surrey CC to allow
a pharmacy in TD village

Secured funding for new cycle
racks in Thames Ditton village,
for installation in 2025

Flood Action Committee liaison
with Environment Agency and
Thames Water

Planted spring bulbs,
maintained flower beds at
Fountain roundabout

Supported The Theatre at the
Vera Fletcher Hall

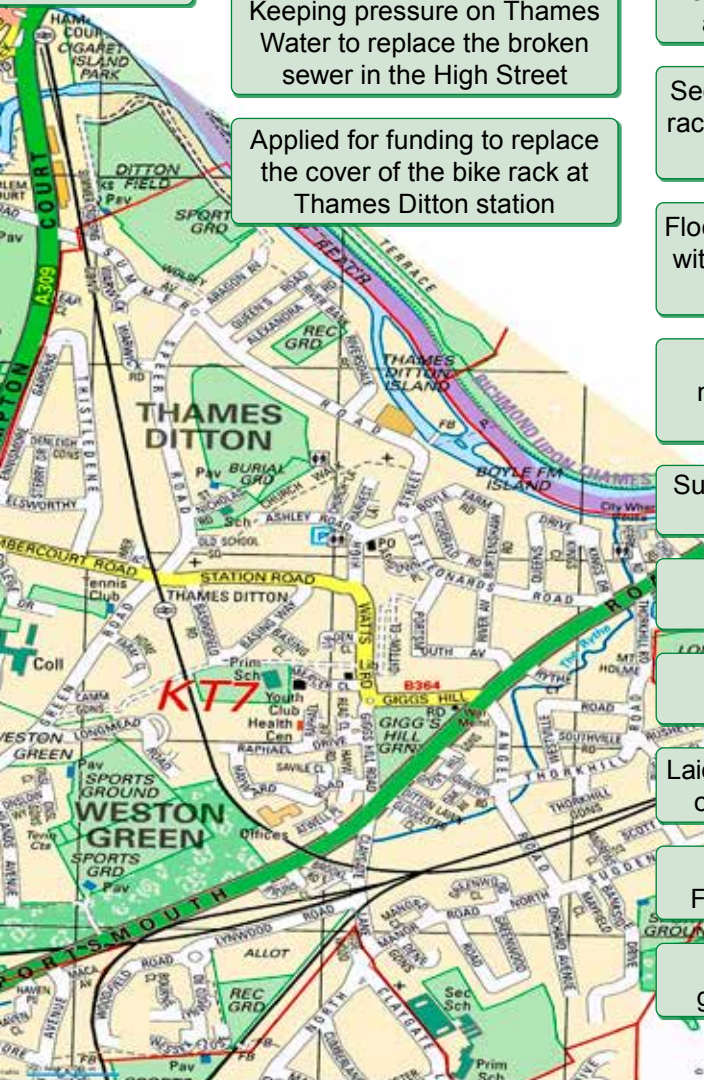
Monthly Litter Picking

Supports monthly
Farmers' Markets

Laid wreaths on War Memorials
on Remembrance Sunday

Continued support to
Foodbank collection points

Responded to local
government consultations



Discover Thames View

Care from the heart in Thames Ditton.

Thames View Care Home is a Grade II listed mansion in Thames Ditton, Surrey. An outstanding place of beauty that offers residential, nursing and specialist dementia care for elderly residents within a restored and extended 18th Century Grade II listed mansion. Our luxurious living environment is home for up to 78 residents in a unique setting of approximately 2.5 acres on the bank of the River Thames, overlooking the grounds of Hampton Court.

Comfort and wellbeing of residents

The main house boasts grand reception rooms including the magnificent first floor library and ground floor cinema room, private dining room, lounge and hair salon. There is a dedicated activities room with an extensive programme of events for residents' health and wellbeing. We are dedicated to creating a home

away from home where all residents are cared for with true enthusiasm and love. Our main priority is to continue to provide eventful days, to fulfil dreams in a kind and giving way, and to make sure all our residents get to embrace their personalities. Our friendly team are focused on ensuring everyone's wishes and own individual needs are met. Our passion is to provide expert care with a personal touch and to create the safest environment possible for the people living in our community.

Pastimes and mealtimes

At Thames View there is a range of pastimes whether that's social, creative or physical to encourage good mental health. We help to ensure everyone has a purpose to their day, it's their life and they choose the way they want to live it.

We understand the importance of good nutrition and hydration. Of course, dining experiences

are not only generated by the food eaten, the company and atmosphere can completely define our enjoyment. This is why we tailor the experience for everyone and welcome families and visitors to dine with us too.

Choice and independence

When it comes to individual bedrooms, we help our residents to put their unique stamp on their room and keep things just how they like them. All bedrooms are ensuite and have delightful furniture and furnishings. Our home is surrounded by beautiful landscaped gardens with several rooms having access to the gardens directly from their room.

Our bistro is perfect for socialising with family and friends and has a kitchen area for making drinks. For alone time there are quiet nooks with comfy armchairs, classic novels and books on the shelves.



Providing residential, nursing and dementia care on a permanent and short stay basis.

Our ground floor cinema room is just the ticket for the weekly film club and our private dining room gives the space for friends and families to come together to celebrate key milestones.

Local community events

We host a range of regular events that the local community are welcome to join including our weekly coffee morning and monthly dementia friendly music session.

Whether you're looking for permanent or respite care, or would like more information about our events, please get in touch. We would be happy to give you a tour of our home and meet our team. Whatever your needs there is a place for you at Thames View.

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An RA campaign to restore a pharmacy in the village – more than 1,000 residents have signed a petition in support - will come to a head when Surrey County Council's Health & Wellbeing Board debate the issue at its 19 March meeting. Karen Randolph, who oversees Heath and Community issues for the RA, outlines why the need for a pharmacy is today greater than ever.

Boots abandoned the village, not because there was any lack of need for their services but to meet their corporate objectives. Thames Ditton is only one of the 300 branches it closed in 2024, and it either has or will be closing around 350. For many local residents, especially those to the west of the village, this is a huge problem. Those of us who live on the Kingston/Surbiton side of the village and are sufficiently mobile, are very fortunate to be able to use the wonderful Thorkhill Pharmacy on the border of Long Ditton. But many of those who most need a pharmacy - the elderly, parents with young children, disabled, those with chronic conditions etc – live further away and are the very people who are less likely to have access to a car or to be able to walk any distance.

No one will have failed to notice the increase in the number of new homes in and around Thames Ditton in recent years – and of course homes mean more people needing health services. In addition, the health service's landscape has dramatically changed, with little prospect of any significant improvement in the foreseeable future: getting GP appointments is difficult,

A&E services are frequently overwhelmed, hospital waiting lists are notoriously long. Yet the government is now encouraging patients to go to their pharmacist rather than their GP for a number of medical issues.

There is no sign the need for pharmaceutical services will decline in the foreseeable future, so why does the NHS appear to think we need fewer pharmacies to serve a larger population than we did a decade or more ago?

HOW do we change the situation?

Firstly we need a pharmacist who wants to open up in the village ... and we have not just one but two who want to do so! We should be celebrating, but it is not that simple or straightforward. The NHS controls market entry of new pharmacies and there are a number of very high hurdles for any applicant to overcome: if a pharmacist wants to set up and be able to dispense NHS prescriptions they first have to apply (via NHS Primary Care Support England) for a licence from the NHS; that application then has to be approved by the appropriate NHS body (in our case Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board). This application process has been described as “a bureaucratic nightmare”, and worse.

The NHS relies on the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment (PNA) to provide essential information on which the NHS bases market-entry decisions. The current draft PNA for Surrey states there are NO gaps in pharmaceutical provision in the whole of Surrey, despite the loss of at least 19 pharmacies since the 2022 version.



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The most recent review of the PNA went out for consultation between November and January. Unsurprisingly, not many have read it! The RA submitted critical comments, informed by a huge number of emails from residents, particularly those to the west of the village. The PNA, as it stands, is due to be published in April this year, once it has been accepted by Surrey County Council's Health & Wellbeing Board at its meeting on 19 March.

So as a result of everything we have heard from local residents, we launched the following petition, which is due to

be presented to that meeting: *“We, the undersigned, request that Surrey County Council’s Health & Wellbeing Board and the NHS recognise the need for a pharmacy in Thames Ditton Village itself (which until early 2024 had had a pharmacy for as long as residents can recall) regardless of any conclusions to the contrary which may be indicated in the draft PNA due for publication in April 2025.”*


At the time of writing we have over 1,000 signatures. Let’s hope the HWB members listen to our concerns and see sense.

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Wednesday 9:30 Enchanted Child 10:30 Senior Coffee Morning 11:00 60+ Ladies Belly dance	Thursday 9:30 Re-stretch 10:00 Minicooks 10:30 VV Arts Class 11:00 60+ Ladies Belly dance
Friday 9:30 Enchanted Child & Stay&Play	Saturday Check Instagram
Sunday <div>CLOSED</div>	Note Schedule subject to change at short notice

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Living History on the Thames

By Mark Laity



Thames A Raters sailing on the river near Surbiton

It is not often that you really can see living history on the Thames, but take a stroll on its banks near Surbiton on a Tuesday evening and there is a fair chance you can see just that – in the shape of sailing boats built in 1898, 1906 and 1907.

These amazing boats are the Thames A Raters, sailing out of Thames Sailing Club, itself the oldest river sailing club in Britain, having been formed in 1870. Not that these

survivors of the Victorian and Edwardian era look elderly. Their hulls maybe old but their masts and sails are modern, making them very sprightly in a breeze and capable of keeping going in a typical Thames drifter. They are also very beautiful and perfectly adapted to sailing on the narrow reaches of the Upper Thames.

Their story starts with newly prosperous Victorian gentlemen, having both money

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in their pockets and time on their hands, deciding to take the rich man's sport of yachting, conducted in large cruisers on the coast, and bring it closer home to their river doorstep. The type of boat they sailed obviously needed to be adapted to the river, so over succeeding decades the designs evolved. Of course, unlike the open sea, the river is limited on how far and where you can go, so from the early days sailors wanted to race, and so the boats were designed for speed.

By the end of the 19th century boat design had hit a plateau culminating in the Thames A Rater. About 28 ft long, beamy and shallow-drafted, they are still unbeatable on the river. But that is not just the hull shape and over the years their sails and masts have developed hugely, with 350-380 square feet of sail on a 45' carbon fibre mast. Beautiful to look at and exciting to sail, they have a crew of three.

The oldest is the 1898 Ulva, with the 1906 Scamp, 1907 Vagabond and 1910 Caprice also at the club. Thames SC fleet is completed by more recent glass fibre Raters, whose hull is based on Ulva. They are largely owned by syndicates, which makes them much more affordable to run.

There is a second, smaller fleet of Raters at Upper Thames SC at Bourne End near Marlow and every year the fleet heads up there for its national championship at Bourne End Week. At Thames there is regular sailing on Tuesday evenings and Sunday mornings. Thames SC also has an active handicap fleet and runs sail training courses. There are few places better to enjoy a drink and a supper (on Tuesday evenings) than its historic and atmospheric clubhouse overlooking Ravens Ait and Home Park.

The club welcomes new members, and the Rater fleet is always looking for more crews to help sail them, even with little

experience. To find out more then go to its website at www.thamessailingclub.co.uk or email: info@thamessailingclub.co.uk. To celebrate its 150th anniversary the club also published a superb, lavishly illustrated history of sailing on the Upper Thames, details of which can also be found on the website.



Thames A Raters sailing near Hampton Court Palace in the 50s



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Help us 'Paint All Saints' - Fundraising Appeal



All Saints Weston

At the very heart of Weston Green lies All Saints Church – known locally as ‘the white church by the pond’. Perhaps less well known is the fact the building was designed by Sir Edward Maufe, who also designed Guildford Cathedral and was one of the foremost architects of his time. Today the Church remains a significant Grade II Listed building.

All Saints Weston, on Chestnut Avenue, opened in 1939 only weeks before the outbreak of World War II. Many men and women from the Parish went to join the forces and take part in other wartime work, including the Vicar, the Rev Victor Edwards who became a Royal Navy Chaplain for three years. Some homes in Weston Green were destroyed by bombs but fortunately the new Church was spared, despite government concerns about its high visibility from the air. The War Memorial, also designed by Sir Edward Maufe, was

unveiled on 2 October 1948 with 44 names inscribed of those in the parish who had died as a result of enemy action, including civilians.

All Saints has now been serving the local community for over 80 years. Alongside regular church services it provides a place for funerals, weddings, baptisms, local school visits and parades, and food bank collection. Together with the church hall, it offers a place for local groups to meet every week - toddlers, dance and fitness classes, as well as music performances. All these help foster community spirit and make All Saints an important hub at the heart of Weston Green.

The Church is open daily during daylight hours and visitors can enjoy its sense of space and simple beauty.

‘Paint All Saints’ Appeal 2025



Alas, the external fabric of the building is now in need of repair and the original white walls have been greying down over the years. In January 2025 an Appeal was launched to

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raise £100,000 to repair and repaint All Saints. Several local groups are already involved in the Appeal and individuals too. It is a real challenge for a small community like Weston Green to raise such a significant sum, but for many people living locally this magnificent building is an integral part of their neighbourhood, and they want to see 'the white church by the pond' back once again.

A programme of events and activities has been planned across the year to help raise funds. Do come along or, if you can, please donate to the 'Paint All Saints' Appeal via <https://allsaintsweston.com> or scan the QR code



Events coming up

- **Friday 28 March 7pm:** Students from Hinchley Wood School will perform '**Back to Broadway**' - an evening of well known musical hits. Free entry but cash or card donations on the night.
- **April 7 to 21:** Children's '**Ugly Bug** **Easter Trail** outside All Saints - free trail sheet at back of Church.
- **Saturday & Sunday 17/18 May:** **2025 Flower Festival and Plant Sale** with cream teas (Saturday only)
- **Saturday 7 June at 2.30 and 7.30** – **Ember Big Band: Remembering Weston's War.**
Nick Handel, a former BBC producer, has created a 'musical documentary' celebrating 80 years since the end of World War 2, drawing on the experiences of local people living in Weston Green at the time. Their personal stories will be accompanied by the wonderful Ember Big Band with songs to reflect the period. Tickets will go on sale to the public in March (£25 and £10 for children) For more details about ticketing contact *office@allsaintsweston.com*
- **Friday 20 June 7.30:** the ever popular '**Weston Super Mares**' Midsummer Concert, celebrating summer with a wide range of uplifting cappella music.



9.8

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score**

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1	T	R	2	U	3	P	4	H	5	S	6	X	7	E	8	T	9	S
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28	S	T	A	S	H	E	S		29	S	E	T	T	E	R	S		

Congratulations to the senders of the correct entries opened in the shuffle who win a £5 voucher to spend in local shops.

Rob Horler

Mary Bowen

Catherine Dunne

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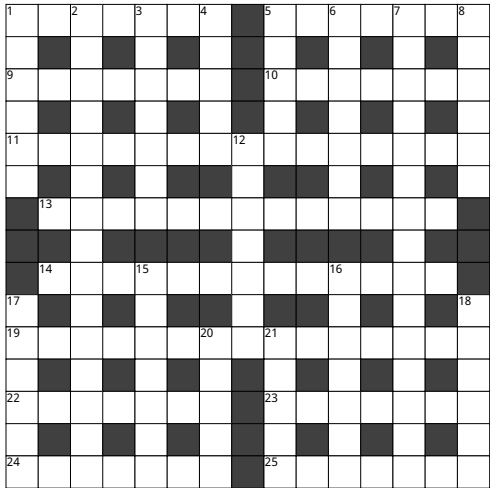
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Spring Crossword



by **Andy Howarth**



The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date of 15 April 2025 will win a £5 voucher to spend in local shops.

Please send the completed puzzle (or photocopy) enclosing your name and address, with the envelope clearly marked 'Crossword Competition' to:

Thames Ditton Today
Crossword Competition
24 High Street, Thames Ditton, KT7 0RY

Names of the winners will be published in the Spring edition, unless otherwise requested.

ACROSS

- 1 Tedious anagram is fresh air (7)
- 5 Deflects (7)
- 9 Testers scrambling byways (7)
- 10 Dylan's birthplace (7)
- 11 Go too far to enter the field of play? (4,4,3,4)
- 13 Luggage sack ends legal action? (4,9)
- 14 German process from 1990 (13)
- 19 You're not seeming to be by Stephen King? (1,4,4,4,2)
- 22 Soothing night-time? (7)
- 23 Plant parts (7)
- 24 Music players (7)
- 25 Hides directions on a stony slope (7)

DOWN

- 1 Bogus bosses tend to beguile (6)
- 2 1957 Best Actress Oscar winning film (5,5,2,3)
- 3 First on the agenda (4,3) 4 Union leader not seen to follow (5)
- 5 In a position to suggest (5)
- 6 Lecturers' spectacles? (7)
- 7 What we say about Thames Ditton (3,4,2,2,4)
- 8 Tastes different in America (6)
- 12 Goosebumps author (1,1,5) 15 French lawyer (7)
- 16 Items disappear into this (4,3)
- 17 Arm mover (6)
- 18 Oddball assist creates balance (6)
- 20 Creeps to the margins? (5)
- 21 Endures (5)

SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

SERVICES

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	General Enquiries:	07895 762100 (Mon-Wed) www.cheer-elmbridge.org.uk
Dittons & Weston Green NeighbourCare	Frankie Bell	07790 472993
Elmbridge Borough Council Community Support Services		
Thames Ditton Centre for the community	Mon & Thurs	0208 3985921
Thames Ditton Dementia Centre	Nikki Harding	01372 474526
Meals on Wheels, Community Transport, Dial-a-Ride, Alarm & Telecare services, Relief Carers	ask for service at central switchboard	01372 474552
Homesupport Elmbridge	Thomasina Breslin	01932 267128
Esher and District Stroke Club	Ann Pollock	0208398 6132
Voluntary Action Elmbridge	Sally Dubery	01372 463587
Surrey Youth and Adult Education Service	Elmbridge Area	020 8979 8334

GROUPS

1st Thames Ditton Brownies	Vanessa Corby	1stThamesDittonBrownies@gmail.com
3rd Thames Ditton Brownies	Emily Wattret	3rdthamesdittonbrownies@gmail.com
1st Weston Green (All Saints) Scout Group		membership@westongreenscouts.org.uk
1st Weston Green Guides	Sumathi Jeevaratnam	sumathi.jeevaratnam@gmail.com
2nd Weston Green Guides		2wgguides@gmail.com
2nd Thames Ditton Guides	Vanessa Corby	2ndThamesDittonGuides@gmail.com
1st Weston Green Brownies (All Saints)		1wgbrownies@gmail.com
3rd Weston Green Brownies		3wgbrownies@gmail.com
1st Weston Green Rainbows	Lizzie Owen	westongreenrainbows@gmail.com
4th Thames Ditton Ajax Sea Scouts	Chris West	chris.west@ajax.org.uk
Dittons Scout Group	Stuart Jack	07971 479740
Emberbrook Trefoil Guild	Mary Bowen	020 8398 6857
Friends of Bushey and Home Parks	Jean Smith	020 8977 9391
Girlguiding in Thames Ditton and Weston Green		dittonsdistrict.hjh@gmail.com
Molesey and Dittons Neighbourhood Watch	Chairman: John Haberfield	020 8398 5256
Parents and Toddlers(St Nicholas church)	Information	020 8398 7211
Ripieno Choir	Nick Harris	020 8399 7231
Surrey Bell-ringers	Giles Andre	020 8979 1994
Bereavement Café	St Nicholas Church Hall	020 8398 9641
Thames Tots (Kings Church, Speer Road)	Abby Kelly	Office@Kingschurch.com

CLUBS

Albany Motor Yacht Club	Secretary	01784466651
All Saints Weston Lunch Club	Alison Cruthers	07957 347170
Arts and Heritage Club	Carol Butcher	01932 867511
Cercle Francais d'Esher	Brigitte Tiller	01932 860842 brigitte@ptiller.com
Claygate Bridge Club	Hon. Secretary	020 8398 1710
Colets Health & Fitness	info@colets.co.uk	020 8398 7108
Ditton Bridge Club	John Dagnall	02083984463
Dittons Skiff and Punting Club	Secretary	enquiries@dittons.org.uk
Dittons & Hinchley Wood Royal British Legion	Hon Secretary	020 8398 6263
Ember Players (Drama) Ember Sports Club	Anne Segal	07712 778357

Ember Sports Club	Caroline Anderson	secretary@embersportsclub.org.uk
Ember Sports Club: Bowls	Sylvia Jones	01932 788701
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Simon Charrington	07917 017453
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Annabel Duncan	0208 786 6318
English Folk Dancing Club (Thames Ditton)	Jane Ford	07857 826668
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Long Ditton Cricket Club	Nigel Hardy	020 8398 8361
Long Ditton Garden Club	Heather Harvey	020 8398 2642
Model Railway Society (Hampton Court)	Secretary	01932 241224
Old Cranleigh Rugby Club	Piers Cushing	07790 003731
Old Cranleigh Hockey Club	Simon Marshall (Men)	07801 737695
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
	Edmund Woolley	020 8398 3581
	Julian Rye	01932 976994
Probus Club, Hinchley Wood & the Dittons	Martin Gibson	moleprobus@gmail.com
Probus Club, Sandown	George Cameron	020 8224 1392
Probus Club of Molesey	David Walker	0870 460 3586
Probus Club of Claremont	Nigel Harris	secretary@rivernookbowmen.co.uk
River Club (BMYC)	Alec Thomas	020 8398 2391
Rivernook Bowmen	Andy Howarth	07941 242348
Surbiton Croquet Club	Secretary	0208 398 3101
Stragglers Running Club	Secretary	020 8398 2401
Surbiton Golf Club	Steve Aukett	secretary@tdltc.com
Surbiton Hockey Club	Mark Rodbard	020 8398 1551
Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club	Neal Brooker	020 8398 7108
Thames Ditton & Esher Golf Club	Geoff Dryden	07813 805 645
Thames Ditton Squash Club (Colets)		Geoff.Dryden@hotmail.com
Thames Ditton Cricket Club		
Thames Sailing Club	Mark Laity	07515 101056

SOCIETIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Civil Service Pensioners' Alliance	Mrs Brenda Denby	0208 398 6054
Ember Choral	Linda Bridges	020 8399 5402
Esher and Molesey Garden Society	Jean Billett	01372 465961
Esher and District Amnesty International	Cherry Eddy (Campaigns)	0208 398 4377
Hampton Court Way Allotment Association	Lettings: Piotr Hennig	020 8398 5358
Long Ditton Youth Club	Toni Izard	07749 633973
Lynwood Allotment Society	Gill Vickers	020 8398 4870
Molesey and District Antiques Society	Linda Lambert	020 8398 1476
NADFAS (Decorative & Fine Arts) Kingston	Mrs. Valerie Windsor	020 8549 9967
Oxshott & Cobham Music Society	Cherry Eddy (Membership)	0208 398 4377
		cherryeddy102@gmail.com
Soroptimist Women	Jean Smith	07770 417814
Thames Ditton Women's Institute (W.I.)	Secretary	020 8398 8615

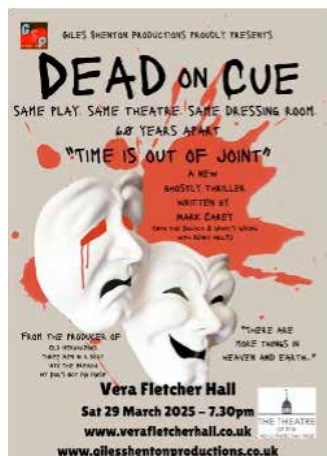
OTHER

Vera Fletcher Hall	Lettings: Alison Black	08456 528 529
Vital Village	Lettings: Laura Pring	07511 524982
Weston Green Conservation Area Advisory Committee		wgcaac@outlook.com

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings

A BRAND NEW THRILLER FOR SPRING

Following the success of our Film Festival celebrating the screenplays of R C Sherriff in the 50th year since his death, we are going to be continuing our Spring Season with the return of Giles Shenton Productions with *Dead on Cue*, a new ghostly thriller from Mark Carey, writer of *Into the Breach* and *What's Wrong with Benny Hill*?



Dead on Cue is set in the same dressing room, during the same play, in the same theatre, but the performances take place 60 years apart. The theatre is presenting *Hamlet* where "time is out of joint". What is the uncanny connection between the two productions? How can the same things be happening to different actors 60 years apart? What secrets are hidden in the old dressing room under the stage? What mysteries are held within the old dressing room mirror?

By the end of the show, you will be left believing that there are indeed more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

In addition to seeing this brand new show, the ticket for the performance includes a tasty bowl of chilli or veggie chilli which will be served before the start of the show. *Dead on Cue* can be seen at the VFH on Saturday 29 March. Our doors will open at 7.00 pm and food will be served from 7.15 pm. The show will start at 8.00 pm. Tickets must be booked online via the VFH website in advance to guarantee food.

Another date for the diary is Friday 30 May when Giles Shenton Productions will be presenting *C'Est La Vie*, a play about the renowned actress, Sarah Bernhardt. Details will be online and via our e-newsletters for which you can sign up on the website. www.verafletcherhall.co.uk





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