

THAMES DITTON TODAY

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THAMES DITTON TODAY IS 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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Cover: Small Copper butterfly by Jason Butler.

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 Boots Pharmacy, 14 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

About the Association

Founded in 1934 our Association is a strong, locally based non-party-political organisation concerned with protecting the amenities and furthering the interests of residents.

We work to preserve and enhance the best in our attractive environment and the quality of life of everyone in our community.

Through regular meetings, social activities, our magazine and website we keep in touch with residents' views and we raise and spend funds for the benefit of the community, from tree and bulb planting to contesting unacceptable development projects.

With six Residents' Councillors covering the two electoral wards we have a strong voice on Elmbridge Council working with other Residents' Councillors to ensure that decisions are based on the needs of local communities and on good management rather than on party politics.

Our Residents' County Councillor, Nick Darby, represents our views at Surrey County Council.

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THE NEXT RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION OPEN MEETINGS ARE

Tuesday 27 June 8pm – All Saints Church Hall, Weston Green

Tuesday 3 October 8pm - Vera Fletcher Hall

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News from the Residents' Association to end - May



May local elections

Thank you for turning out to vote. The local elections for Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) demonstrated overwhelming support for our Residents' Association (RA).



Elaine Sesemann, new RA EBC Councillor, Thames Ditton Ward

Following Karen Randolph's retirement after 16 years of services as RA Councillor for Thames Ditton, we were delighted that RA candidate Elaine Sesemann was elected to represent the ward.

Elaine Sesemann RA	1,563
Liberal Democrats	643
Conservatives	307
Labour	127
Reform UK	44

Elaine has lived in the local area for nearly 30 years and brings the experience of a varied career to her new role, having been a school business manager, a tax inspector and a teacher.

Following her election Elaine said: "I feel honoured to have been elected to represent Thames Ditton ward. I would like to thank everyone who voted for me for their support. I am looking forward to working hard to support the interests of our community."

RA Councillor Janet Turner was overwhelmingly re-elected as Councillor for Hinchley Wood and Weston Green.

Janet Turner	1,603
Liberal Democrats	518
Conservatives	384
Labour	84

Elmbridge Borough Council is still a coalition between the RA and the Liberal Democrats, but this time the Liberal Democrats are the majority partner.

See the RA Councillors' update on page 14.



Put the Nature and Climate festival in your diary

The weekend of September 8 - 10 will see a mix of top-level talks, hands-on activities and entertainment themed around climate change and what we can do to make a difference. To get involved in helping make the festival a success, please contact Cllr Gill Coates at gcoates@elmbridge.gov.uk

Thames Ditton Centre for the Community



Thames Ditton Centre for the Community

There has been a lot of concern and rumours that the Thames Ditton Centre for the Community is under threat of closure. We followed up with our local RA Councillors and they have confirmed that there are **no** plans to close the centre.

We understand that, following the devastating effect of the Covid pandemic on the vulnerable and the national crisis in our care system, EBC commissioned a review of community support services to get a better understanding of the overall picture in order to re-imagine the service to do a better job of meeting the needs of the community.

That study showed that care services are only reaching 2% of the Elmbridge population, whereas about 10% are considered *'in need'*. It also showed a lack of demand for council services at the centre and suggested an alternative scenario - *'handing it to the community'* - so that the centre becomes *'a thriving, community-led hub'*, not council-run, allowing EBC to refocus its Community Care budget on the services that provide more targeted outcomes to people in need.

It was suggested this could be a model where a board of local trustees takes over responsibility for the centre with paid staff managing day-to-day operations such as bookings and running the café.

The RA is among a wide group of stakeholders invited to participate in a community consultation which started in April to see if there are more effective ways of managing the centre. We regard the community centre as a vital asset and one that should be kept. We agree it is under-utilised and there is much more that could be done with it. We will continue to participate fully in the process to see how this can be addressed.

Environment Agency Drop-In



The Environment Agency 'Drop-In'

Representatives of the Environment Agency (EA) flooding department recently set up shop in the Albany pub car park to discuss with residents how to prepare for a flood and other flood-related issues. Tony Thompson, the convenor of the Residents' Association Flood Group, was there and set up a stand with a display of flooding information specifically relevant to Thames Ditton.

There were two bits of news from the EA. First, they are still thinking about a potential temporary flood barrier, having been delayed because of the need to consider how to ensure that it did not move during a flood. Second, following the survey of riverbank heights arranged by the Residents' Association (with funding from EBC) the EA has allocated some funds for an initial feasibility study for a permanent barrier.

Planning

The appeal against the decision to refuse a planning application for an **Aldi store** on the old Guy Salmon site will be determined by a public inquiry scheduled to start on June 20.

The RA feels strongly that this is not the right site for a supermarket for many reasons, not least the threat it would present to the viability of our local High Street shops. For more details on this, see our website article at: www.residents-association.com

We are therefore backing a 'Rule 6' involvement at the Public Inquiry. This allows us to make representations, employing a specialist planning barrister and expert witnesses. There is a considerable cost for this, and we estimate we need to raise £20,000 to cover our legal fees and other expenses.

We appreciate that everyone is facing considerably increased costs at present, but if anyone can help we would be very grateful. We have opened a crowd funding account with Collection Pot: www.collectionpot.com/pot/3101900 The appeal will close when our target is reached, or on August 31, or when the inquiry result is announced. Should there be any surplus we will put it towards local community enhancement projects.

RNLI on Albany Reach June 17

Local resident Nell Hickman, with the RA, has arranged for the RNLI to visit Albany Reach on Saturday June 17 from 1 - 4pm to demonstrate how to use the new rescue throw lines and give essential water safety education. With lifeboats visiting and crew acting as target practice it will be a fun and educational afternoon. Please come along.



Throwlines at Albany Reach

New Bumps and Babies café



First meeting of the Bump and Babies Café

Every Friday during term time (11 - 12.30pm) 'Tiny Saints Bumps and Babies café' for new Mums and nearly Mums will be held at All Saints Church Hall, Chestnut Avenue Weston Green KT10 8JL (beside Marney's pond). Refreshments are provided and it is a great opportunity to get to know other Mums and expectant Mums living locally. It is free and no sign-up is required. For more information contact office@allsaintsweston.com

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Coronation Party in the Garden

More than 200 residents attended a 'Coronation Party in the Garden' hosted by Tricia and Will Bland on behalf of Thames Ditton Foundation (TDF), the local charity which supports and brings people together. More than £1,500 was raised from the sales of tickets, cakes and refreshments.

Since Covid and the 'cost of living crisis' TDF is spearheading support for those living locally who are struggling and in need. Working with East Elmbridge Foodbank it has instigated the Thames Ditton Foundation Fund, offering financial support to those in need living locally.

TDF also supports other important village projects from Thames Ditton in Bloom to Boomerang Bags, as well as a raft of initiatives championing our High Street.



TDF Trustees, from left, Julia Hickman, Bob Huxster and Tricia Bland

Thames Ditton in Bloom



Thames Ditton in Bloom team at the station

The May Thames Ditton in Bloom planting event at Thames Ditton Station saw 25 community volunteers armed with trowels and gardening gloves plant out 19 wooden planters made by Men in Sheds and 14 donated wheelbarrows, creating the new season displays which will bloom throughout the summer.

New - look clubhouse

Ember Tennis (part of Ember Sports Club in Grove Way) has a new-look clubhouse and extended veranda and patio so that people can enjoy a drink and watch some tennis.



New-look clubhouse

New members would be very welcome, contact tennis@embersportsclub.org.uk



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Visiting the past, with a royal connection

Old St Georges Church, the oldest public building in Esher, built in the 1540s, is open to the public on Saturdays from 11 - 3pm with Friends of the Church on hand to welcome visitors. On Saturdays 9 and 16 September 11am and 2pm there will be guided tours to coincide with the annual national Heritage Open Days. Find out about its close connection with royalty and two prime ministers.



St Georges Church, Esher

Are you looking for a local part-time job? The Vera Fletcher Hall is looking for you

The Vera Fletcher Hall (VFH) is at the heart of the Thames Ditton Community. It is currently advertising for a Hall Manager and a Caretaker/Cleaner.

The Hall Manager is a very flexible part-time role, approximately ten hours per week. The Cleaner/Caretaker role is approximately five hours per week, fewer during school holidays. To find out more, please contact Neil Russell at nrussell@rassociates.co.uk

The friendly VFH Management Committee is also looking for a volunteer Honorary Secretary to join them. If you would like to be part of the team that keeps this vibrant village asset at the heart of the

community, please contact Neil Russell at nrussell@rassociates.co.uk

Dates for your diary

Secret Gardens of Thames Ditton

Sunday June 11, 2 – 5.30pm

RLNI at Albany Reach

Saturday June 17, 1 - 4pm

Nature and Climate Festival

September 8 - 10

Farmers' Market

Mercer Close Car Park
(opposite the Library),
fourth Saturday of the month

Weston Green Litter Pickers

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

Thames Ditton Litter Pickers

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

All Saints Weston Community Lunch

last Wednesday of every month. To book in, contact Alison Cruthers on 07957 347170 or alisoncruthers@yahoo.co.uk

Bereavement Café (open to all)

Third Tuesday of the month,
10.30 am - 12 noon. St. Nicholas Church Hall Call 020 8398 9641 for more information.

'Knit and Natter'

Tuesdays 10.30 – 12 noon, Talbot House Café, St Nicholas Church Hall

Tiny Saints Bumps and Babies café

Fridays term time 11.00 – 12.30 pm
All Saints Church Hall, Weston Green

Residents' Association

www.residents-association.com

or follow us on Twitter @TDresidents



Update from your Residents' Associations'

Thames Ditton Ward



Elaine Sesemann
TDWGRA



Caroline James
TDWGRA



Alex Batchelor
TDWGRA

New Council for 2023/24

The disappointing news from the May elections is that the Residents' Group is no longer the largest group in Elmbridge Borough Council. Three RA losses to the Lib Dems plus three Conservative losses mean that the Lib Dems now have 19 seats on Council compared with the Residents' Group with 17 and the Conservatives with 12. The new Leader of the Council is Bruce McDonald (Claygate) of the Lib Dems.

The good news is that, with no overall majority, the Lib Dems will continue to work in coalition with the Residents' Group, much as we worked together before the election. The eight revamped Cabinet portfolios have been split evenly, with four positions each. The TD&WGRA is well represented with two councillors in the Cabinet. Alex Batchelor has been appointed as Portfolio Holder for Housing and Gill Coates retains her position as Portfolio Holder for Community Care. She is also the Deputy Leader of the Residents' Group.

The Committee memberships of your local Councillors is as follows:

Alex Batchelor - Cabinet, Shareholder (Housing) Group, Hurst Pool Project Group

Gill Coates - Cabinet, East Area (EA) Planning, Elmbridge Older Persons Advisory Body, Lower Green Project Group

James Crawshaw - Overview and Scrutiny, EA Planning, Lower Green (LG) Project Group

Caroline James - Planning, EA Planning

Janet Turner - Planning, Licensing, Countryside Consultative Group, LG Project Group, Constitutional Review Group

Elaine Sesemann - Overview and Scrutiny, EA Planning, Affordable Housing Working Group

We will be working hard on these and other working groups and sub-committees to ensure residents continue to have a strong voice in Elmbridge and that local issues, not national politics, remain the core focus in the Council chamber. We are also always available to local residents to assist with individual concerns and issues.

Mayor and Mayor's Charity

The new Mayor for 2023/24 is Cllr Richard Williams (Esher RA). His chosen charity for the year is Oasis, an Elmbridge-based charity that provides vital support for vulnerable families and children.

Councillors at Elmbridge Borough Council

Hinchley Wood and Weston Green Ward



Gill Coates
TDWGRA



Janet Turner
HWRA



James Crawshaw
HWRA

The outgoing Mayor, Cllr Simon Waugh (Esher RA), recently announced that he had raised £60,000 for his chosen Mayor's charity, the Brain Tumour Charity.

Council priorities for 2023/24, by portfolio

Vision and transformation: Delivering the coalition's Vision 2030 for Elmbridge, transforming services and making Elmbridge a thriving, sustainable place to live, driven by the power of our community.

Finance and Resources: EBC only gets to retain 11% of the Council Tax collected. The Council's budget for 2023/24 is just £24 million and the priority is to deliver services within budget.

Climate change and sustainability: We have a Net Zero target for 2030 and measures being introduced include a green fleet strategy; solar panels, LED lighting, green procurement strategies etc. Community priorities are air quality and sustainable living.

Community care: This absorbs almost 20% of EBC's budget but we are only reaching 2% of the local population. 9-10% of Elmbridge's population are vulnerable and in need, so the

priority is targeting this budget to reach more people who need support.

Environmental Services: Keeping our streets and open spaces clean; collecting our domestic waste on time; renegotiating our Joint Waste Solutions Contract.

Leisure / Culture and Property Investment: Managing the 57% of Elmbridge that is covered in green space - commons, woodlands, parks and recreation grounds and cemeteries. Overseeing strategic improvement projects for Hurst Pool, Esher town centre and Lower Green.

Housing: Tackling the housing waiting list; supporting 200 Afghan families still living in hotels; supporting Ukrainian refugees to settle; intervening with social landlords to improve the lives of tenants.

Planning, Business and Enterprise: Seeing the Local Plan through the Inspection stages; balancing protection of our Green Belt and conserving Elmbridge's character with building the affordable homes and infrastructure that Elmbridge needs; helping Elmbridge town centres to thrive; supporting local businesses.

For more information about any of the above, please contact one of us.

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Update from Nick Darby, our Surrey County Councillor



In this report I cover more detail than usual on potholes. This is a major issue with significant disintegration of some roads, reflecting under investment in years gone by.

Those I have reported recently include:

Embercourt Rd - (third set of repairs outstanding)

St Leonards Road

Weston Green Road - towards Esher Station, which tends to flood, masking deep holes

Lime Tree Avenue

Portsmouth Road Esher, from Scilly Isles.

Church Road Long Ditton

Ewell Road Long Ditton - a series of holes reflecting the overall state of this road

Walton Road East Molesey - this has all but disintegrated and needs resurfacing

Woodstock Lane North - the road to Squires.

This is a cross section of local roads in the Dittons where the potholes were large, deep, and dangerous. In each case I requested priority attention, in one case getting the road closed and repair under way within 45 mins.

All of this is frustrating, a combination of numbers, the number of teams employed by the SCC contractor, the speed of action, funding and the quality of work. My hope is that SCC will innovate by investing in new machinery (both more efficient and quicker) and covering a wider area than just an individual small hole. SCC are about to undertake a thorough review of the new contractor's first year, much to be desired.

I am happy to report these for residents if you email me. However, reporting issues to SCC online via their website is easy, and is what I would recommend.



Surrey County Councillor, (The Dittons) Nick Darby

My second item is the application for registration of a section of Long Ditton as a Village Green. This includes the area known as One Tree Hill, and the Stokes Field Nature Reserve. I recommend all of this for anyone who does not already know it. Many in the Dittons worked to put the application together, a good number giving evidence to the Inspector. The Public Inquiry recently took place in Long Ditton Village Hall. The Inspector will produce a report with recommendations, which will be considered by the Surrey County Council Planning & Regulatory Committee - so no quick decision.

With best wishes for a warm Summer.

Nick Darby,
Surrey County Councillor for the
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The Big Help Out



Say CHEER! Guests and volunteers at the CHEER Coronation Tea Party

King Charles wanted to mark his Coronation with a day of volunteering on May 8, so when the 3rd Weston Green Brownies contacted RA Councillor Gill Coates with a request for any ideas for local projects they could help out with, she put her thinking cap on and came up with three activities: a litter pick, a Himalayan Balsam ‘bash’ and a tea party for elderly residents.

Regular Weston Green litter-picker Louise Russell quickly volunteered to help with the litter pick, local charity CHEER agreed to dovetail their planned *Coronation Tea Party* with the Brownies and Guides ‘*Big Help Out*’ and Nigel Coates offered to lead the ‘*Balsam Bash*’ with support from Elmbridge’s Countryside Team.

The projects quickly spread to include Brownies, Guides and Rangers units from Long Ditton, Thames Ditton and Hinchley Wood as well, and some willing parents.



Enthusiastic litter-pickers on Ditton Common

On the day girls aged from 7 to 17 turned out in force for the Big Help Out. The regular litter pick in Weston Green had been cancelled because of the Coronation, so 27 enthusiastic litter pickers set forth guided by Louise and regular stalwart Peter Hunt. Huge areas of Ditton Common, Weston Green and Hampton Court Way were cleared after the busy bank holiday weekend.



Some of the Brownies showing off the elusive Himalayan Balsam

The *Balsam Bashers* were less successful, unfortunately. A cold Spring meant that the hoped-for cache of the pesky, invasive weed was limited to a handful. But the girls enjoyed themselves spotting the wildlife on Littleworth Common with the useful guides provided by the Countryside Team.

Meanwhile, in the Thames Ditton Centre, CHEER had laid on a huge indoor ‘street party’ for 41 of their guests (CHEER supports elderly and isolated residents in East Elmbridge). The girls had baked

cakes and biscuits beforehand, and the Weston Green Co Op provided cream teas for everyone. The girls busied themselves serving teas and drinks and chatting to the guests, the oldest of whom, at 99, had witnessed three Coronations! The room was splendidly decorated by CHEER’s staff and volunteers and guests enjoyed a quiz and a sing-along. There was even a special visit from the King himself (OK, it was a cardboard cutout, but great fun.)

Elsewhere the youngest Rainbows served tea to their parents and planted bulbs in Hinchley Wood.

District Commissioner Georgie Sibley said it had been “a truly amazing Coronation weekend and hopefully one the girls will remember for a long time.” Special thanks to Steve Blevins from the Co Op; Irene Belcher and the team from CHEER; Susie Jones from EBC’s Countryside Team; Louise, Peter and Nigel and all the Dittons Area Brownies, Guides and Rangers for their enthusiasm.

Coronation Weekend Thames Ditton & Weston Green



Annalise Boutle, Oaklands Avenue, Weston Green getting the party started



RA Councillor Gill Coates and ‘King Charles’



Oaklands Avenue / Orchard Gate



Portsmouth Avenue



Chesnut Avenue



Ready to party



Fit for a king at the Home of Compassion



TDF's Coronation Party in the Garden

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One hundred years of messing about in boats



Dittons Skiff and Punting Club members invite you to join them in this their centenary year

Tucked away at the riverside end of Queens Road, alongside The Albany pub, is Dittons Skiff and Punting Club. This historic sporting and social institution may be unfamiliar to many Thames Ditton residents but with 100 years of history, record-breaking feats, Olympiad rowers and a thriving sporting and social calendar, it's a hidden gem.

The club enables people of all ages to enjoy the traditional Thames sports of skiffing and punting on the glorious stretch of the river between Hampton Court Palace and Kingston Bridge. A skiff is a traditional wooden Thames rowing boat with fixed seats, and skiffing is sculling (rowing) with

two oars. Racing punts are narrower than those seen in Cambridge, but in the same way the craft is moved by pushing off the riverbed using a punt pole.

Back in 1923 former residents of Thames Ditton were keen founders of the club, and the river was a focus for community events and sporting prowess. Men and women competed in regattas (races), finessing their rowing and punting techniques for agility and speed. Historic postcards show that on regatta days the rivers were teaming with beautiful wooden craft and the banks were thronged with cheering people wearing boaters and blazers.



Molsey Regatta 1920's

Since the Roaring Twenties the challenges of war, social change and financial limitations have all meant that local councils and sports people have worked with huge energy and determination to keep skiffs and punts on this part of the Thames.



The former Vaudeville River club featured on the cover of Thames Ditton Today, 1987

When the club was looking for new premises in the late 1980s, it seized the opportunity promoted in Thames Ditton

Today in 1987 which outlined a competition organized by the Thames Ditton and Weston Green Residents' Association calling for ideas for the then under-developed Albany riverside site. Dittons Skiff and Punting Club put in an entry – and won! Years of fundraising and negotiations with the site owner Elmbridge Council followed, and in 1995 the Mayor of Elmbridge formally opened our purpose-built boathouse with a club room, bar and gym, plus its river terrace with stunning views over the Thames, Home Park and Hampton Court Palace.

Throughout the week club members take punts and skiffs on to the Thames for a leisurely outing or for race practice ahead of regattas. As with all sports there are techniques and skills to learn, plus the need to understand the flow and speed of the river itself. Both disciplines build strength and stamina as well as a strong core and legs; balance and co-ordination are important too. This all comes with practice time on the water and the guidance of experienced coaches, of which the club has many.

In this centenary year Dittons Skiff and Punting Club is celebrating in style, with lots of events planned on and off the river. The first was the Boxing Day Regatta, a one-mile sprint from the club up to Hampton Court Bridge and back, a tradition since 1924, though today there are a lot more Santa hats! The Centenary Flotilla takes place in June, and the Centenary Ball in the autumn will have a 1920s theme, but with a 2020s playlist for the dancing.

The club currently has more than 150 members, men and women from a range of ages and backgrounds who run the club themselves and together share the joy of spending time on the Thames. Some focus on these sports as a way to maintain fitness and train for competitive races; for others, the key benefit is enjoying a shared activity



Guy Hanscomb and skiff

on the water with like-minded people. The important thing is that everyone enjoys themselves at whatever level they choose.

The Vice Captain for Skiffing, Guy Hanscomb, himself a Thames Ditton resident, explains: *“Skiffing and punting are great sports for fitness and wellbeing, and we’re also proud to be one of a handful of Thames clubs playing our part in keeping these traditional sports alive. It’s great to join with fellow members to skiff and punt on this beautiful stretch of the Thames on a summer’s evening, and then return to the clubhouse to socialise over drinks on the river terrace!”*

Dittons Skiff and Punting Club offers members great value for money. The 2023 membership price for an adult is £235 a year, giving unlimited access to the activities, clubhouse amenities, regattas and all social events on the calendar. Members also have opportunities to take part in major events including the spectacular Great River Race, an amazing chance to skiff through

the heart of London, past some of its most famous landmarks.

In its centenary year the club is keen to encourage more people to discover the joys of skiffing and punting. *“If getting out onto the Thames this summer appeals to you, come along to one of our free Taster Sessions,”* invites Guy.

“These run every Thursday evening at 6.30pm from 25 May to 24 August. Adults of any age are welcome and you don’t need to have any previous experience. Our experienced members will be ready to greet you and accompany you out onto the river, and afterwards we’ll invite you to join us for a drink on the terrace. A summer on the river awaits!”

Natasha Woollard

To find out more visit www.dittons.org.uk

Photography Competition 2023

Get your entries in for our ‘*Nature & Climate Photography Competition*’, sponsored by Killik & Co. The closing date is **Friday, August 25**. There are four categories:

- 1. Local animal wildlife** - the fauna of Thames Ditton & Weston Green
- 2. Local plant wildlife** - the flora of Thames Ditton & Weston Green
- 3. Our changing climate** - Our local area in all weathers
- 4. Open category** - nature & climate in the wider world

There will be a first prize (£50) in each category, plus highly commended (£25) and a special prize for a photograph taken by someone under 18.

Full details of how to enter are available on our website residents-association.com



9.7

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New Village Green at Long Ditton



Stokes Field, (Open Spaces Society photo)

We are delighted that Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) has voluntarily registered Stokes Field, Long Ditton, as a village green. This follows a long campaign by the Save Hinchley Wood Long Ditton Green Belt group and the Open Spaces Society. Comprising about eight hectares of mixed woodland, open grassland and scrub intersected by numerous paths, the land is also a Local Nature Reserve.

The Thames Ditton & Weston Green Residents' Association gave a substantial donation to the campaign to register both Stokes Field and One Tree Hill as a village green, believing that village green status affords greater protection than Green Belt and will preserve this green space for generations to come. The funding was towards the costs of the Public Inquiry including a specialist barrister and an expert witness when Taylor Wimpey opposed their application.

In 2018, after Elmbridge Council's Local Plan consultants had identified the adjoining

One Tree Hill, owned by developers Taylor Wimpey, as 'lesser-performing Green Belt', concerned local residents applied to register both Stokes Field and One Tree Hill as village greens. Local residents had used the land for recreation for several decades and therefore they believed it qualified for registration.

EBC opposed the Stokes Field application to be registered as a village green and Open Spaces Society local correspondent Rodney Whittaker joined the campaign, supported by local councillors, to persuade the Council voluntarily to register the land as village green. This registration has now been agreed by the Council, which withdrew its opposition in the face of local pressure.

Rodney Whittaker on behalf of the Open Spaces Society, (of which the Residents' Association is a member) said "*We are delighted that Elmbridge Council was prepared to listen to our arguments for voluntary registration of this popular piece of land. Now it will be safe and local people have rights of recreation here. In doing this, the Council has set an excellent example to others*".

"No less than 57% of Elmbridge's land area comprises registered commons and other open, accessible spaces. The Residents' Association led Council has a deserved reputation for excellent care of its commons. The areas are all well used, and much valued by the borough's residents. Now we hope to succeed at the public Inquiry on One Tree Hill and to add it to the village green register as well."

Ruth Lyon

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Ditton Garages, Southville Road, Thames Ditton, KT7 0UL

Thank you retired RA Borough Councillor Karen Randolph



This local election saw Karen Randolph stand down after serving for 16 years as our Residents' Association Councillor at Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC). In those years she has helped countless residents navigate local government processes, deal with local issues and access services

She has lived in Thames Ditton for nearly 40 years. In 1995 the planning proposal for a Tesco superstore, garage and mega car park opposite Giggs Hill Green galvanised her to get involved in the Residents' Association and fight on behalf of the local community. Looking back she said *"Alarmed by the potential impact I got involved with the Residents' Association (RA) campaign which saw those plans shelved and led to the existing more sympathetic development of housing and green space. I realised then that people must get involved if we want a say in how our communities are shaped."*

She is now involved with the campaign to prevent another supermarket and car park being inappropriately developed on the opposite corner of Giggs Hill Green.

Having served on the Executive Committee of the Residents' Association, including a spell as Chair, she was elected to Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) in 2007.

Karen ran her own market research consultancy and is a trained mediator, skills which have served her in good stead in her years as a Councillor.

In her time at EBC she has focused on planning and says: *"Planning is complex. Over the years I have learned a lot about the processes and policies that must be considered when applications are made."*



Karen on the roofs of Hampton Court Palace

Much of my time was spent helping residents to understand how they can participate in the planning process."

She spent many years on the East Area Planning Sub-Committee and the full Planning Committee, as well as taking part in the Local Plan Working Group. Having been the Shadow Planning Portfolio Holder she was the ideal choice as Planning Portfolio Holder in the Residents Group / Lib Dem coalition at EBC, a role she held for six years in total.

Her wealth of experience helped navigate the tricky waters of the Local Plan, to develop a planning and development structure that protects the Green Belt and challenges central government directives on the number of housing units EBC was expected to build. (The Local Plan has yet to pass through its final stage, which is a review by a Planning Inspector.)

Local resident Edwin Glasgow said *"Our village is so lucky to have someone who is not only highly intelligent and articulate but also hugely kind, deeply caring and selflessly public-spirited."*

Reflecting on her time at EBC Karen said: *“I have thoroughly enjoyed my time as a councillor and have really enjoyed meeting so many people across and beyond our community. Planning is a fascinating subject and I am a great believer in what good planning should achieve and how local residents can benefit – development does not have to be negative, it just has to be appropriate and well designed. It has been a privilege to be the portfolio holder.”*

In addition, whilst at the council she was involved in handling social housing issues, neighbour disputes and helping residents navigate the complexity of local government. She is Chair of the Thames Ditton Almshouses, helping to maintain this valuable community asset.

Over the years Karen has been an active campaigner in trying to maintain the local community hospitals across Elmbridge, particularly in Thames Ditton and Molesey.

She was Chair of the Friends of Thames Ditton Community Hospital during which time the Friends raised enough money to provide ultrasound and echocardiograph capacity which benefitted many patients at Emberbrook. She currently sits on the Patients Participation Group (PPG) for Thorkhill Surgery and would like to encourage many more patients to get involved with the PPGs.

Now she is looking forward to having time to help with her wonderful new granddaughter, spending time with far-flung family and friends and doing the things she didn't have time to do while in the cabinet at the council. We are delighted that we continue to have access to her wealth of experience as she will continue on the RA Executive in her role as convener for Health and Community.

Karen, thank you so much for your many years of service to the community, it is really appreciated.

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Meet your distributors – Cecilia Roberts



Your copy of Thames Ditton Today was put through your letterbox by one of our team of loyal distributors. Who are they and what are they up to when they are not pounding the streets of Thames Ditton, Weston Green or East Molesey delivering magazines?

Cecilia delivers to Boyle Farm Road, Fitzgerald Road, Burtenshaw Road and the Home of Compassion.

How and when did you start living in Thames Ditton?

My family moved into our house in 2007 just after it was flooded by a burst water main. The water came all the way from the station through to the river Thames. They were living here when I was born, and I am 12 now.

How did you become a distributor?

I started by helping my Dad who was delivering leaflets and magazines for the Residents' Association. He would walk and I would run from one house to the other. Now I sometimes do it on roller skates. I like the covers of Thames Ditton Today – I think they are intriguing and well designed.

A brief 'potted biography'?

I was born in Kingston Hospital. I went to Stepping Stones Nursery School in Woodfield Road and after that to Weston Green School which is opposite Milbourne Pond. I saw the diggers there when they were digging down to the water table to stop it drying out. It was so exciting the first summer when dad and I went down to check the water level and it had not dried out and



Cecilia delivering Thames Ditton Today

I could see lots of tadpoles wriggling round a log in there.

I am now at Notre Dame in Cobham in Year 7. My favourite subjects are Maths and Art. I am not a big fan of languages.

I have an older sister, grandparents who live five minutes away and cousins in Wales and London. Our family has a Vizsla dog named Goose. He is very lucky because he gets taken for his walks in Home Park by boat because we live on the river.

What hobbies and activities do you enjoy?

I love being creative. I've got a sewing machine and it is great to upcycle an old piece of clothing and turn it into something new. I'm keen on cooking and often make desserts because I have a sweet tooth! I've also cooked seasonal items like a chocolate

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log at Christmas and Hot Cross Buns. I found out that to make the cross you have to pipe on a flour and water paste.

I'm a member of the Ajax Sea Scouts and can take part in lots of water-based activities including rowing and paddle boarding. There is also a St George's Day camp and a summer camp. Last year we went to Lake Bala in Wales for a week.

Every year our family does our 'Haribo Paddle' in two canoes. We start at Shepperton Lock with a big bag of Haribo sweets and paddle home to Thames Ditton. Every time we see a boat with a name that begins with 'H', we have a sweet. You get at least 30!

I'm a good swimmer and once swam around Thames Ditton and Boyle Farm Islands non-stop. My Dad was behind me in a boat.

Favourite food?

Something sweet! My Grandma makes a really good ice cream jelly. You mix ice cream and gelatine and freeze it. I'm going to get her to pass the recipe on to me. It's really nice.

If we eat out, I like pizza.

Favourite film?

Animation movies by Japan's Studio Ghibli.



Still from Studio Ghibli film 'On Your Mark'

Favourite holiday?

We went to a Greek resort where I went

water skiing and sailing. It was near the town so we could walk in and look around. Every year we have a week in Wales in Auntie Ruth's holiday home. It is great because we are near the beach and you can get nice ice cream.

Favourite clothes?

I'm lucky because I get lots of hand-me-downs from my sister which means I don't have to buy stuff.

Favourite book?

I like reading books by Roald Dahl and David Walliams.

Is there one thing that perhaps people don't know about you?

Last October I walked a marathon to raise money for Battersea Dogs Home. I raised £400. I started at Wimbledon Common and went through Richmond Park, Bushy Park and Home Park. I was wearing a FitBit and it was 60,593 steps!

Pat Cooke

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gardening club being particular favourites. Customer service is crucial to the success of resident comfort and wellbeing. The Hotel Services Manager and team provide a 24-hour service and our menus use seasonal and local produce – some of which is grown in our very own vegetable garden - forming the basis of the extensive restaurant-grade menus. Room service is also available, with a selection of lighter meals and snacks. A concierge service attends to a host of other requirements from ordering flowers and arranging dry cleaning to booking theatre tickets.

Pastimes and mealtimes

At Home of Compassion 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.



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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.

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Our bistro is perfect for socialising with family and friends and has a kitchen areas for making drinks. If you prefer to have some alone time, you can explore quiet nooks with comfy armchairs, classic novels and books on the shelves. To keep the mind sharp you'll find board games, cards and puzzles too - there's plenty to keep our residents engaged if they choose.

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Aria Care and the Team at Home of Compassion are delighted that, The Care Quality Commission (CQC), have awarded the home with the rating of 'Good' in all five key inspection areas for being safe, effective, responsive and well-led.

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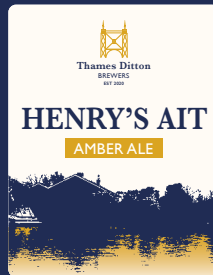
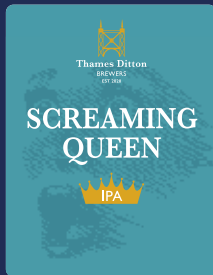
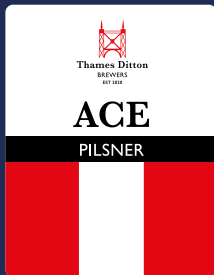
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Battling the mighty mite



The Spring edition of *'Meet your Distributor'* introduced Nell Nockles, who told us about her passion for educating people about the impact and danger of dust mites. It was news to us, so we asked her to tell us a little bit more.



House dust mite magnified (fortunately!)
(Wikipedia commons)

Having suffered severely with asthma when I was young I was amazed to find out that common house dust mites were a cause of asthma. I changed to sleeping on an air mattress to remove the mites from my bed and my health radically improved.

I was so excited by the dramatic change in my health that, with the support of doctors, I have dedicated myself to informing people about mites, and the dangers from house dust mites, a major cause of allergic disease worldwide.

In the 17th century the cloth merchant Antonie van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723) made a microscope to look at barely visible life forms. One group he noted he named *'little wolves'*, an appropriated name for a dust mite. This was probably the first human

sighting of an animal that has been on earth for millions of years. Scientists know this by looking at fully formed mites encased in amber about 145 million years ago.

Today the number of described dust mite species is estimated to be about 45,000. Many are significant causes of damage or harm to agriculture and animal health. For example, storage mites that can spoil grain stores by introducing fungi from their droppings, ticks that bite and carry disease in their saliva, and dust mites that can cause allergies in people and animals sensitive or allergic to their presence.

Of all mites studied it is the common house dust mite belonging to the species *Dermatophagoides* that ranks highest in medical research, because it is a major cause of allergic dermatitis (eczema), rhinitis (hay fever) and asthma. It is not the mite itself that is a focus of medical research but a digestive enzyme in its droppings that has been described as *'like papain, a meat tenderizer used in the food industry'*.

Immune reactions to this aggressive enzyme can result in an irritation, allergic reaction or both. Veterinary research has noted that the mite's enzyme is a near perfect match to the mange mite's enzyme that causes itchy sores in sheep - a comparison that would not surprise scientists who believe that millions of years ago the house dust mite was a mange mite that made a lifestyle shift to scavenger.

As a scavenger the mite eats bacteria, fungi, yeasts, wheat, toenails, pollen and any organic matter but its favourite food is old, discarded skin scales. An adult house



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dust mite is barely visible, is up to 75% water and lives in tight colonies in damp, dark, warm and still conditions. Any break from these four environmental conditions is a disaster for the colony.

They have neither eyes, beating heart, nor respiratory system and can drown in a normal family wash, but a hot wash at 60°C will kill all mites and eggs.

If you are allergic to the mite the best advice comes from Dr Jill Warner of Asthma UK “*keep your allergen levels low and avoid offering the mite a nesting site in your home.*”

If you want to find out more about the dust mite, its impact, current research and what action to take to control them please visit my website housedustmite.com. It is a free labour of love as I am keen to share what I have found out to help people enjoy better health.

Nell Nockles

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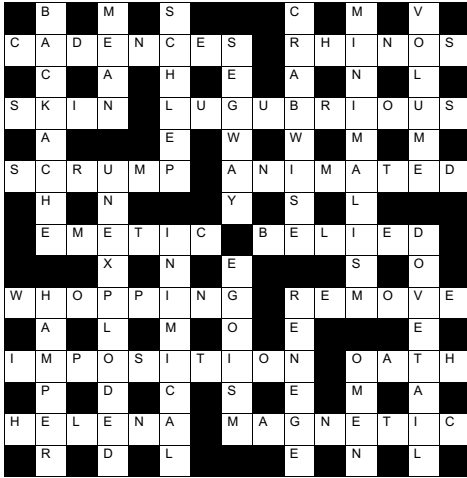
Thank you to everyone that took the time to enter our picture competition, we were delighted with the response. Almost every entrant correctly identified the locations....congratulations to 6 year old Emily Smith who was drawn as our winner! She was thrilled to receive the voucher from View Gifts as was her mum (with the bottle of fizz!) “*Emily’s over the moon with being a competition winner and loved spending it on pushies almost straight away!*”



WINNER! WINNER! WINNER! WINNER! WINNER!

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Mary Bowen

Crossword Compilers Wanted

For five years Howard and Bob Cruthers have done a wonderful job with the crossword. Now they would like to step back and invite someone else to have a go.

If you would like to try your hand at crossword compiling please contact
editor@residentsassociation.com



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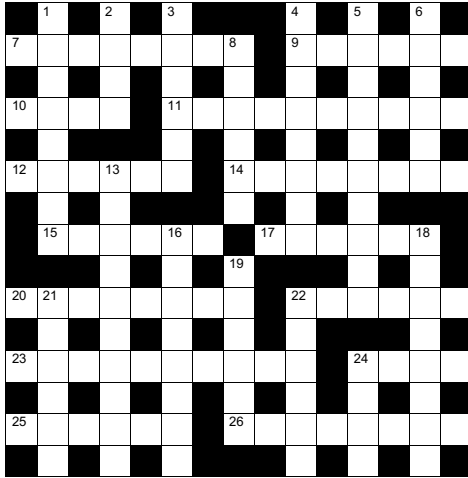
Peace

Hope



**GOD SAVE
THE KING**

Summer Crossword



by **Howard and Bob Cruthers**

The first three correct entries randomly opened after the closing date of August 5 2023, 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 and addresses of the winners will be published in the Autumn edition, unless otherwise requested.

ACROSS CLUES

- 7 North African semolina dish (8)
- 9 Second largest Pakistani city (6)
- 10 Light glancing touch, by Rock Band? (4)
- 11 Conventional image – see pottery (anag) (10)
- 12 Leave suddenly, from tent? (6)
- 14 Delicacies (8)
- 15 Unhealthy atmosphere (6)
- 17 Polish port city (6)
- 20 Aural infection treatment (8)
- 22 Card game, or where it is played (6)
- 23 Lewdest (10)
- 24 Pedigree mate? (4)
- 25 “Imagine” singer, middle name “Winston” (6)
- 26 Aubergine dish (8)

DOWN CLUES

- 1 Amphitheatre (8)
- 2 Egyptian goddess of fertility (8)
- 3 Hearsay (6)
- 4 Donald Campbell’s speed machine (8)
- 5 Knife sharpeners (10)
- 6 Thrice (6)
- 8 Vehicle pace monitor (abbrev) (6)
- 13 Canceling (10)
- 16 Skulking, or sponging (8)
- 18 The Bluegrass State (8)
- 19 Value (6)
- 21 Ornamental shrub, with showy flowers (6)
- 22 Lemons or grapefruits, for example (6)
- 24 If you’re under this, you’re in a difficult situation (4)

SERVICES, CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND GROUPS

SERVICES

Cheer (Concern and Help for East Elmbridge Retired)	Manager	01372 879321
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	Carole Needham	gsl@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

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	Giordano Orsini	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	Elaine Sesemann	07801 943392
Ember Sports Club	Zenda Hedges	07717 304146

Ember Sports Club: Bowls	Sylvia Jones	01932 788701
Ember Sports Club: Croquet	Dr. David Cooke	01932 862841
Ember Sports Club: Tennis	Annabel Duncan	0208 786 6318
Esher Bowling Club	Roger Cooper	01372 468109
Esher Bridge Centre	Paul Whicker	01372 460157
Esher 41 and Ex-Round Tablers' Club	Dr. R. Tudor-Williams	020 8398 0108
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 Cranleighan Rugby Club	Piers Cushing	07790 003731
Old Cranleighan Hockey Club	Simon Marshall (Men)	07801 737695
	Helen Hawes (Ladies)	07771 557900
Probus club, Hinchley Wood & the Dittons	Edmund Woolley	020 8398 3581
Probus Club, Sandown	Julian Rye	01932 976994
Probus Club of Molesey	Roger Marlow	0208 398 5460
Probus Club of Claremont	George Cameron	020 8224 1392
River Club (BMYC)	David Walker	0870 460 3586
Surbiton Croquet Club	Alec Thomas	020 8398 2391
Stragglers Running Club	Andy Howarth	07941 242348
Surbiton Golf Club	Secretary	0208 398 3101
Surbiton Hockey Club	Secretary	020 8398 2401
Thames Ditton Lawn Tennis Club	Steve Aukett	secretary@tdltc.com
Thames Ditton & Esher Golf Club	Mark Rodbard	020 8398 1551
Thames Ditton Squash Club (Colets)	Neal Brooker	020 8398 7108
Thames Ditton Cricket Club	Geoff Dryden	07813 805 645
		Geoff.Dryden@hotmail.com

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: Amelia Crafts	08456 528 529
	Membership: Sue Morris	020 8224 0980
Weston Green Conservation Area Advisory Committee		wgcaac@outlook.com

Please contact the Editor to amend these listings

Chair's Address to the AGM



At our AGM on March 21, Chairman Graham Cooke welcomed Adam Chalmers, the CEO of Elmbridge Borough Council who talked about his vision for Elmbridge and encouraged residents to find out more by visiting EBC's website.

Graham's Report referenced the RA's success in the 2022 elections and encouraged residents to vote on May 4.

Graham thanked all Councillors for their efforts over the year, but special thanks went to Cllr Karen Randolph who is stepping down after 16 years of service to our community. Karen has undertaken numerous roles on the Council including, most recently, as Cabinet Member for Planning. In this role Karen helped to deliver the new Local Plan which, once approved, should protect our valuable Green Belt.

Graham introduced Elaine Sessemann as candidate for Thames Ditton Ward and confirmed that Janet Turner will stand for re-election in Hinchley Wood and Weston Green Ward in May.

In May 2022. The RA had supported the Platinum Jubilee celebrations which, so sadly, were followed by the death of Her Majesty the Queen.

Mention was made of the highly successful 'Secret Gardens of Weston Green' and residents were reminded that the 2023 event in Thames Ditton will be held on Sunday June 11.

The efforts of local resident Nell Hickman, with support from RA Cllr Nick Darby, were acknowledged, with throw lines now installed at Albany Reach for improved safety.

The highly successful 'Nature & Climate Change' Festival will be repeated this year on the weekend of September 8-10. Huge thanks go to all concerned, in particular, Cllr. Gill Coates and Cllr. Caroline James.

Graham explained that the RA has taken responsibility for the Thames Ditton High Street Christmas Lights. In addition to the financial support needed, volunteers were encouraged to make themselves known when it comes to the work required at the end of November each year. Thanks were given to former RA Cllr Tricia Bland and the TD Foundation especially for the funding of the defibrillator at Budgens.

Planning issues continue to keep our RA Cllrs and Officers busy with the ALDI application, which was refused by EBC, the subject of a public hearing due to commence on June 20. Mention was also made of the Molesey Ventures site in Orchard Lane (off Ember Lane), where we are supporting local residents' objections to an inappropriate development.

Finally, thanks were given to all those who support our Residents' Association and help make our area a wonderful place to reside.

Residents-association.com

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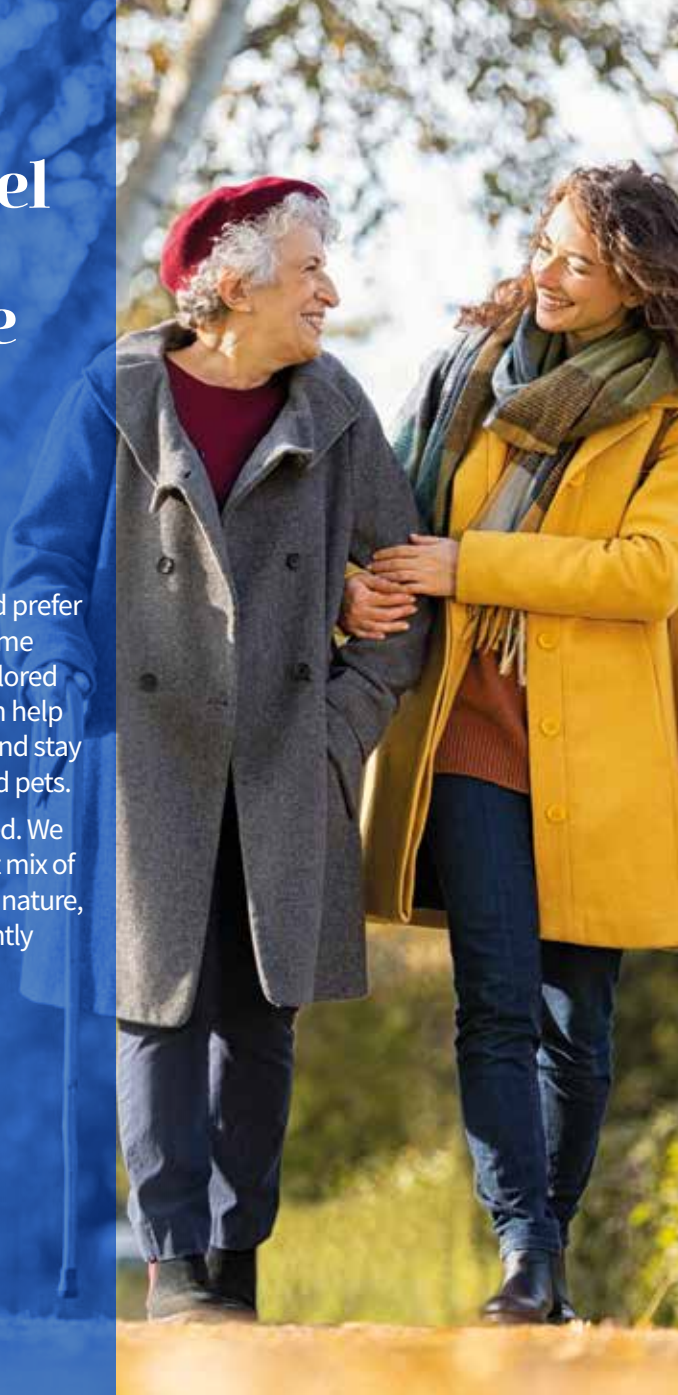
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