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Caterham misses out on Levelling Up funding again

By Rosalind Brookman

Tandridge District Council's application to Round 2 of the government's Levelling Up fund has been unsuccessful. In 2022, TDC submitted a bid for £8.7m to help regenerate areas in Caterham Valley and Caterham on the Hill. The money would have been used to help boost the town's economy, attract more people to live and work in the area, introduce flood alleviation measures, make upgrades to specific roads and retail areas, and create bigger open spaces, among other improvements.

This is the second time Caterham residents have had their hopes dashed. In 2021 the council was informed their Round 1 application for £4.3m had been rejected. Residents who live in areas of Caterham prone to rising flood water had been hopeful they would receive help to fix the problem the second time

around.

In January, the government announced that 111 areas will receive a share of the £2.1b pot. £200m of this will be allocated to projects in the South East, such as the more than £19m allocated to Rother Council for the transformation of the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill, but no money was awarded to the three bids submitted in Surrey. Other than Caterham, these had been for a health centre in Sheerwater and better cycling and walking roads to the east of Woking. 525 separate bids were put in across the country, with only around one-fifth being awarded money. Many councils have expressed frustration and anger that they have missed out on much-needed funding.

Leader of the council Catherine Sayer stated she is 'extremely disappointed' the town had

missed out once more:

"We invested a lot of time and hard work putting together our bid and I would like to thank everyone involved for their tremendous effort and commitment. We will seek feedback on our application and will appeal the decision if we can. We will also consider another bid when the government confirms details of the third round of funding."

MP for East Surrey Claire Coutinho added:

"I am disappointed that Tandridge's bid for the Levelling Up Fund has been unsuccessful and I want to thank TDC for their work in putting together the bid for Caterham which I supported. I will work with TDC and central government to explore all future funding opportunities, to make sure that East Surrey gets the funding it needs to improve our towns and villages."



Community helpers Oscar Skelly, 13 (middle), and brothers 10-year-old Leo Khosravi and eight-year-old Sam have been providing a valuable voluntary litter clearing service across the area they live in for three years. Find out more about them on page 3.



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Letter from the editor

Welcome to February 2023! We didn't print in January but we've been busy behind the scenes streamlining systems, gathering stories, developing new features, and ensuring the Tandridge Independent looks the best it has ever been.

This month's issue features great tips from our columnists, including new interior design guru Deborah, from Menagerie Interiors, who is offering inspiration for those thinking about renovating their homes, and River's Kitchen, where our very own River-Blue brings us a fun twist on a traditional recipe. Finance expert Chantal Baker, from Champ Consultants, explains why it's so important to check your credit report - something I didn't do for years.

We also have a story about the inspirational Ella Patterson, a Caterham resident who has been training to run two half-marathons to raise money to help her dad, who is suffering from the rare genetic disorder hereditary spastic paraple-

gia. We receive regular information about local charity events and while we would love to include each and every one in the paper, we don't always have the space. We can, however, put them on our website and across our socials instead, so please keep sending them to us!

The kids and I will be flipping pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, and I've already begun planning half-term activities. With three children who vary in age from 6 to 15 and who each have completely different interests, I definitely have to get organised early. Just Dance Performing Arts in Coulsdon will be holding their annual showcase on the fabulous stage at Woldingham School, so that's already in my diary. If you fancy getting creative with your kids you could stop by Godstone's Flowers for Florists: they have everything for all kinds of floral projects (perfect for Valentine's Day!) and while you're there you can pick up some romantic goodies for that special person and have a cuppa in their new coffee shop.



You'll always find a copy of your favourite community newspaper at one of our pick-up points across the district, but don't forget you can also download a digital copy from tandridgeindependent.com, and

follow us on our social media platforms.

See you next month!

Louise D'Costa

Oxted: a blueprint for cardiac arrest survival

By Rosalind Brookman

David Sullivan is a busy man. He not only runs a roofing company and travels the world speaking about cardiac arrest survival, he is also on a mission to make the UK the safest place in the world to survive a cardiac arrest, using his home town of Oxted as a blueprint. He and his business partner, ex-football player John Salako, recently installed a defibrillator outside Number 44 in Station Road East, meaning you are now never more than 30 seconds away from one of the town centre's seven life-saving boxes.

In 2016, two events conspired to change David's life. His earlier career, including time in the armed forces, gave him a solid background in lifesaving first aid but during a refresher course he was shown a defibrillator for the first time: "I'd never seen one before and I thought 'what a great bit of kit!'. I had no idea I'd be seeing one again so soon."

Two months later, after witnessing a young man collapse on a golf course from a cardiac arrest, David performed CPR for 17 minutes, before the club's defibrillator arrived, followed by the emergency services. Thanks to his efforts, the man survived. It was a bittersweet moment: although obviously relieved his patient was alive, that traumatic moment came soon after David losing four close friends under the age of 46 to cardiac arrest, outcomes which may have

been different if they'd had access to a defibrillator. He knew then that he wanted to do something to make a difference to the survival rates.

The UK statistics make for grim reading: more than 30,000 people suffer out-of-hospital cardiac arrests each year, and the survival rate is just 7%. David blames a lack of defibrillators:

"Speed is of the essence after a cardiac arrest. If you get a defibrillator onto the patient in under three minutes, their survival rate could go up to 73%." He set up Heart Angel, a company delivering CPR and defibrillator training, to spread awareness of the importance of knowing how to save a life. During the pandemic, this morphed into Creating Lifesavers, through which David now sells and rents defibrillators and offers various training courses, with the aim of establishing 'an army of lifesavers'.

In 2021, he embarked on a 1,100-mile golf-themed walk from John O'Groats to Land's End, raising money for the installation of defibrillators and showing 30,000 people how to perform CPR en route.

He wants to see defibrillators installed as standard outside pharmacies, dentists' and doctors' surgeries, and in schools (he is currently teaching CPR to 4,000 local school children). He is also

looking to help a football club become the first 'heart safe' club in the world.

David says it is vital that everybody learns how to perform CPR: "It may not be the most important

20 minutes of your life, but it could be the most important of somebody else's."

To find out more, or to sponsor a defibrillator, visit creatinglifesavers.uk.



Photo: David Sullivan with one of Oxted's defibrillators

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David Gold

The Tandridge Independent was saddened to hear of the death of David Gold, co-chairman of West Ham United and chairman of Gold Group International, on 4 January.

Last summer we spent time at his Caterham home, where he treated us to breakfast and a tour of his house, with personal anecdotes accompanying many of the photos and ornaments on display. We also enjoyed a buggy ride through the grounds, viewing his golf course and helicopter landing strip. En route he told us about his passion for preserving wildlife, and shared golfing stories full of self-deprecating humour! David was focused on supporting charities and small businesses and we are grateful for all he did for us, through both advertising and advice.

We would like to offer our sincere condolences to his family.

TDC reminds voters to bring photo ID

Tandridge District Council is reminding residents to bring photo IDs to the polling station on 4 May. A recent law change means if you don't have photo ID (below), you can not vote:

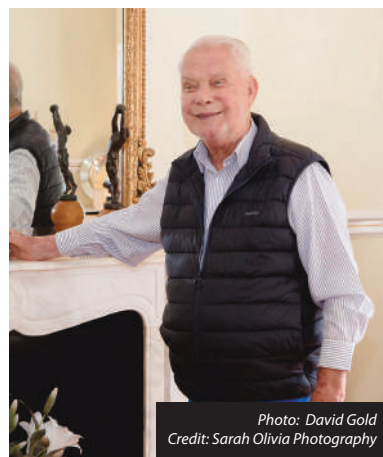


Photo: David Gold
Credit: Sarah Olivia Photography

- A passport
- A driving / provisional driving licence
- A Blue Badge
- An identity card with a PASS mark
- Certain concessionary travel cards
- A biometric immigration document
- A national identity card

It must be the original (not a photocopy). Out of date IDs can be used if the photo still looks like you. Photo ID is not needed for postal voting.

If you don't have photo ID, you will need to apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate by 5pm on Tuesday, 25 April. More information can be found at electoralcommission.org.uk.

de Stafford School set for government refurbishment

de Stafford School in Caterham will benefit from the government's School Rebuilding Programme, which aims to upgrade buildings and facilities at 500 schools and sixth-forms across England over the next decade. 400 of the schools have been chosen already, with de Stafford featuring in the fourth set, which was announced in December 2022.

The nomination process allowed

schools to put themselves forward. Assessments and site visits were carried out: schools were prioritised on criteria such as having buildings with 'severe and urgent condition need that meant they were a high priority for replacement' and 'risks that have the potential to cause significant harm to pupils and/or staff'. Schools with buildings 'of specific construction types that require replacement' were also included in the list.

Closure of NatWest in Caterham

The Caterham branch of NatWest, which was situated on Croydon Road, closed its doors permanently on 31 January. Customers can continue to use banking facilities, such as deposits, free cash withdrawals and balance checks, at post offices. You can also access government services, bill payments, foreign currency and travel insurance.

The closest post offices to the closed NatWest are Caterham Post Office, at 26 Croydon Road, Caterham on the Hill Post Office, at 51-55 High Street, and Whyteleafe Post Office, at 217 Gladstone Road.

How do you feel about the closure of another bank in Caterham? Let us know your thoughts: newsdesk@tandridgeindependent.com.

Surrey ambulance workers to strike in February

Ambulance workers across Surrey are set for two days of strikes in February, as part of wider GMB Union national action. Paramedics, emergency care assistants, call handlers and other staff from the South East Coast Ambulance Service will walk out on 6 and 20 February, after pay talks with the government failed to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

The service works closely with the union and their staff during strike days, ensuring they are still able to respond to the most seriously ill or injured patients, and they are asking the public to only ring 999 in an emergency.

Two further strike days have been planned for March.

Committed litter pickers hope to inspire others

Oscar Skelly, 13, and brothers eight-year-old Sam and 10-year-old Leo Khosravi, have been providing a valuable voluntary litter clearing service across the area they live in for three years. The boys, who live on Chalkpit Lane in Oxted, head out every couple of months with their rubbish sacks, after Oscar was inspired by an episode of Blue Peter:

"One of the presenters was getting involved with litter picking, alongside a community group. We often go for a walk up our lane into the North Downs, and we noticed that some drivers had littered and

fly-tipped in the wooded area and along the lane. I felt angry that people weren't taking care of our woodland and surrounding area.

I believe we are helping to keep our road cleaner and litter-free, but every time we come back we find that people have littered again. Our litter picking requires teamwork, dedication and commitment: I hope this inspires other children in our town to do the same."

Sam is pleased with the impact their recurring litter picking is having: "It definitely helps the environment."



Photo: Sam, Leo and Oscar when they began their litter picking mission

News in brief

Boundaries review

Residents are being asked for their opinions on new ward boundaries as part of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review of boundaries in Tandridge District.

Submit your views by visiting lgbce.org.uk and selecting 'Tandridge' from the drop-down box, emailing reviews@lgbce.org.uk or by writing to Review Officer (Tandridge), LGBCE, PO Box 133, Blyth, NE24 9FE

Ash dieback work in Hill Park

Surrey County Council have started tree felling at several sites in the county, including Hill Park near Oxted, to remove ash trees that are suffering from ash dieback. Caused by a non-native fungus, ash dieback is untreatable, spreads rapidly and can quickly fall or drop branches, so need to be managed to prevent harm to the public. SCC's countryside team have been working with specialist contractos to remove unstable trees.

Job fair

There will be a Tandridge Jobs Fair at the council offices in Oxted on 9 March, from 10:00 - 13:00. Visitors can meet local employers, apply for roles and find out about a range of career, volunteering and progression opportunities. East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership is providing a free bus service: call 07708 127861 to book a ride. Employers can get involved by emailing gatwickdiamond.eas@dp.gov.uk.

Competition winner



The winner of our December competition was Mel D. Johnson, who won meat products worth £40.

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The Christmas Community Giveaway marks a year of The Accessibility Project

By Abi Chapman, founder of The Accessibility Project

After launching The Accessibility Project in Southwark, I officially bought The Accessibility Project to Oxted at the start of 2022. Finally we were home, in the place I had been born and raised in, and as part of the community I am so passionate about. With that came a higher level of responsibility to make a positive impact. The stakes are high wherever you work, but they are higher in a community you know and love.

In December 2022, after one event in particular, I found time to reflect, and I realised that the project had grown, connected and partnered with so many, in so many different ways: it was a humbling moment. Throughout the year, we provided support to Ukrainian refugees and their hosts, ran one-off community sessions, supported the Community Fridge, which is run by St John's Church in Hurst Green, and also collaborated with them to launch a community hub!

Towards the end of 2022, it was noticeable just how many people were apprehensive about Christmas approaching, and we decided to launch the Community Christmas Giveaway, an initiative with the aim of creating 100 gift bags to hand out. So, how were we going to achieve this? Simply through the good-will of others. I was overwhelmed by the response from our community: we received over ten large moving boxes of donated gifts, as well as financial contributions.

After a call out for volunteers to

help us sort, wrap and pack gift-bags, we were finally ready to distribute them the week before Christmas. I say, with pride, that we smashed our target out of the park, creating 217 gift bags, and raising £605! We were able to give Christmas presents to the users of the Community Fridge and the Hub and to their loved ones, as well as to those who were known to be recognised in need.

None of this would have been possible without everybody coming together, nor without the immense support given to us by our local church, St John the Evangelist. We hope to turn this one-off event into some form of tradition, and we are looking forward to the new year ahead: there is so much more to come!

If you want to get involved in The Accessibility Project in any shape or form, from volunteering, supporting the running of it, and more, please get in touch:

theaccessibilityprojectuk@gmail.com.



Photo: The donations received for the Christmas Community Giveaway

Warlingham Community Library celebrates its 10th anniversary

By Safiyah Choudry

On Saturday, 21 January Warlingham Community Library celebrated its 10th anniversary. The Shelton Avenue building was decorated with balloons and bunting, and local residents were invited in to see examples of the many groups that use the space and the activities that take place there, including a craft room where children were designing their own Chinese New Year dragon. The day also included a raffle, a colouring competition and a cake made by Sandra, from local business Flavours Coffee Bar. The large crowd that attended was proof of just how important the library and its hard-working staff is to the people who use it.

Warlingham Community Library first opened in 2013 as a partnership between Surrey County Council and Warlingham Parish Council, after it was threatened with closure. A group of volunteers stepped in to run it, and it thrives

today thanks to their dedication and the support of the local community. The number of visitors, and books, continues to grow each year.

Tina Picanza has been with the community library since it started, and became volunteer coordinator in 2016. She has followed the library's journey, and says it is all thanks to local residents: "We have 40 fabulous volunteers who give up their valuable time to ensure we stay open. We are a library for the community, supported by the community."

Speaking on the anniversary celebrations, she said: "The time and effort our volunteers give to our library is returned in bucket loads by the library's success. The love and value placed in its existence was definitely in evidence on Saturday. It's a privilege to be part of a great team."

The library has activities and sessions for all ages, including Friday rhymetime sessions for babies and toddlers, reading groups for all on the last Tuesday of every month, and knit & knatter sessions every Tuesday. There is also a Lego club, poetry sessions and computer support sessions, among



Photo: Warlingham Community Library

other events. On Wednesdays, the library also provides a warm hub, offering a place to study, read and socialise, hot drinks (for a small donation), and free wi-fi.

With all that Warlingham Community Library has to offer, it is a welcoming and cheerful space for all, and one that is highly treasured. And if the plans for its future that were on show at the anniversary party are anything to go by, there are lots of exciting developments to come.

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Warlingham Park School open morning

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We run breakfast club and after school clubs daily, and the children enjoy delicious home-cooked food. We are lucky enough to boast a wealth of facilities, including specialist rooms for art, DT, drama and music, a computer suite, a wide range of clubs and activities and even our own flock of chickens! We have some developments this term, including a new spacious drama studio, the introduction of Latin to Year 6 and a weekly Japanese club. Our school trips are also in full swing, with visits to the Maritime Museum and the Natural History Museum and, despite the wet weather, our Forest School continues to be a favourite with the pupils. To join us at our next open morning, simply call us on **01883 626844**, or email info@warlinghamparkschool.com. We look forward to welcoming you to Warlingham Park School.

Ella's running to keep her Dad walking

16-year-old Caterham resident Ella Patterson is in training to run two half-marathons in February, to raise money for her dad Andy, who has the rare genetic disorder hereditary spastic paraplegia (HSP). This progressive disease causes the muscles and tendons in his legs to weaken and stiffen, and will eventually confine him to a wheelchair. In some cases, it can also cause other debilitating symptoms and greater body weakness. It is irreversible and incurable.

Before his diagnosis in 2013, Belfast-born Andy led an extremely active life. A keen sportsman, he played cricket for Ireland's national team between 1996 and 2001, as well as at county level for Sussex and Bedfordshire. After leaving professional sport he began working at a school in Caterham, teaching cricket and hockey. It was around this time he noticed that something was affecting both his balance and his ability to walk, resulting in his diagnosis of HSP.

Following increased deterioration in his mobility, Andy began to rely on a walking aid for short distances, but this soon had to be swapped for a trolley walking aid, which is now essential for his movements.

There is hope for Andy, however, in the form of new life-changing surgery, which could allow him to walk unaided once more, as well as possibly preventing further deterioration. It is currently only available in the United States though, and costs approximately £70,000. There is also an added time pressure: the



Photo: Andy Patterson

surgery needs to be performed before Andy is forced to use a wheelchair, which doctors estimate to be in around six months.

Ella has already raised more than £10,000 via her Just Giving page, but she hopes to raise even more through her half-marathon attempts:

"Dad will never be able to run or play sport again, but this operation could give him the opportunity to walk freely, leave his house without assistance and live his life again. All I want is for him to be happy."

Donate at [justgiving.com/crowdfunding/helping-my-dad](https://www.justgiving.com/crowdfunding/helping-my-dad).

Do you have a story?

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School buries time capsule to mark 150 year anniversary

By Rosalind Brookman

The Education Act of 1870 was brought in to deal with the provision of compulsory education for all children in England and Wales, with school boards established to ensure schools were built and managed in areas where they were needed.

One of those was on Chaldon Road in Caterham. Opened in 1872, it provided space for 125 boys, 125 girls and 100 infants. Today, the site is home to Hillcroft Primary School, which now has 453 children on its register.

September 2022 marked the beginning of Hillcroft's 150th academic year, and the school has planned a series of events to mark the anniversary.

During the autumn term, the pupils created items that would be placed into a time capsule. Each class is represented by artwork and quotes, and photos from school trips have also been included. The capsule was buried on the school field on Wednesday, 4 January, by head boy and girl James and Tabitha. It has been left with instructions not to be opened until

2047.

Teacher Emily Dunn, who is coordinating the celebrations, hopes that the pupils who are present when it is dug up will include sons or daughters of the current cohort:

"Hillcroft is a big part of the community, and many of the children here have parents, and even grandparents, who also attended the school."

A celebration book has been opened in the reception area, for the school community and members of the public to add their comments. It will remain open for the rest of the year.



Photo: Head boy James and head girl Tabitha bury Hillcroft's time capsule



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To do this successfully, magistrates:

- Understand and appreciate the different perspectives of the community
- Make fair and impartial transparent decisions
- Communicate with sensitivity and respect
- Are self-aware and open to learning
- Work and engage with people professionally

Once your application has been accepted, you will need to provide two references and attend an interview, where you will be asked to discuss various situations that you could encounter in court. Once you've been appointed, your first year will be spent training under a mentor, becoming familiar with criminal law and procedure, and sitting in on court sessions.

Increasing diversity

Richard Hay, who many Tandridge residents will also know as Ridge Radio's DJ Ricardo, was appointed as a magistrate in 1994 at the age of 37 and has worked at Croydon Magistrates Court for 29 years. In October 2022 he also became a diversity and community relations magistrate, a role which aims to help progression towards a more diverse and inclusive judiciary:

"When I started at Croydon, I had a few colleagues from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds, but around 98% of the magistrates there were white, which meant the bench wasn't reflecting the diversity of the population of the area. People will have increased confidence in the judicial system if they see a broad range of ages and ethnicities on the bench."

As of April 2022, 14% of magistrates in England and Wales are from a minority ethnic background, with this rising to approximately 30% in London. 79% are over 50 years old. Richard hopes to encourage younger people from underrepresented groups to consider becoming magistrates through events such as talks at schools and community groups:

"We want to demonstrate that anybody can become a magistrate: there are people like you on benches across the country, and you could join them. It's an opportunity to make a difference."

Transferable skills

Richard is also keen to stress

another positive aspect of becoming a magistrate:

"It can really help your career. The skills you develop as a magistrate - decision making, effective listening, critical thinking, flexibility, commitment and resilience - are all transferable skills, skills for senior management roles. When I was appointed as a magistrate I was a team leader at Lambeth Council, and I am sure everything I learned in court helped my advance to assistant director. So business owners who support employees to become magistrates will benefit from their insight and experiences."

To find out more, and apply, at icanbeamagistrate.co.uk.

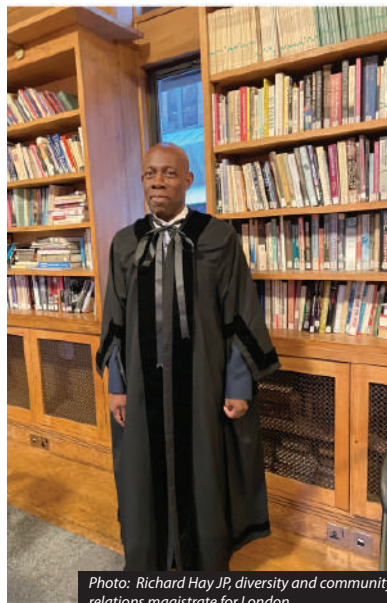


Photo: Richard Hay JP, diversity and community relations magistrate for London

The Breck Foundation: Continuing to make change for the better

By Mark Harrington

7 February is Safer Internet Day. At a time when much of our life is online, it is important to raise awareness of the dangers of the internet.

Entering its ninth year, the Breck Foundation was established after the tragic death of Breck Bednar, and it continues its amazing work educating children, teachers and parents on how to safely navigate the ever-changing digital domain. Breck was groomed by someone whom he met online through gaming, and who he believed to be a friend, and was lured to his murder at fourteen years old.

The Breck Foundation strives to help young people reclaim the internet from those who seek to use it for harm. They work constantly to make sure what happened to Breck doesn't happen again, by giving children the tools and knowledge to recognise online dangers. The charity has been at the forefront of supporting the government's Online Safety Bill which, if passed, will force social media companies to remove illegal content from their platforms, share children's social media activities in court, and allow Ofcom to give out two-year sentences to social media company managers who fail to prevent children from seeing harmful material.

Part of the charity's work is to educate young people, through in-person and online presentations, which are tailor-made for

different ages and special educational needs. So far, they have reached over 125,000 young people and this number continues to grow.

The foundation is continually developing resources to support online education. Their website offers user-friendly guides and blogs about new technology, apps and social media, along with ways to discuss and deliver online safety education. There are also books, plays and music, which were nominated in the Excellence in SEND category at the 2022 Music and Drama Education Awards.

This Safer Internet Day, the Breck Foundation wants to flood the digital world with joy and positivity and are calling on their supporters to stand up to online hate, and post selfies of themselves wearing yellow, the colour of joy. We hope you will get involved! You can also book a presentation for your school, club or community group or purchase their books to share with your children.

If you can, please donate to the Breck Foundation to allow them to continue working with schools, or help them to reclaim the internet by fundraising for them. The work they do is vital for the future of our children, and for making the online world a safer place for everyone.

For further information, please visit breckfoundation.org.



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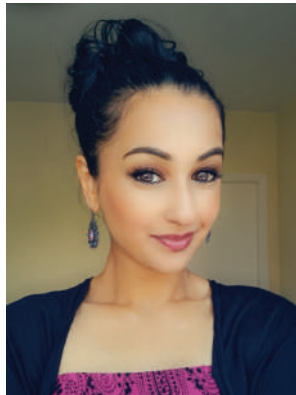
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Dealing with damp and condensation in your home

By Cllr Catherine Sayer, leader of Tandridge District Council

You may have read about the inquest into the tragic death of Awaab Ishak. The two-year-old died in 2020, after prolonged exposure to mould in his Rochdale house. The story caused widespread shock across the country.

During winter months, our homes can suffer from damp and mould caused by condensation and I wanted to highlight the council's advice on how to deal with it.

Condensation happens when warm moist air, released by everyday household activities such as cooking or bathing, comes into contact with cold surfaces such as walls or windows. It's estimated the total moisture added in one day from these ordinary tasks can be up to 15.9 litres. If moist air doesn't escape through open windows, air vents or extractor fans, it settles, often leading to mould growth in room corners, backs of carpets and inside cupboards.

Reduce moisture

Reduce the moisture in the air by ventilating rooms, drying clothes outside, putting lids on saucepans, not leaving kettles boiling, wiping down surfaces where moisture settles, making sure air vents aren't blocked and, of course, keeping your home warm, although that may not be so easy given the high heating costs.

Many people use dehumidifiers to try and cure or reduce condensation in their home. However, these are expensive to run and won't solve the problem if the damp is caused by condensation.

Condensation isn't the only cause of damp. It can also come from leaking pipes or overflows, rain seeping through the roof where a tile or slate is missing or blocked gutters. Rising damp, due to a defective or missing damp-course, also causes mould to appear.

The council has produced a leaflet with more details which can be found at

[tandridge.gov.uk/condensation](https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/condensation).

If you rent your home and are experiencing problems with damp and mould, please report this to your landlord as soon as possible. If the problem worsens, or you don't hear back from your landlord in a reasonable time, you can contact our environmental health team for help and advice by emailing envhealth@tandridge.gov.uk or calling **01883 722000**.

Landlords have an obligation to ensure that their tenants' homes are safe, secure, clean and in good condition. You can find more information about these expectations and the standards that rented properties should meet on the website at

[tandridge.gov.uk/privatehousing](https://www.tandridge.gov.uk/privatehousing).

If you have concerns, please make sure you take action as soon as you can. Get in touch:

Cllr.Catherine.Sayer@tandridge.gov.uk.



Cllr Catherine Sayer

Domestic abuse included as a policing priority at Kenley Ward Panel

By Cllr Gayle Gander, Kenley Ward

On 24 January, residents, church group representatives, KENDRA and local councillors met the Metropolitan Police Kenley Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT). Chaired by Nick Graves, Old Lodge Lane Baptist Church's pastor, the Ward Panel discussed community safety and policing priorities.

Latest crime statistics were reviewed, and questions asked about crime. It's unsettling discussing crime near where we live, but reassuring that, after Sanderstead, Kenley has the lowest crime rate in Croydon. Generally, vehicle offences were opportune, and the number of catalytic converters taken has dropped. One SNT member is being trained on smart tagging and will run a public session on preventative actions.

The Ward Panel chair wanted to ensure more 'hidden' offences were considered and introduced a Kenley resident with experience of domestic abuse. She explained the insidious nature of the abuse and the need for victims to understand help was available. The Ward Panel was supportive of awareness raising on this as a community safety priority. In reviewing existing policing priorities, the panel agreed to amend an existing priority to: Violence against the person with particular attention to domestic abuse and violence. This sits alongside two other priorities around burglaries and vehicle crime.

The next Ward Panel meeting will be on 18 April at Old Lodge Lane Baptist Church.

Whyteleafe weathers the storms

By Dr Marcus Jones, chairman, Whyteleafe Village Council

The heavy rains and snow have caused disruption both nationally and locally, with some large potholes appearing on Whyteleafe Hill and Station Road. Most repairs have now been made but please continue to report any road problems that you see to Surrey County Council, via <https://www.surreycc.gov.uk/do-it-online/report-it-online>.

There has been widespread disruption as well to trains, postal services and hospitals, to name a few. And there are financial challenges across our community too.

However, Whyteleafe has rallied and is becoming stronger day-by-day, as more residents volunteer to address some of our community needs, helping to weather our storms and bring some rainbows into our community.

For example, a Warm Hub cafe is now operating successfully at St Luke's Church on Whyteleafe Hill. Many thanks to county councillor Jeffrey Gray for contributing towards this initiative.

AFC Whyteleafe played three charity matches over the festive period, and village councillor Deano Cline coordinated the collection of over £700 in donations for the Whyteleafe Food Hub.

Over recent months, many of our voluntary groups have seen new people join, which is wonderful to witness. Whyteleafe village councillors work closely with so many of these groups and on behalf of the whole council, I would like to say a big thank you to all of the dedicated volunteer teams that help make our village such a caring and compassionate place to live. Thank you all. Contact me:

Cllr.m.jones@whyteleafevillagecouncil.gov.uk.



Photo: Large potholes have been appearing in Whyteleafe



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New history for Hever

By Rosalind Brookman

Celebrities are well known for knocking years off their age as they get older, but now a medieval castle in Kent has done it too. New research shows that Hever Castle, once thought to have been built over 750 years ago, is actually only 640 years old.

At a press view on 12 January, architectural historian Simon Thurley, who was commissioned to carry out the research, revealed that rather than being built in 1270 for William de Hever, the castle was actually constructed for John de Cobham in 1383. De Cobham was also granted a licence to crenellate Hever for defensive purposes during a time of social unrest.

Greater understanding

Amongst many other things, Thurley's work has brought a greater understanding of what Hever looked like and how it was used when it was the Boleyn family home. The new information also shows that Anne of Cleves, who was given the lease to the castle as part of her divorce from Henry VIII, spent far more time at Hever than was previously thought, adding the Long Gallery, the Staircase Gallery and remodelling the ceiling in the Great Hall.

The research was able to highlight the remarkable preservation of the castle, with the gatehouse, battlements and portcullis mechanism dating back to the 14th Century. Thurley suggests that there is 'probably no other sequence of medieval defensive timberwork like this anywhere in Europe.'

As part of the press view, curator Alison Palmer presented a newly acquired deed, dated 1558, which details the sale of the Hever Castle estate from Queen Mary I and King Philip to the Waldegrave family, who let the castle throughout their ownership.

Exciting changes

The Hever team has exciting plans in place for the castle. Changes will be made to its configuration and displays to reflect the research findings, starting this year with the ground floor, and moving up through the building over the following years.

Simon Thurley stated: "We all thought we knew the story of Hever, but it turns out that we don't. It was home not to just one queen but two, and where they lived is still there to see – an amazing survival."

More details can be found at hevercastle.co.uk/news/hever-castle-rediscovered.



Photo: Architectural historian Simon Thurley and Hever CEO Duncan Leslie with the newly discovered deed

Letters from Ridland Farm

By Peter Connelly, curator of East Surrey Museum

This month in the museum we've been busy preparing our new exhibition, which looks at rural life in East Surrey. From pre-Roman times, the East Surrey area has been extensively farmed. Despite the growth of towns and villages from the 19th Century onwards, the area remains largely rural in character, although farming and the rural economy has changed out of all recognition.

While going through our collection, we came across a fascinating collection of correspondence from

the 1880s, relating to Ridlands Farm (the picture, which dates from the 1920s, is labelled 'Redlands Farm House' as the two spellings

appear to have been used interchangeably for a time). Ridlands Farm House dates from the 17th Century, and still stands in Ridlands Lane, Limpsfield.

In 1880, Mr William Heasman, a successful flour miller from Oxted who lived at Coltsford Mill, decided to lease a farm to grow his own corn for milling. Mr Granville Leveson Gower of Titsey Place wrote to him on 7 August 1880 with details of all 220 acres of Ridlands Farm and on 16 May 1881 Mr Heasman finally paid the sum of £432 and three shillings to take up the lease at an annual rent of £145. But there were problems straightaway, with Mr Leveson Gower complaining that his gamekeeper found wire traps on Ridlands land that could harm Leveson Gower's pheasants. Mr Heasman retorted that the



Photo: Ridlands Farm House c1920

gamekeeper should not be on his land, and that Ridlands was infested with rabbits which were eating his crops. The correspondence stretches over five years, with Leveson Gower denouncing Heasman for not supplying 100 tresses for thatching the barn, and Mr Heasman continually complaining about the lack of repairs to the farm buildings and the hordes of rabbits. By July 1885, Mr Heasman had managed to knock the annual rent down to £110 (around £16,500 in today's money). Sadly, that's where the letters end, but Coltsford Mill remained in the Heasman family and, once it stopped grinding corn, William's grandson Wilf opened a restaurant there in 1966. It is now a wedding venue.

eastsurreymuseum.org.uk



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Celebrating our teachers

By Sue and Maryanne



Sue and Maryanne from Tutor Your Child

This month, we thought we would dedicate our column to the amazing teachers who inspire our children.

We have both taught in schools for many years and it has been great fun but also, at times, hugely challenging.

It is a great responsibility to teach the next generation. We all know, from our own childhood and also from our children, that young people often remember everything a teacher has said to them. Much of our aspiration, enjoyment of learning, resilience and self-belief is in the hands of the people who teach us.

Care and understanding

During our many years of teaching we have seen the power and impact of a teacher who truly understands and nurtures their pupils. Children can tell if somebody honestly cares about them and this makes them feel secure. When a child feel safe and valued then they will feel confident and ready to learn.

Everyone learns in different ways: when a teacher has a good understanding of how each child in their

class learns, every child benefits. And helping children to understand how they learn can benefit them throughout their life. They will use this personal and individual understanding when they come across new situations and challenges. It will give them a strong sense of self and identity, which are such important things for children to have as they grow up.

Love of learning

Enthusiasm is catching. When we are with people who are passionate about what they do it rubs off on all those around them. The greatest teachers we have ever known are those who love learning themselves and can convey this to their pupils. Not everyone is passionate about the same thing but that is the beauty of a child's journey through education. They will come across lots of different teachers with individual knowledge and interests and will benefit from being taught by them all.

The other day, one of our own children was talking about a teacher they had when they were six, who taught them all about Antarctica. This teacher had just been there, and was so excited about their experience that they wanted to share it with their young pupils. They created a role play area, a collection of books, lots of discussion and a wide range of learning opportunities. Twenty-four years later, this experience is still remembered with delight!

Always being your best self

It is hard to explain to anyone who

has not

been a teacher just what it is like to stand in front of a class full of young people.

You need to have a great knowledge of what you are teaching. Being able to communicate this effectively then requires continual and ongoing assessment of how the content is being understood. This can change from minute to minute for some children. In addition, a teacher needs awareness of the interpersonal aspect of teaching a class full of children: they will continually be monitoring aspects of their well-being which could impact their learning, their wavering attention and concentration, and how to support their resilience and self-esteem.

The teaching day can be intense! As well as being in class, you also need to fit in other duties, such as planning lessons, meetings, working on school development priorities, supporting new staff, organising trips...and much more!

It is always sad when we hear about teachers leaving the profession, and there are so many young teachers who do not stay very long.

Teachers need our support. Children need us to support their teachers.

Children learn best when they have happy people, who are enjoying their job and feel supported and valued and we all can have a part to play in this.

Sue and Maryanne x
www.tutoryourchild.co.uk
Please contact us if you would like more information about how to help your child.
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Teacher Training Academy opens at East Surrey College

By Rosalind Brookman

East Surrey College's teacher and assessor training courses will now fall under the umbrella of their new Teacher Training Academy, which launched in January 2023. Based at the college's site in Redhill, the academy offers courses aimed at developing careers in teaching, training or assessing.

Teacher training coordinator Jose Aguiar explains that the courses are relevant to anybody who wants to teach: "The Award in Education and Training (AET) Level 3, the Certificate in Education and Training (CET) Level 4, and the Diploma in Education and Training (DET) Level 5 are open to candidates who have graduated from university and want to step straight into teaching, as well as to people on different career paths who want to transfer their experience into a teaching role."

Organisations can also enrol staff on to the academy's teacher training or assessor courses. Jose explains:

"Anybody who delivers training or assesses qualifications in a workplace or educational setting, or who conducts internal quality assurance needs to have a qualification. Alongside the AET, the CET and the DET, we offer the Certificate in Assessing Vocational Achievement (CAVA) Level 3 and the Award in the

Internal Quality Assurance of Assessment Processes and Practice Level 4."

A new package on offer combines the AET and CAVA courses, meaning that anybody who completes it will end up with both a teacher training and an assessor qualification.

Flexible delivery

The academy can provide bespoke tailored courses to businesses and organisations, which can be delivered on site, at the college, online, or as a mix of all three. Jose says that one of the key things the academy offers employers is flexibility:

"We work with their timings, whatever suits them. We have run in-person lunchtime sessions on site for one company and evening sessions via Microsoft Teams for another. And, while the courses we run at the college have set dates, for outside organisations we can offer them at any time."

Visit esc.ac.uk/part-time/teacher-training-academy for more information.

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"We want every child to leave their sports sessions with a smile on their face."

Outdoor learning plays a key part in the outstanding education Hazelwood School delivers. The 25-acre grounds are home to a variety of different environments that its teachers utilise to motivate their pupils and inspire them into a long-term passion for learning. Alongside academic success, a love of sport is also nurtured in Hazelwood students from the beginning of their school journey, with the games team regularly bringing their specialist sports knowledge to the youngest cohort in the pre-school.

Hazelwood have a team of six specialist PE staff and 22 games staff, who help with coaching and after-school

clubs, working under the leadership of Director of Sport Alex Jones, who joined the school in 2022. Involved in a professional capacity in school and club sports for the last 15 years, Alex has worked on player pathways at both Saracens and Harlequins Academy and, as a coach, has won several national competitions in football and rugby.

The winning streak continued in November last year, when Hazelwood's U-13s boys' team, led by first team coach Jon Jarvis, lifted the trophy at the Independent Association of Prep Schools' national football finals. Indeed, Alex is sure that many of

Hazelwood's other teams are also on course for victory.

However, it's not just students who excel at sports that get to compete in matches and competitions. The opportunity is there for every pupil to join a team and represent the school in one of the many sports on offer, which includes swimming, badminton, rugby, hockey, lacrosse, netball, gymnastics and tennis, among many others. There is also a diverse range of after-school clubs, such as judo, golf and scuba diving, for children to join, and the wider school community of students, parents and teachers can often be found taking part in weekend parkruns together.

During years 5 through 8, the children can also take part in the

school's newly introduced bespoke Sports Scholar programme. Pupils have obtained more than 35 sports scholarships to a range of senior schools over the last five years.

Alongside grass pitches, courts, indoor and outdoor cricket nets, a state-of-the-art sports hall and the 15-metre swimming pool, the Hazelwood children are also getting great pleasure from their all-weather 80 x 55m astro pitch, which was completed during the autumn term of 2022. Part of the money for this new addition was raised by the school's dynamic parents' association, and Alex says it has been a game changer, allowing the pupils to participate in sports lessons in all weathers.

He says: "We want to ensure that all

pupils here at Hazelwood have the opportunity to explore and participate in a broad and varied sport offering. We endeavour to tailor what we offer to the needs of our pupils, no matter their ability. Our hope as a department is that all pupils leave Hazelwood having enjoyed their sports sessions, and will have found an activity they love and will be a lifelong passion for them."

Hazelwood is keen to encourage others to take advantage of their exceptional sports facilities. Clubs and groups who are interested in hiring space at the school should direct their enquiries to lettings@hazelwoodschool.com. You can find out more at hazelwoodschool.com.



Green Tips - February gardening jobs

By Neil Miller, head gardener at Hever Castle & Gardens

I'm beginning to see white spots in front of my eyes after planting thousands of snowdrops in the green, ahead of our snowdrop-themed month at Hever Castle. Our planting this year takes our grand total of snowdrops in the garden to 115,000.

From 8 February onwards, visitors can take a self-guided tour of the snowdrops and follow them down Sunday Walk to Church Gill, where William Waldorf Astor and his family once walked. We also have tens of thousands of *Galanthus nivalis* rippling beside the Outer Moat.

We add to our display every year, and carefully wait and watch for the special varieties that we've planted in the Winter Garden to appear, like Colossus (a large, nine-inch snowdrop) 'Grumpy' *Galanthus elwesii* (a delicate snowdrop with distinctive green markings that depict a grumpy face), Wendy's Gold and *Galanthus Green Brush*, with its unusual green tipped flowers.

If you've ever wanted a snowdrop collection, this is the month to head out to the snowdrop plant fairs in Kent and Sussex where you'll find unusual and rare varieties of these delicate beauties.

What to do this month

February is a great time to clean out the greenhouse. So, turn the radio up, sing loudly and sweep and clean with verve - you may be in the warmest place in the garden but you'll need to dance to keep your blood pumping! Make sure you clear the greenhouse of any fungus and moss that may have collected.

It's a good idea to wash down the staging and your trays before the planting season begins.

This is also a fantastic time of year to give your gardening tools an audit: don't forget to mend the spade with the dodgy handle (you know the one, right at the back of the shed!). With all your tools in order and the greenhouse and potting shed ship-shape, you'll feel a renewed energy for the year ahead, which is already starting to show promise with crocus and snowdrops poking their heads through the earth.

Too late to plant?

I have received a few queries from gardeners and visitors asking whether it's too late to plant their tulip bulbs. Ours are all in the ground in preparation for our Tulip Celebration in April but, if you're quick, and while the ground is still soft enough, there is still time to get your bulbs in. You might even find some bargain basement ones going cheap in the nurseries!

If you didn't manage to split and divide your snowdrops last March as they finished flowering, then you can buy them green from the end of the month and plant them in *s e m i - s h a d e* where they won't dry out. If you are

planting some green for this year, then make sure the soil is rich with well-rotted compost - or organic matter - and also make sure you plant them as soon as you get them! It's worth noting that snowdrops are on the CITES list of endangered plants, so ensure you purchase from stock and not from somewhere that has harvested them in the wild.

Supporting Alzheimer's Society

The snowdrop is not just a beautiful indication of the coming spring but it's also a plant that has played an important role over the last 50 years in the medicinal management of memory loss.

This year at Hever Castle and Gardens we are pleased to support Alzheimer's Society, a fitting tie-in for Anne Boleyn's childhood home in Kent where our tens of thousands of snowdrops welcome the early spring every February. It's wonderful to be able to bring some focus on its fundraising and the important work it does this month, as the snowdrops bloom.

Find out more: hevercastle.co.uk.



Snowdrops at Hever Castle

Create a home for your feathered friends

By The Urban Countryman

Birds are now preparing for the breeding season and starting to search out suitable nesting sites, so it's the perfect time to install nest boxes. Here are some pointers:

Type of box

They should be waterproof and well-insulated. Be wary of some materials: ceramic boxes can be poorly insulated and plastic can produce condensation, making young birds cold and damp. Boxes with metal roofs can seriously overheat on sunny days.

Different birds like different entrance hole sizes, so choose the right size for the birds you want to attract (robins prefer open-fronted boxes, for example). Perches may seem like a helpful addition but nesting birds don't need them and they may actually be more useful to predators. Brightly-coloured boxes look lovely, but will probably also attract the attention of predators.

A metal plate around the entrance is a good predator deterrent (especially woodpeckers and squirrels), as it prevents them from enlarging the hole.

Location

- Site boxes in sheltered locations, away from strong sunlight and damp winds.
- Place them between six and eight feet above the ground.
- Tilt the box slightly forward to deflect rain from the entrance.
- Don't place boxes of the same type close together: this may

promote aggressive behaviour between avian neighbours.

• Site boxes away from bird feeders: high levels of feeding activity could disturb nesting pairs.

• As fledglings cannot make long flights at first, it is worth siting the box quite close to cover, allowing them to gain confidence from short flights.

• Ensure the boxes are well out of the reach of cats. Our furry companions kill millions of birds every year: my neighbour's cat loved to sit on top of the box, trying to catch birds as they flew in and out!

Some species are picky over nest sites: if you have a box that has been unoccupied for a couple of years it might be worth repositioning. Once you have resident parents and chicks it can be very tempting to take a peek inside but restrain yourself, as you will risk the parents abandoning the nest.



Credit: @urbancountryman (Facebook)

River's Kitchen: Toad in the hole twist

By River-Blue

11-year-old River-Blue is an aspiring chef. Each month, he will share one of his own original recipes.

Toad in the hole with a twist

Ingredients (to serve 5)

For the Yorkshire pudding:

- 140g plain flour
- 3 large eggs
- 200ml milk
- Oil / lard for cooking

For the pigs in blankets:

- 5 meat or veggie sausages
- 10 rashers of smoked streaky bacon or veggie bacon

Method

1. Make the Yorkshire pudding mixture (you can even do this the day before, but keep it in the fridge if you do) by adding the flour, eggs and half the milk to a bowl, and whisking until there are no lumps left
2. Add the rest of the milk, and whisk a lot until you get a smooth texture. You should also see lots of bubbles on the top of the mixture
3. Wrap each sausage in two rashers of bacon, to create the pigs in blankets
4. Preheat the oven to 230°C
5. Add the oil or lard to a baking dish and put it in the oven for a few minutes to warm it
6. Add the sausages to the baking dish: cook them for five minutes, then turn them over and cook for another five

minutes

7. Add the Yorkshire pudding mix around the sausages, and put it back in the oven for a further 20-25 minutes (don't open the door for at least 20 minutes)

8. The toad in the hole should be golden brown in colour and raised around the edges

9. Add potatoes and gravy, and serve!



River-Blue

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Thanks from the editor

By Louise D'Costa

I would like to thank Enterprise Rent-a-Car, in Caterham on the Hill, for their help with my transport during the past eight months. Not having a car of my own presented me with many stressful moments and Enterprise helped alleviate that by repeatedly finding me a vehicle with my exact requirements, often at short notice and always with a smile!

Distribution of the paper every month is key and Enterprise's assistance meant I could deliver it across the district on time, without worrying about how I was going to get there. It also guaranteed that the team and I were able to visit advertisers, source stories, carry out interviews with residents, and attend our planning meetings.

Thank you to Luke, Jeremy and Tinashe for your patience, your outstanding customer service, and for getting me back on the road every time.



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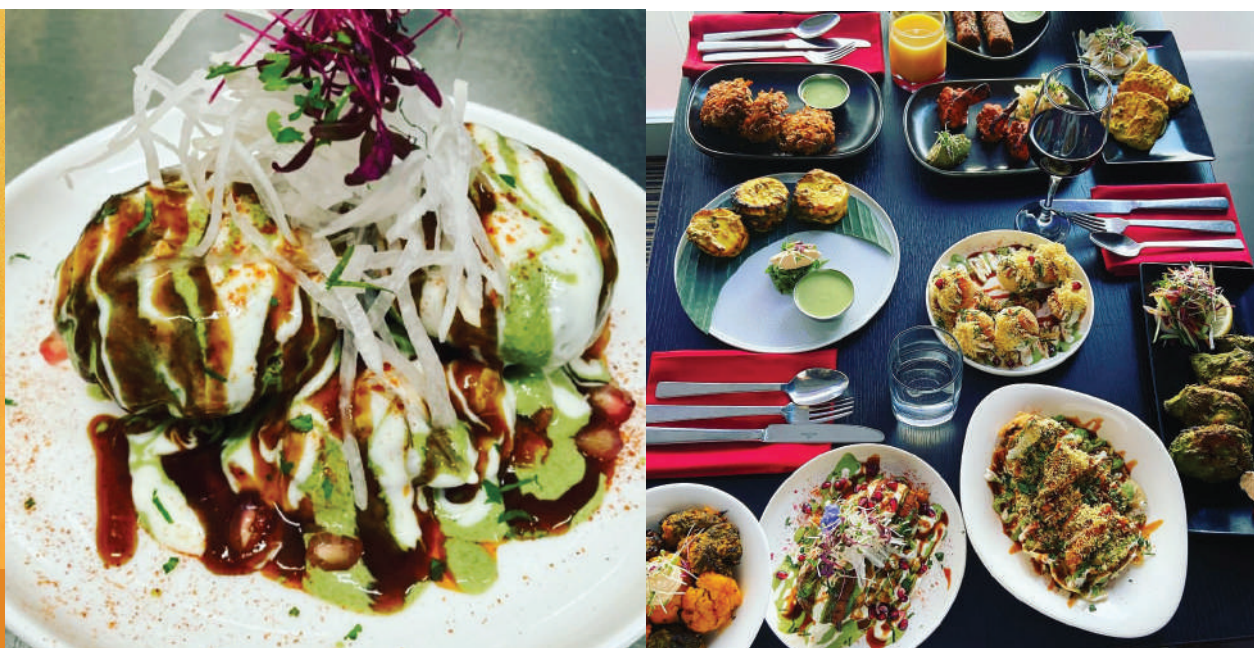
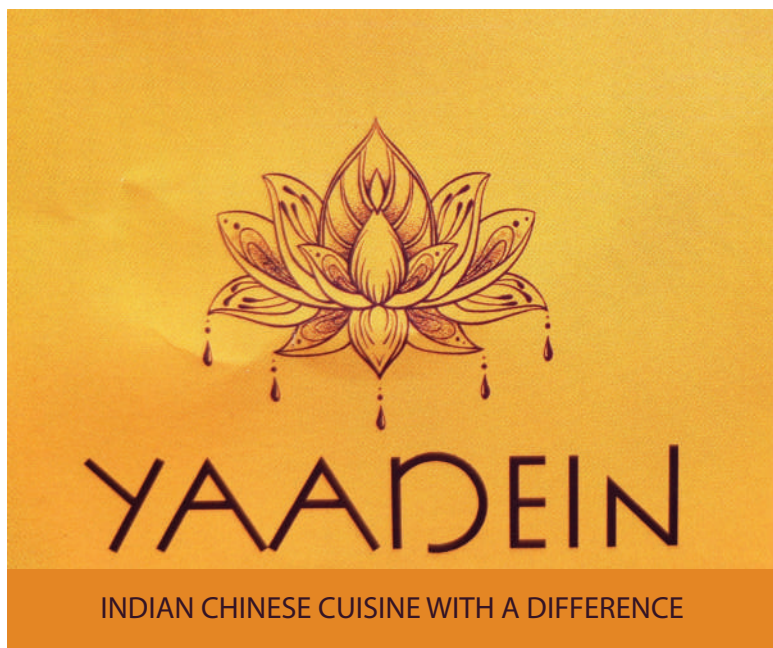


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With over 17 years of experience both in his home country India and reputable London restaurants; Chef Pradeep's journey has inspired and influenced his cooking style and dishes. Cooking up a storm with both the traditional approach and innovative styles.

He is passionate on the importance of using quality ingredients to produce exceptional flavours delighting guests with his gastronomic specialities.



Chef Kushi Ram
— CHEF —

With a flair for exquisite flavour and design, Chef Kushi Ram discovered his passion and began his career during 1996 with Hotel Residency, India. Through his culinary journey, cooking and the art of designing he united these qualities and has been surprising guests with his creativity over the decades.

Chef Kushi Ram's journey has brought him to the UK where he continued to explore and venture out of traditional cooking styles to search for new inspiration to enhance his culinary skills with an impressive array of establishments to his portfolio from his country of origin India and London.



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Letter from Claire Coutinho MP

Happy New Year!

Just before Christmas I held a catch-up meeting with the local groups who are part of my Friendship Project. We heard how they have all been getting on since the project launched back in July, and I was thrilled to share that we have already raised over £5,000 to support their work, thanks to some extraordinarily generous donations.

This year, through the Tandridge Community Fund, grants of between £100 and £500 will be allocated to help groups put on events and run activity days: all with the goal of tackling loneliness by creating friendships.

We also heard from Anita Donnelly and Dave Elliott from the East Surrey Rural Transport Partnership.

Their services can help connect residents in rural areas who struggle to get around. If you know someone who might benefit from their services, they can visit eastsurreyrtp.org.uk or call **01883 701270**.

At the start of January I was at the prime minister's New Year speech, where he set out his priorities for the year ahead. After a difficult 2022, he has promised to halve inflation, grow the economy and get national debt falling, while taking action to cut NHS waiting lists and stop small boats, all of which I know have been worrying residents locally.

I was particularly proud to hear him speak about the importance of family. Families are at the heart of

what makes us happy and well. No matter what form they take, it's the common bond of love which shapes our lives, and as minister for families I'll be working hard to strengthen those bonds.

One of my favourite visits this month was to Limpsfield Grange School in Oxted. They are the UK's only school solely for autistic girls, and they provide a wonderful approach to teaching that is specifically tailored to their needs. We discussed what more can be done to support their work locally, and Sarah the headteacher left me thinking about how their success can be replicated in schools across the country.

Finally, I know many of you have been frustrated by the mayor of London's decision to extend the ULEZ to Outer London, including Coulsdon and Kenley. He announced the expansion with just nine months' notice, during a time when buying a new car is unthinkable for so many. I have heard from businesses, families and self-employed tradespeople for whom this charge will be devastating.

I, plus 28 colleagues, signed an open letter opposing the decision, and I'm organising my own letter to the mayor himself, alongside local Tandridge district councillors.

Read my full letter:
tandridgeindependent.com

BBC Surrey - Weekly Chat

Tune into BBC Surrey every Thursday at 11.40 to listen to Louise D'Costa talking about local, current news stories.
104.6FM - BBC Surrey

Ask Nicky - how can I increase my self-confidence and find love again?

By Nicky Forster

Every month, Nicky Forster answers personal development questions sent in by our readers. Email yours to newsdesk@tandridgeindependent.com. This month, Simon from Caterham asks:

'My wife left me for another man two years ago, and it really knocked my self-confidence. I am quite lonely, and would like to meet somebody else, but I'm nervous about putting myself 'back out there'. Can you help?'

Although I am not a relationship counsellor or expert, most of us have experienced hurt and or rejection at some stage in our life. It's tough, but the important thing to remember is that you are deserving of love and companionship.

Realise your value

Before you start to think about dating again, take some time to focus on rebuilding your self-confidence. Start by working on you. Spend time doing things that are proven to make you feel better: take regular exercise, get out for walks, spend time with friends and engage in hobbies you enjoy, prioritising sleep and healthy routines. This will help with almost every area of your physical and mental health.

Lean on those who you trust, and talk through your emotions, good and bad. These people are your council: they are on your side and

have an emotional investment in helping you through this time.

When to begin looking for a new relationship can be difficult to judge, but if you wait for the perfect moment, you may never start. And if you don't take that first step, you won't get the results.

Remember, leaving our comfort zone might feel awkward at first, but with any new habit or goal, it gets easier the more we do it. It's also worth noting that it's an entirely natural feeling to be nervous, anxious, and unsure. If you are feeling it, then it's safe to assume that others will be too.

Try to focus on the positives of putting yourself out there. It can be an opportunity to meet new people, explore new interests, and ultimately find somebody new to share your life with.

Good luck!

Nicky Forster had a professional football career spanning over 20 years, playing 721 professional games and scoring 221 goals for eight teams. He represented England at U21 level, playing alongside David Beckham and Phil Neville, and also managed Brentford FC. He now spends his time as a keynote/motivational speaker, and at The Spot Wellness Centre in Godstone.



Nicky Forster

Claire Coutinho MP

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Since I was elected, I've held regular surgeries with local residents to talk about the issues that matter to them.

I've also been holding regular remote surgeries by telephone, so if you need any help or want to raise an issue of importance to you, please don't hesitate to email or call me to set up a meeting.

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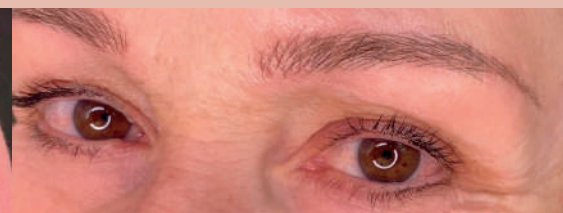
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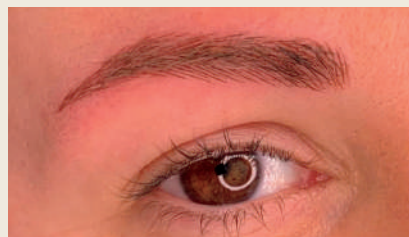
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Why check your credit report?

By Chantal Baker

Your credit report provides you with a credit score. When you want to borrow money (eg for a car, furniture, a mortgage or even a credit card) your credit report is how the potential provider will check if you are creditworthy.

Keep an eye on your score

It is important to keep an eye on your credit score and to review your report on a regular basis to ensure your name and details are not being used fraudulently.

If you are thinking of taking out a loan, check your report well in advance. If there are activities there you do not recognise, you can start working on rectifying this immediately: it can take months to prove it was not you and have them removed.

You can request a copy of your credit report from Experian, TransUnion or Equifax. You have the right to request a free report and do not need to sign up to any monthly subscriptions in order to do this.

The FCA has stated that 17% of people who check their credit report noticed some kind of mistake. The actual number of people with an incorrect credit score may well be higher, as it does not take into account those who

have not checked.

If there is a default debt on your credit report, this can stay on your file for six years. If you have a bad credit report, you may be offered a higher interest rate on your facility, or even have your application declined.

Raising a dispute

If you find an error you can contact the organisation who provided the report. You should raise a dispute with them, which can usually be done through their website. It is advisable to provide evidence to confirm the inaccuracy (where possible).

Alternatively, you can contact the supposed lender to whom you owe money, and they can correct it at their end. This is sometimes easier than going through the credit report provider.

If you are contemplating getting a loan, it may be advisable to find ways to increase your credit score. For example, ensure you are on the electoral register, as this adds 50 points to your Experian score. Each provider may calculate your score differently, so it is worth spending a few minutes checking each one.

[experian.co.uk](https://www.experian.co.uk)
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Ask us

We are happy to answer your questions. Send them through the **Contact Us** page on our website: [champconsultants.co.uk](https://www.champconsultants.co.uk).

Chantal Baker is the director and founder of Champ Consultants Ltd, an accountancy and tax consultancy practice in Caterham.



Photo: Chantal Baker

Need a little design inspiration for 2023?

By Deborah Smith

The start of 2023 is a great opportunity to consider what we want to achieve this year. If renovating or redecorating your house is on your 'to do' list I'm here to provide ideas! My design philosophy is that everyone has a different perspective of what home means. Your home should reflect you and what is important to you: it's those personal touches that make a home unique.

2023 trends

Global design trends continue to be about the need to balance being brave and expressing our true selves with the desire to retreat, reflect and escape the crazy realities that surround us! Interior trends reflect this with bright colours, unique finishes and bold designs, versus calmer neutral tones that echo nature and help us to relax in our own safe haven.

Bold colours are still big news. Pantone's colour of the year is Viva Magenta – a gorgeous bright reddy-pink which brings a rich and luxurious look with it. Navy is still strong but royal blue and indigo are also being celebrated, along with teal, aquamarine and emerald matched with oxidised copper. Bright wall murals are a creative,

My Facebook group - Growing Businesses - Tips, Help & Advice - provides tips and advice to help grow your business.

yet cost-effective, way to add interest. I'm also seeing a lot of block painting on feature walls or areas of sculptural interest like sky lights, bulkheads or wall recesses.

You can be adventurous, but try to use colours that complement each other and sit well together. A colourful room can really add the wow factor, but you want it to be for the right reasons!

Explore colours

If you shy away from bright tones, or just prefer to be surrounded by a calmer environment, there is a huge spectrum of neutral colours to explore. The trend is moving away from cooler greys, and towards warmer greys, mushroom and 'greige'. Muted colours and earth tones provide a calming backdrop to a room whilst still providing colour and interest. If you're looking for a long-term look, try neutrals on the walls and floors and add more design and colour with accessories, fabrics or art. Then you can update and stay on trend without having to redesign the whole room!

Natural fabrics and materials sit beautifully with a natural colour palette, and provide texture to a room. Ever thought of using concrete on your floors or walls? It



Deborah Smith

offers neutrality with a cool, industrial edge and is growing in popularity with the brutalist trend.

Pick a pattern?

Geometric prints are still on trend, but with a glamorous twist: think Art Deco or retro Hollywood. Use velvets or silks alongside accessories and lighting. Terrazo continues to be a strong trend for flooring, tiles and worktops. Paint textures are being explored, with a mix of gloss and matt paint on wall surfaces, and textured tiles will remain big this year. Lastly, following the brushed brass and gold prominence over recent years, look out for a rising trend in iron and silver accessories.

Think environment

Be mindful of your purchase choices for furniture and accessories as well as fabrics, wallpapers and paints. Avoid single use plastics where you can, upcycle furniture and find those brilliant small businesses who make it their mission to be authentic and environmentally friendly. Finally, have fun with your projects! Go with what you are drawn to, what resonates with you – wherever you live, you need to feel at home.

#shoplocal

For luxurious neutral looks try Penny Hamilton Interiors in Reigate.

Deborah Smith is the founder and design director of [menagerieinteriors.co.uk](https://www.menagerieinteriors.co.uk).

Enquiries: deborah@menagerieinteriors.co.uk
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AFC Whyteleafe round-up

By Adrian Van Aalst

Here's a catch-up of what's been happening with the Leafe since our last article.

In the middle of December we made the trip to south-east London, to take on league whipping boys Bermondsey FC. We immediately put the bottom-place club under pressure, before taking the lead through some great play from Mico, who put Adjei through for a tap-in. 0-1 to the Leafe.

Against the run of play, the home side drew level in the 12th minute, giving them a rush of confidence and leading to some nery moments for us and a slightly more even game. Normal service was then resumed via Adjei, who bullied the defenders and smashed the ball into the top corner. 1-2 Leafe.

The second half saw some scintillating play from us, leading to a further five goals and a consolation goal for a poor (on the day) home side. The game ends 2-7 (Adjei scoring five of those!).

Over the Christmas break the boys played a few friendlies to keep sharp, with some promising performances and results.

Heading home with the points

The second week of January, and we were finally back to league business, facing Lewisham FC away (who were, at the time, second from bottom in the league). We took the lead after four minutes, with Alaka pouncing on a poor clearance from their keeper to slot home for 0-1. Anyone hoping for another Bermondsey result were quickly brought back down to earth, with Lewisham's battling style on a sticky, rough pitch. Chances were created by both teams and a glorious opportunity for the home side arrived just before the break, with the ball drilled across the goal. Fortunately, no-one managed to make contact and we went in at the break one up, after a very tight game.

The second half saw a great free kick from our skipper Alfie Clark fly towards the top corner, only bettered by an unbelievable save from the Lewisham keeper. Just a minute later and it was that man Ashley-Paul Robinson, with a trademark screamer from the edge of the box, making it 0-2. Eight minutes later Lewisham responded with a long-range effort, to get back in the game: 1-2. A storm of biblical proportions broke out but still they

played on. Chances fell to both teams, with one in particular looking inevitable that the home side would draw level, but the gods were obviously smiling on us as it somehow didn't go in. We removed our hearts from our mouths and headed home with the three points.

Next up we were in midweek FA Premier Cup action to Croydon FC, at the atmosphere sponge that is the Croydon Arena (for the third time this season). Both our previous encounters had been tight affairs and this proved to be exactly the same. A number of chances fell to both teams during the 90 minutes, with both keepers in fine form, and the game ended 0-0. Penalties it was. Unfortunately, our penalties caused more threat to local wildlife than the Croydon goal: we lost 4-2 and were out of the competition.

A comedy of errors

And for our final game update, we 'welcomed' Lydd FC to Church Road. The Kent coast club sit third in the league and the encounter at their place earlier in the season was a feisty affair, to say the least: one of our men was sent off and another carried off (we were lucky it wasn't more). The first half saw some glorious football from us. Former Real Madrid trialist Gaspar Mico was in scintillating form, culminating in a wonder goal after weaving in and

out of players and unleashing a shot into the top corner: 1-0. Mico, Tedros and young Jake Parrott (on his home debut) pulled the strings which led to a goal for Adjei (7 in 4 now for the rejuvenated striker): 2-0. Leafe then in total control until a comedy of errors in defence gifted Lydd a goal just before the break. 2-1.

The second half saw our guests come out rejuvenated and fired up (while for us it was the opposite), turning the game on its head: only some fine saves from Dan Smith kept them at bay. In the 79th minute, Temi Alaka was sent off after responding to provocation from a Lydd player (who was revelling in his role as the afternoon's pantomime villain). Ten minutes later and two Leafe players go down injured. The ref (who had been truly shocking) insisted on both players leaving the pitch and, while we were down to eight men(!), Lydd drew level from a free kick. The game ended 2-2 and we only have ourselves to blame. It's Groundhog Day, as we throw away another lead.

We have now somehow managed to throw away 22 points from winning positions in just half a season, and are currently positioned mid-table. Relegation or the play-offs are both a (remote) possibility.

However: win, lose or draw, Church Road is still a great place to cheer on your local club, so come down and support the boys!

Follow us on social media for the latest news and fixtures. afcwhyteleafe.com



Photo: AFC Whyteleafe Vs Croydon FC. Photo courtesy of Andrew Crane

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