

# **Spelthorne Borough Council Spring Bulletin 2024**

## **Letter from the Leader**

Dear Residents, I hope you enjoy this spring edition of the Bulletin. We have put together a range of Council news, community updates and local events to help you keep in touch.

We will be launching a 'Keep Spelthorne Clean' campaign in June, working with residents and businesses to tidy up some of the unsightly areas in the Borough. Like you, we hate to see things like litter, graffiti and dog fouling and are determined to crack down on these issues. We have reached out to the younger generation to get them more involved and ask for their help to get the message across by creating impactful posters that will encourage people to show more respect for the Borough and do their bit to tackle climate change. Thank you to all the children who have taken part. We have included some of their posters in this edition of the Bulletin and look forward to recognising their hard work in the summer.

I work very closely with Surrey Police and have been discussing concerns that residents in some areas have raised about the antisocial behaviour and drug usage. The Spelthorne Borough Commander, Matt Walton, is already working hard to tackle these issues but we do need residents to report any problems they may encounter. It can sometimes feel like it takes a while to see improvements, but the Police can only support us if they are acquainted with the full facts of each case and it is important that every incident is reported, however minor. See details on how to report on page 17.

The things that matter to you are what matter to us and we want to hear what you think we are doing well and what needs to improve. If you have a problem or see something that's not right, please report it to us and we will do everything we can to sort it out. You can report problems on our website or call our Customer Services team on 01784 451499. We will be running a residents' survey later in the year to get your views on the Borough and our services and I look forward to hearing what you think.

I am pleased that we have put together a balanced budget for the 2024/25 financial year but the pressure on costs is a challenge for all councils and the government spending review scheduled for 2026/7 is likely to see the funding given to Surrey councils reduce even further. We are doing all we can to prepare for this and continue to work hard to make savings wherever we can without impacting the quality of our services.

Cllr Joanne Sexton, Leader of the Council

## **Customer Portal**

Register for access to Spelthorne Council's new portal at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/customerportal](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/customerportal) to receive service alerts and news, manage your account and payments and check the progress of your applications and requests.

## **Farewell from the Mayor**

Dear Residents,

As I approach the end of my term as Mayor, I can't believe how quickly the year has gone. It has been a great honour and privilege to represent Spelthorne, the Borough I have lived in all my life, and to follow in the footsteps of my mother Isobel who was Mayor when she sadly died in 2014. I would like to thank residents for the fantastic support and the lovely welcome I've received on my visits.

This year I have been supporting two charities – DayBreak Respite Care in Staines-upon-Thames and the Jasmine Suite Breast Unit at Ashford and St Peter's Hospital. I look forward to continuing, with your help, to raise funds for these very worthy charities in the last few weeks of my mayoral year.

For my Consort, Yanis, and I, there have been so many highlights it's impossible to mention them all. One of the most special things about being Mayor is that you get to meet people from such a range of organisations, at different stages of life, with different interests and opinions. I know the Borough very well but even I have been surprised by just how much is going on in Spelthorne and the amount of work being put in by volunteers and local charities. If you have any spare time, do think about volunteering for a few hours a week; it's a great way to meet new people and give back to the community at the same time.

I am holding a cycle fun day at Lammas Park in Staines on Saturday 6 April with loads of bike related activities including scooter and skateboard workshops, bike checks, Police UV marking, cycling lessons, arts and crafts and competitions.

I would like to end by thanking all the council staff and councillors who have helped to organise my events and assisted me during the year, and also the Deputy Mayor, Cllr Elizabeth Baldock, who has supported me so well.

Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos, Mayor of Spelthorne

Contact the Mayor's office by email [mayor@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:mayor@spelthorne.gov.uk) or call 01784 446275

## Council Tax

Council Tax is charged at eight different levels, depending on your property value. The breakdown of how much each of the three Council Tax raising bodies retain per Council Tax band per annum for 2024/25 is as follows:

<b>Band</b>	<b>Total (£)</b>	<b>Spelthorne Borough Council</b>	<b>Surrey County Council</b>	<b>Surrey Police &amp; Crime Commissioner</b>
A	1536.38	148.27	1172.40	215.71
B	1792.46	172.99	1367.80	251.67
C	2048.52	197.70	1563.20	287.62
D	2304.58	222.41	1758.60	323.57
E	2816.70	271.83	2149.40	395.47
F	3328.84	321.26	2540.20	467.38
G	3840.96	370.68	2931.00	539.28
H	4609.16	444.82	3517.20	647.14

Your Council Tax pays for services provided by Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner and Spelthorne Borough Council.

For every £1 of Council Tax: Spelthorne Borough Council receives under 10p. Surrey County Council receives just over 76p. Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner receives 14p.

For more information, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/counciltax)

## Who do I contact?

In Surrey we have a two-tier local government system which means that some services are looked after by the borough council (Spelthorne Council) and

some are the responsibility of the district council (Surrey County Council). This list may help you decide who to contact about a particular topic.

<b>Spelthorne Borough Council</b>	<b>Surrey County Council</b>
Car parks	Adult social care
Community centres and meals on wheels	Birth/death/marriage registration
Council tax and business rates	Bus passes
Elections	Disabled parking badges
Environmental health and food safety	Education and libraries
Fly tipping	Fire and rescue
Food and welfare network	On-street parking
Housing and housing benefits	Pavement repair and footpaths
Leisure centres	Potholes
Licensing	Roads and drains
Parks and leisure	Social services
Pavement cleaning	Street lighting
Planning and building control	Trading standards
Rubbish and recycling	Trees on pavement/road
Trees in parks	Verge cutting
<a href="http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk">www.spelthorne.gov.uk</a> 01784 451499 <a href="mailto:customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk">customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.surreycc.gov.uk">www.surreycc.gov.uk</a> 03456 009 009 <a href="mailto:contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk">contactcentre@surreycc.gov.uk</a>

## **Sustainable Warmth**

The Action Surrey partnership of local authorities has been awarded further funding to help Surrey residents save money on energy bills and improve the energy efficiency of their homes. For more information and to check eligibility, visit [www.actionsurrey.org](http://www.actionsurrey.org)

## **Rain gardens**

As our climate changes, we should prepare for long dry summers and short periods of heavy rain. A rain garden is designed to deal with both these extreme weather conditions whilst benefitting wildlife and people by preventing water from running off into the drainage system, which can lead to flooding.

You can create your own rain garden using plants that can survive a range of moisture conditions and by creating softer surfaces that will better hold rainwater e.g. lawns, flower beds and ponds.

For more information, visit [www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/gardening-for-wetlands/how-to-make-a-rain-garden](http://www.wwt.org.uk/discover-wetlands/gardening-for-wetlands/how-to-make-a-rain-garden)

## **Shared Prosperity Fund**

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) supports the UK government's wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK. It provides new funding for local investment by March 2025.

There are three UKSPF investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills. As part of this funding, we have two projects relating to climate action and sustainability that we have been working on implementing in Spelthorne which are detailed below:

**Urban Food Growing:** Working with Talking Tree Café, a growing space has been created next to Staines Railway Station for local residents and volunteers to grow their own fruit and vegetables. The project has been added to the Incredible Edible Network which represents groups involved in similar projects across the UK. More growing spaces are underway.

**Sustain Spelthorne:** We have appointed Place Support Partnership to provide climate change and sustainability audits for small and medium businesses across the Borough, enabling them to increase their efficiency and reduce costs. More details are on page 22.

## **No mow May**

Consider taking a break from mowing this spring to let wildflowers grow in your garden. This can help to provide pollen, nectar and shelter for insects and other wildlife, increasing biodiversity. If you don't want to stop mowing completely, you can opt for a higher cut to allow flowers to emerge, or keep one patch long.

Interested to find out more? Visit [www.plantlife.org.uk](http://www.plantlife.org.uk)

## **Air Quality Action Plan Consultation**

The Council's Air Quality Action Plan is due to be updated later this year. The Plan summarises the actions that will be taken by Spelthorne and other agencies to improve air quality and tackle the causes of areas of elevated nitrogen dioxide across the Borough.

It will be developed in consultation with multiple stakeholders including Surrey County Council, National Highways, neighbouring boroughs, the Environment Agency, health authorities and Spelthorne residents. A public consultation is planned for summer 2024 and more details will follow soon.

### **Hassle free letting for landlords**

Spelthorne Rent Assure is a scheme for local landlords who are interested in renting their property through the Council. Under the scheme, the Council guarantees to directly pay landlords the full market rent for their property, for up to two years. Other benefits include:

- one month's rent paid directly in advance
- five weeks' repair bond
- free tenancy agreements provided (including right-to-rent checks)
- property viewings arranged
- free professional inventory service
- tenancy training for the tenants
- a completely free service - no agency fees

We believe the scheme is one of the most attractive currently on offer. The Council will find the tenants and, if approved by the landlord, will draw up the agreements free of charge. Ongoing support is then offered to both the landlord and tenant for the duration of the tenancy.

If you would like to register your interest, please complete the enquiry form at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/sra](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/sra). For more information, email [sra@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:sra@spelthorne.gov.uk), call 01784 448611 or visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/sra](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/sra)

### **The Spelthorne Business Plan Competition 2024**

Are you a budding entrepreneur who dreams of starting their own business? Kwasi Kwarteng MP is hosting the Spelthorne Business Plan Competition in partnership with Spelthorne Borough Council.

If you have a great business idea but need some help to get things off the ground, this is an opportunity to give your idea the boost it needs.

And as this year is the 10th anniversary of the competition, the prize has been increased to £4,000. The six best entries will be asked to present their business idea to a panel of expert judges at a Dragons' Den style final hosted at BP in Sunbury on 27 June.

Each of the finalists will be given support to perfect their pitch. Entries are welcome from individuals or teams of up to four people. For full details and to enter visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/businesscomp](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/businesscomp) or search @Spelthorne Business Plan Competition on Facebook.

The competition is open to Spelthorne residents aged 16 and over. The deadline for entries is 25 April. For more information or help with the application process, email [karen.porter@parliament.uk](mailto:karen.porter@parliament.uk)

### **Police and Crime Commissioner elections: 2 May 2024**

The Police and Crime Commissioner elections are being held on Thursday 2 May 2024. Don't forget you will need to bring photo ID with you if you are voting at a polling station (details of acceptable ID will be detailed on your poll card).

If you wish to vote by post, the quickest and easiest way to apply is online at [www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote](http://www.gov.uk/apply-postal-vote). If you are not already registered to vote, visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote) to make an application. The deadline to register if you want to vote in the PCC election is Wednesday 17 April.

### **Use RingGo for quick, easy parking in Spelthorne**

Cashless parking is available in all council owned car parks with the UK's leading provider, RingGo. This means you can pay for parking using your smartphone. There's no need to search for loose change or queue up to use the parking machine. The current payment options of cash and contactless are still available.

The free RingGo app can be downloaded onto smartphones via the App Store or Google Play. Once downloaded, you register your details, enter the location code shown on the signage and how long you want to park for, and confirm to pay. If you find you're running late, you can extend your parking session on the app.

For more information, visit <https://ringgo.co.uk>

### **Keep Spelthorne Clean**

Keep Spelthorne Clean is a community campaign, launching in June, which aims to encourage everybody to take a pride in Spelthorne by helping to make a difference in our neighbourhoods, town centres, parks and open spaces.



As a Council we are committed to maintaining Spelthorne as a clean and green borough. We are all responsible for our environment and we are looking at ways we can work to keep our borough clean.

The Council will work with individuals, groups, schools, businesses and other organisations across our borough in the effort to address problems such as litter, graffiti, dog fouling, and fly-tipping.

The Council will be engaging with Residents' Associations over the next few months to identify some specific areas where some additional focus may be needed to tackle local issues and where the Council can help community groups to get involved in making their areas better places to live, work and enjoy their leisure time

There is a lot of great work being done in Spelthorne by groups and individuals which we are incredibly thankful for but there is still more to do. We will highlight the good work already being done and hope to encourage more people to get involved in the campaign.

### How we can support you

Do you want to be part of Keep Spelthorne Clean? We will support individuals and groups if you want to arrange a litter pick. Our Neighbourhood Services team can supply a range of equipment including bags, litter pickers, signage and gloves and our teams can collect and dispose of litter collected as part of your community litter pick.

Are you part of a Residents' Association? If you can arrange for your road to be kept clear of cars, we can arrange a street sweeping, separate to our regular schedule. Contact us by email [neighbourhoodservices@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodservices@spelthorne.gov.uk) or call us on 01784 446411

Are you a local business that would like to take ownership of an area or street? We can offer sponsorship opportunities. Contact the Economic Development team by emailing [e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk)

### How you can get involved

- take pride in your Borough so it is a place we can all enjoy; clean up after your dogs and pick up litter, stop fly-tipping and fly-posting
- take part in a local event. Spelthorne Litter Pickers meet regularly across the Borough and you can find out more on their Facebook page
- embrace your local community, consider volunteering

- take responsibility for your local area by resolving, recording and reporting any issues
- recycle right, reuse more and reduce use of single-use plastics
- organise your own clean up and get your neighbours, friends or someone you know to join in

## Spelthorne in Bloom

Spelthorne in Bloom is a community initiative run by volunteers to recognise the Borough's best kept gardens, pubs, allotments, hanging baskets, places of worship and schools. If you are proud of your garden or business premises, why not get involved. Entries for the competition open on 22 April and close on 21 June. See page 19 for more details about how to enter.

## Better Neighbourhood Grants

Spelthorne Council's Better Neighbourhoods Grant scheme gives each borough councillor an annual allowance of £1,000 to spend on community enhancing projects in their ward. If you are working on a project to tidy up or improve your local area, you can approach your local councillor to see if they could grant some money to help you.

For more information, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/BNG](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/BNG) or call 01784 446250.

## Council allotments

We have 10 allotment sites in Spelthorne so if you would like to grow your own produce and meet like-minded people, contact us to register your interest. Visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/allotments](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/allotments) or call 01784 451499.

## Enjoy our parks

We have dozens of parks, green spaces and play areas across Spelthorne; some have won awards for being the among the best in the country. Whether you are looking for somewhere to take a stroll, play a game of tennis or a playground for the children to let off steam, we have something for everyone. For a list of our parks and their facilities, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/parks](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/parks) or call 01784 451499.

## Become a Spelthorne Litter Hero

If you would like to nominate a Spelthorne Litter Hero, email the details and photographs to [news@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:news@spelthorne.gov.uk). Recipients will receive a certificate from the Mayor of Spelthorne.

## Report it

Let us know if you see an issue in your neighbourhood so we can deal with it quickly. We would like residents to work with us to make Spelthorne a clean place to live and work. If you come across a problem involving litter, graffiti, dog fouling, fly-tipped waste or an abandoned vehicle, please tell us about it. You can report these and other problems using our online form at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/report](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/report) or call us on 01784 451499.

## Poster competition

A huge thank you to the schools who took part in a poster competition as part of the Keep Spelthorne Clean campaign. We received hundreds of entries and you will see some featured in this article and on the front cover. The children were asked to design posters to encourage residents not to litter or graffiti, stop dog fouling and speeding, recycle more and tackle climate change. You will also see some of these posters on our Borough noticeboards, displayed on digital screens at the Elmsleigh centre and on our social media channels.

Well done to all the schools and children from Echelford Primary School, Laleham Primary School, Saxon Primary School, Hawkedale Primary School, Buckland Primary School and St Nicholas Primary School.

Want to know more?

Visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/keepclean](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/keepclean) where you will find:

- a Keep Spelthorne Clean guide
- hints and tips
- poster template to promote your event

## **Specsavers Surrey Youth Games 2024**

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games 2024 is taking place on Saturday 15 June. Free and inclusive local activity sessions will run for up to eight weeks after Easter for beginners in a variety of sports and activities including judo, dance, tennis, basketball, boccia and more.

The sessions will be open to young residents aged 7-16 who live or go to school in Spelthorne. All those who come along to the sessions will also get the opportunity to experience the celebratory festival in Guildford on 15 June.

To register and for more information, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/surreyyouthgames](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/surreyyouthgames) or call 01784 446443.

## **Arts mailing list**

Sign up to receive free emails with news, advice and opportunities for arts activities in Spelthorne. Whether you are an organisation or an individual with an interest in the arts, email [artsmailinglist@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:artsmailinglist@spelthorne.gov.uk) to register your details.

## **Spring art open day**

Saturday 13 April, 10am-2pm Have fun at the Resource Centre making spring-themed crafts with your children. Entry £1 per child (50p for siblings). No need to book, just come along and join in. This activity is for families with children aged 4-11 years (a parent/carers must be present throughout).

Visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/resourcecentre](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/resourcecentre)

## **Mayor's Cycle Fun Day**

Saturday 6 April, 11am-3pm, Lammas Park in Staines-upon-Thames

The Mayor of Spelthorne, Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos, will be hosting a family cycle event with lots of bike-related activities to showcase what's on offer across the Borough. Activities include scooter and skateboard workshops, bike checks, Police UV marking, the smoothie bike, child and adult cycling lessons, arts and crafts and competitions. Bring along your decorated bike for a chance to win a prize.

For more information, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/MayorEvents](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/MayorEvents) or call 01784 446443

## **Spelthorne summer events 2024**

Our summer events leaflet is packed full of leisure and cultural activities taking place across the Borough between June and September. Pick up a copy at your local library or download it at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/whatson](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/whatson)

## **Mindfulness and meditation**

Join our mindfulness and meditation sessions for beginners at Staines Community Centre on Thursdays from 11.45am- 12.30pm.

Mindfulness is a type of meditation in which you focus on being intensely aware of what you're sensing and feeling in the moment, without interpretation or judgment. It involves breathing methods, guided imagery and

other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress. £4 per session for members, £4.50 for non-members.

Staines Community Centre, Thames Street, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 4EA  
For more details, call Staines Community Centre on 01784 463073.

### **New Leisure Centre update**

Progress on the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre is continuing apace with work now focused on the internal fit out. By the end of March, the four 3G roof-top pitches will have been laid, the Clip'n Climb at the front of the centre will be well underway and the gym, pool zones and changing rooms will be nearing completion.

The leisure centre is being built to ultra-low energy "Passivhaus" standards which will provide significant cost savings as well as being environmentally sound. Whilst Passivhaus principles have been used to design other pools and complexes, once complete, Spelthorne Leisure Centre will be the world's first Passivhaus Sports and Leisure Centre.

In the winter Bulletin we outlined how the centre has been designed to be dementia friendly and accessible for all. In addition, it includes a number of features that will benefit visitors:

- Moveable walls in the squash courts to create a larger flexible space for other activities
- Moveable floor in the learner pool enabling the depth to be adjusted to enable swimmers to gain confidence
- Angel Eye underwater drowning detection system, enabling poolside monitoring via a tablet or wristwatch, alerting lifeguards to anyone who may be in trouble
- Underwater lighting system
- LED line markings in the Sports Hall enabling individual court and pitch markings to be illuminated for a variety of different sports

Over coming months, we will be arranging open days so residents can visit to see the progress for themselves and we will be announcing a programme of events to celebrate the opening of the new centre in early autumn. We'll publicise these on our website and social media, so be sure to keep in touch.

For more information, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/newleisurecentre](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/newleisurecentre)

### **Update from the Spelthorne Borough Commander**

We had a very busy Christmas in Spelthorne and you may have seen us on Facebook where we had daily posts in the lead up to Christmas detailing our work on a daily basis. We were also out at a number of events in the winter, so we hope you had the opportunity to come and talk to the team.

Since the last Bulletin we've been focused on three key areas: residential burglary, shoplifting and antisocial behaviour. We've been out conducting patrols of areas that have seen a spike in burglaries and reminding residents to ensure the backs of their properties are as secure as the front as we know certain criminals are targeting this.

With our renewed focus on shoplifting, we've not only been conducting high-visibility patrols with our council and business partners, we've also been out in plain clothes which has led to a 36% increase in the arrest and conviction of offenders. In fact, we currently have the highest detection rate for all crimes in Surrey. This is down to the hard work of our officers but also the support and trust of you the residents, so thank you.

As we move into spring these key areas will remain our focus, so please keep reporting matters to us and come and speak to us at the community engagement events.

You can report online at [www.surrey.police.uk](http://www.surrey.police.uk), call 101 or use the QR code. In an emergency, dial 999.

Matt Walton, Borough Commander, Surrey Police

### **Collect smiles in 2024 and spread some happiness**

Spring is a good time to think about new beginnings. Giving your time through volunteering is a great way to have new experiences, meet people and try things you may not have done before – all while making people smile.

Did you know many studies have shown that smiling releases feelgood endorphins, dopamine, and serotonin, which lift our mood and relax us and the people around us? Volunteering is a great way to spread a little happiness. When you volunteer, you are not just helping others; when you give your time, you make your community that little bit better. Volunteering is about giving your time, such as:

- Helping out in a local group or at an event
- Visiting and talking to someone regularly
- Practical help such as driving, repairing, sewing or cooking

Volunteering can be a regular commitment, but there are also many short-term or one-off opportunities.

Volunteering is good for you

Research shows that connecting with others and the act of giving are two key factors that improve our well-being. Volunteering is good for you as well as your community.

Find the right role for you:

Think about how much time you want to give. Are you looking for a regular commitment or something short-term? Regular opportunities don't have to be frequent – trustee boards, for example, typically meet every two months, with some work in between. What causes do you care about? Think about where and how you want to make a difference. What do you want to get out of volunteering? Whether it's meeting people, learning something new, using your skills or experience, or just getting out of the house, any reason is valid.

Give your time today

Voluntary Support North Surrey has a wide range of volunteering opportunities. To find out more, visit [www.voluntarysupport.org.uk/volunteering/find-a-volunteer-role](http://www.voluntarysupport.org.uk/volunteering/find-a-volunteer-role) or call 01784 465536.

You can also sign up to their newsletter to hear about new opportunities [www.voluntarysupport.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-e-news](http://www.voluntarysupport.org.uk/subscribe-to-our-e-news)

### **Tea parties for the over 75s**

A local charity is looking for anyone aged 75 and over who may be lonely and wants to join their free monthly tea parties. Volunteers host the tea parties at their homes and the older people are driven to and from the venues free of charge.

Pamela Nash, who has run the Staines and Ashford group for Reengage since 2012, said: "The older people who come really get a lot out of it. They enjoy tea and cake and have a chat. They are lovely social occasions."

Yvonne, 82, who has attended the tea parties for several years, said: "They really are fabulous and something to look forward to. They work wonders if you're feeling lonely."

If you'd like to join the group, visit [www.reengage.org.uk/join-a-group/](http://www.reengage.org.uk/join-a-group/) tea-parties or call 0800 716543.

### **Residents' Association meetings**

Spelthorne Borough Council hold regular Residents' Association meetings hosted by the Leader and Deputy Leader.

The Residents Associations that the Council are aware of are listed on our website at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/RA](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/RA) If you would like to set up a Residents' Association, there is a lot of information online to help you get started.

If you are part of a Residents' Association which isn't on the Council's list and would like to attend the meetings, please email [leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk)

### **Sunbury and District Welsh Society**

Are you Welsh or do you have Welsh connections? The Sunbury and District Welsh Society would love to hear from you. They enjoy a busy life of rambles, river, theatre, trips, meals out, including Christmas and St David's Day lunches and much more.

To find out more, call Carl Phillips on 07850 722379 or Rob Gant on 01932 788028. Hwyl!!

### **Annual council grants**

The Council recently published a list of organisations and charities which have been awarded grant funding for 2024/25. To see the full list of recipients, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/annualcouncilgrant](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/annualcouncilgrant)

### **Cancer support group**

The Patient Cancer Support Group meets at 1.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Shepperton Medical Practice. The members support each other through their own experiences in a friendly and informal atmosphere and guest speakers are often invited.

The group has been running independently from the Practice since 2018 and is open to all cancer patients, family members, carers and those who have lost loved ones to cancer. You will be assured of a warm welcome. Tea and coffee are provided.



Please come and join us irrespective of where you live. For more information email Andy at [thepatientcancergroup@gmail.com](mailto:thepatientcancergroup@gmail.com)

## **Spelthorne in Bloom 2024**

Spelthorne in Bloom will soon be open for entries. The competition celebrates the work of the Borough's green-fingered residents and businesses which are helping to make Spelthorne a brighter, greener place to live. The categories for this year's competition are:

- Best kept front garden
- Best hanging basket
- Best community garden
- Best riverside garden
- Best kept allotment
- Best community allotment
- Best war memorial
- Best kept place of worship/public building
- Best kept large pub
- Best kept small pub
- Best environmental planting project
- Best new entrant
- Schools in bloom - best school garden and best edible garden
- Best in show

Entries open on 22 April and close 21 June.

Visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/SIB](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/SIB) for more information/entry form or call Emma Paver on 01784 446411.

## **New Corporate Plan unveiled**

Spelthorne Council has launched its new Corporate Plan for 2024-28 which sets out the strategic priorities and values which will underpin the Council's work over the next few years. 'Putting residents at the heart of everything we do' is the theme of the plan and highlights the focus on listening to and supporting residents and protecting the areas of the Borough which residents most value

The plan also contains our Pledge and Residents' Charter which set out our customer service standards and what you can expect if you contact us or wish to make a complaint. We welcome your feedback so if you have any comments about our Corporate Plan, do get in touch.

A copy of the plan is available to view at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/corporateplan](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/corporateplan). Give us your views by emailing [customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk) or call 01784 451499.

## **Planning Enforcement at Spelthorne**

Each year the Planning Enforcement team at Spelthorne Council investigates around 350 possible breaches of planning control. They look into cases where something has been built without planning permission or where the conditions set out in the planning permission have not been met. Examples include:

- construction of buildings or structures such as a wall or fence
- change of use of buildings or land
- works to protected trees and hedgerows
- display of advertisements
- work to buildings listed as being of special architectural or historic interest
- demolition of certain buildings in a Conservation Area

Planning enforcement plays a vital part in the planning process. By identifying and tackling cases of unauthorised development, the enforcement process ensures fairness, stops unacceptable development and gives residents confidence in the system.

A breach of planning control is not a criminal offence and local councils can use their discretion on what action to take. The purpose of planning enforcement is to remedy the problem rather than to punish the mistake. In most cases the Council will attempt to resolve the breach by negotiation and may offer the opportunity to apply for retrospective planning permission. Where serious harm is being caused however, the Council will take firm action and may not enter into any negotiations before doing so.

In the summer edition of the Bulletin magazine, we will provide more details about planning enforcement and the type of cases the team has dealt with in recent times.

For more information and advice on how to report a possible planning breach, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/enforcement](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/enforcement), email [customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk) or call 01784 451499.

## **Spelthorne Job and Skills Hub**

The Spelthorne Jobs and Skills Hub is designed to empower you to take control of your future career path. Together we will identify your next steps, discover your interests and develop your skills.

Our team will work with you whether you're 16-24, 25+ or 45+ and seeking new opportunities. Regardless of your abilities, education level or how long since you last worked, our team of work coaches are here to support and guide you.

The Spelthorne Jobs and Skills Hub also offers local businesses a wealth of opportunities to tap into a diverse and vibrant talent pool of ambitious individuals eager to make their mark in the working world. We can offer help with recruiting for vacant posts, creating apprenticeship opportunities and offering work experience to the next generation of young talent.

For more information, drop into the Hub in the Elmsleigh Centre, visit <https://spelthornejobsandskills.com> or call 07770 481773.

## **Sustain Spelthorne**

Spelthorne Council has launched an initiative to help businesses in Spelthorne lower their energy costs and carbon emissions. The Sustain Spelthorne programme offers free, tailored and expert cost and sustainability support to help your business thrive. We know businesses care about both climate change and reducing cost but may need help to achieve this. Advice is available on a wide range of cost areas including energy and water, telecoms, waste services, supply chains and merchant services.

For more information, visit [www.sustainspelthorne.com](http://www.sustainspelthorne.com) or email [e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk)

## **Spelthorne Business Awards**

The hard work and achievements of local businesses was celebrated at the Spelthorne Business Awards held at the Hazelwood Centre in Sunbury on 24 November. Finalists for each of the 17 award categories gathered with the sponsors to celebrate their successes and toast the winners at this fantastic event. We received some fantastic feedback from the evening:

Joe Roberts-Walker from Mejuicer: "Friday night was a night I had dreamed of for so long and thank you to all my customers, clients, suppliers and supporters for making it a reality. To the Economic Development Team, thank you for putting on a masterpiece of entertainment and for showing so much support to businesses in the borough."

Lisa Hendricks from Assent Building Control: "What an excellent event catching up with those making a difference in the local area. It was a lovely evening and great to celebrate a win."

Matt Wailes from Educational Play Environments: "Well what an evening you guys put together! We all had such a good time and were honoured with the joint award to finish the evening on! Food and company was lovely although I'll have to wait until next year for a winning raffle prize!"

Ray Lavery from CPG: "You all did an amazing job last Friday! I had the best time. This was by far the best award celebration I've ever been to. Well done all of you!"

Gary Kemish from Train Fresh: "Thank you for being so inclusive and creating a lovely night."

We have already started working on the next awards evening so keep an eye out for updates at [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/SBA](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/SBA) and keep Friday 1 November 2024 free in your diary.

## **Spelthorne Business Hub**

Unlock the full potential of your business by hot-desking in the Spelthorne Business Hub in Sunbury.

- Flexibility – work at times to suit you in an office space that is open 24/7
- Collaboration – interact and network with professionals from diverse business backgrounds
- Cost efficiency – reduce expenses without compromising workspace quality
- Productivity – change your environment for increased focus

To make an appointment to look around or for more information, email [e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk)

## **Food waste facts**

Across the UK we annually throw away 9.5 million tonnes of food, half of which is still edible, so still useful. This amount of food, if it was saved, would be enough to feed the entire population of the UK three meals a day for almost three months.

Food waste is also one of the largest contributors to climate change. If thrown into landfill, food waste generates huge amounts of greenhouse gasses.

Reducing and recycling our food waste is now shown to be the single biggest contribution a household can make to limiting its carbon footprint and helping to reduce climate change.

In Spelthorne we run a weekly food waste collection. All the food collected is taken to the Community Recycling Centre in Shepperton where it is used to generate electricity using a process called anaerobic digestion. The food waste is put into huge tanks where it is broken down by bacteria. The bacteria give off methane which is collected and used to power generators that produce electricity. This green electricity not only powers the process but is also fed back into the grid.

Food waste bins are free to all residents and can be collected from the Council Offices in Knowle Green, the Fordbridge Centre in Ashford, the Greeno Centre in Shepperton or Staines Community Centre.

For more information about food waste, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/foodwaste](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/foodwaste) or call 01784 451499

## **Bulky Waste**

Having a clear out? Bought a new sofa or bed? Do you need to dispose of a dining table, fridge or an old wardrobe? Spelthorne Council works in partnership with Staywell, a charity which runs a furniture and appliance collection and disposal service through their subsidiary Kingston Community Furniture. You may have seen their shop in the Heart Shopping Centre in Walton.

If you have large items you need to get rid of, Kingston Community Furniture will collect them and if they can be reused in any way, they will recondition, repair and give them a new lease of life in the community. You can visit their shop and grab all sorts of bargains. Collections need to be booked in advance.

Visit [www.staywellservices.org.uk/kcf](http://www.staywellservices.org.uk/kcf), email [collections@kcfurniture.org.uk](mailto:collections@kcfurniture.org.uk) or call 0208 9425500 (leave a message and they'll ring you back to book a time). Collection costs £70 for up to five items and £100 for six to eight items. They can provide a quote for more than eight items.

## **Tired of going to the tip?**

Our garden waste collection service provides a convenient, low-cost way for residents to dispose of leaves, weeds and cuttings throughout the year. Fortnightly collections take place from 1 April to 31 March, with a break during the winter.

Your garden waste is collected from the kerbside every other week and turned into compost which is then used by local farms. If you don't have much garden waste, you can share a subscription with your neighbour.

The cost is £67 a year (plus a one-off charge of £29 for the bin). New customers can subscribe from the beginning of March for collections to start in April.

For information and to sign-up, visit [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/gardenwaste](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/gardenwaste)