

Spelthorne Borough Council Winter Bulletin 2023

Do you still want to receive this?

You are currently subscribed to receive large print versions of Spelthorne Borough Council's Bulletin magazine. Your information is not shared with other organisations or used for any other purpose. If you no longer wish to receive this, please contact Louise King by email at l.king@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444260.

Letter from the Leader

Dear Residents,

Another year has passed by so quickly, but I hope you are looking forward to Christmas and have chance to meet up with family and friends.

Residents have been telling me that having clean, graffiti and litter-free towns is very important to them. We have taken this onboard and are planning to join the Great British Spring Clean campaign in the spring which will see us working with residents to tidy up unsightly areas and encouraging people to respect the Borough.

We are also working in partnership with the Police Borough Commander who has been in situ since spring to address the issue of anti-social behaviour across the Borough. I can assure you that this administration is listening to residents and will endeavour to address the things that matter to you most. You will start to notice changes in 2024.

At Spelthorne we never forget that residents are our customers and our role is to improve the quality of life for local people. Our pledge 'putting residents at the heart of everything we do' captures our determination to provide the very best services and achieve the highest levels of customer service in all aspects of our work. You can find out more about this on page 15.

Work on our new corporate plan is progressing well. This will set out our priorities as an organisation as well as the values and ideals which will underpin everything we do, now and into the future. I look forward to updating residents in January.

On behalf of everyone at Spelthorne, whatever you have planned over Christmas and the New Year, I hope you have a restful break and that 2024 is a good year.

Cllr Joanne Sexton, Leader of the Council

Update from the Spelthorne Borough Commander

I would like to take this opportunity to briefly update you on what we've been doing recently. In the past few months, we've executed several warrants at locations in the Borough which led to the seizure of drugs and arrests, including two linked to organised crime.

The team have also been hard at work tackling shoplifting in Shepperton and the creation of a business watch in the village which we hope to replicate in Ashford. We have also been targeting anti-social behaviour in Sunbury, focusing on an individual who has been begging door to door but also then committing crime. They were arrested and have been issued a community protection warning banning them from our Borough.

We are entering the winter months and it is important you take extra precautions against burglary, so please go to Spelthorne Beat on Facebook where we have posts with guidance on this.

I am also very aware of the ongoing reports of anti-social behaviour in Ashford which my team are working on resolving with our partners in the Council and beyond. We will continue to deal robustly with all offences of this nature and encourage you to report it to us using the online reporting tool at www.surrey.police.uk. In an emergency call 999.

Matt Walton, Borough Commander, Surrey Police

Council office opening times

Our reception opening hours are 9am to 5pm Monday - Thursday, 9am – 12 noon on Friday. The Council offices will be closed for the Christmas period from 12 noon on Friday 22 December until 9am on Tuesday 2 January 2024.

The Council's out of hours emergency number is 01784 451499.

Message from the Mayor

Dear Residents,

Christmas is already upon us and another year has almost passed. I hope you are enjoying the festive preparations and will be able to attend some of the local events taking place in December. I have been busy with engagements in the Borough and am very grateful for the warm welcome I've received from everyone.

I would also like to thank the many volunteers and groups who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to foster a sense of community and make the Borough a better place.

This year I am 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 months of my mayoral year. A highlight in the fund-raising calendar is the Spring Charity Ball which is being held on Saturday 30 March 2024 at the Hazlewood Centre in Sunbury. Everyone is welcome.

I will also be hosting a family cycle event in Lammas Park in Staines on 6 April 2024 with loads of bike-related activities including BMX and skateboard workshops, bike maintenance, bike security marking, spin bikes, the smoothie bike, arts and crafts, and much more besides. Look out for more details in the spring Bulletin.

I send you all my best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Cllr Denise Saliagopoulos, Mayor of Spelthorne

For more information about the Mayor and her charities, call 01784 446275 or visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/mayor.

The Mayor's Spring Charity Ball

Join the Mayor at her Gatsby-themed Spring Charity Ball:

Saturday 30 March 2024, 6.30pm – midnight

Hazlewood Centre in Sunbury-on-Thames

Gatsby style – dress to impress!

Tickets cost £79 each which includes a three-course meal, welcome drink and entertainment.

All the money raised from the evening will be donated to the Mayor's charities.

To book your tickets, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/MayorEvents, email mayor@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446275.

Electoral Register 2023/24

The Electoral Register will be published on 1 December 2023 and remain in place until 30 November 2024. If you are not registered to vote, you can visit www.gov.uk/register-to-vote to make an application.

This Electoral Register will be used for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled for 2 May 2024 and snap General Elections or Referenda. It is also used by credit referencing agencies to check where people live when they apply for any form of credit such as a mortgage, loan, mobile phone contract or hire purchase agreement. Residents who are not registered to vote may find it more difficult to obtain credit.

For more information, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk, email electoral.services@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444218.

Noise nuisance from fireworks

If you are planning to use fireworks privately, bear in mind that they can be very disturbing to your neighbours and distressing for their pets. Please warn your neighbours in advance and avoid loud display style fireworks.

Repeated use of fireworks at the same property can become subject to noise nuisance laws although it is recognised that fireworks are used more frequently around some festival periods of the year. Additionally, it is an offence to:

- use fireworks between 11pm and 7am, apart from Bonfire Night when they can be used up to midnight and New Year's Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year, when they can be used until 1am the following morning
- use fireworks in a public place unless this is part of an official organised event
- use category 4 fireworks unless this is part of a professional firework display

For more information visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/Noisefaq or call the Environmental Health team on 01784 446251.

Help to take that next step

Located in the Elmsleigh Centre in Staines-upon-Thames, Spelthorne Council's Job & Skills Hub is dedicated to finding employment and skills opportunities for local people.

Whatever your age, situation, skills or background, drop-in and see us if you need help to find your next opportunity. We are open from 10am – 4pm on weekdays.

For more information, drop into the Hub, visit www.spelthornejobsandskills.com or call 07770 481773.

Spelthorne Stronger Business Programme

The Spelthorne Stronger Business programme has been commissioned by Spelthorne Council to provide free support to help residents to start up and grow viable, sustainable businesses.

It is open to pre-start and start-ups in the first 24 months of trading, focusing on the A-Z of how to start a business and working through the critical steps to fast track growth.

Established businesses can also benefit from the programme which offers one-to-one business growth sessions looking at the key barriers to growth and topics including business strategy, technology, leadership and management, operations, input/export, or any challenges you may have.

For more information and to apply, visit www.mygrowthpod.com/Spelthorne

Spelthorne Business Hub

Run by Spelthorne Borough Council in partnership with CoTribe, Spelthorne's Business Hub in Sunbury-on-Thames provides a creative workspace with a vibrant and friendly atmosphere for local businesses. The Hub offers serviced office facilities with a choice of hot desks and permanent desks. Various packages are available with prices starting from £99 per month, which include:

- 24/7 access
- free workshops and seminars
- access to mentors
- access to meeting rooms and break-out spaces
- membership to the Spelthorne Business Forum
- excellent networking opportunities
- superfast wi-fi
- parking
- tea and coffee for your team and visitors

For more information about the Spelthorne Business Hub, visit www.spelthornebusinesshub.com

Take charge of your world!

Sign-up to our Customer Portal to manage your requests, applications, payments and accounts, all in one place at a time convenient to you. Creating an account saves you time as your contact information will be pre-filled when you complete a form and you can view the progress and history of your requests and accounts. If you have registered to use our e-forms in the past, you can use the same login details, you don't need to register again.

View

- Council Tax and Benefits information
- Your local and county councillors and MP
- Your rubbish, recycling and garden waste collection dates
- Planning applications in your area
- Your electoral ward and polling station
- The progress of your requests

Apply

- For email alerts (bin collection reminders and news)
- To set up a direct debit
- For a new bin
- For a parking permit
- To join Meal on Wheels

Report

- A missed bin collection
- A change of address
- A complaint about noise, bonfires, litter, dog fouling, fly-tipping etc
- An abandoned vehicle
- A taxi/private hire vehicle accident

Pay

- Your Council Tax
- A Penalty Charge Notice
- A pest control service
- Garden waste collections
- Allotment hire

To sign-up, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/customerportal

Reduce your waste this Christmas

Food waste: We accept all food, peelings, bones, leftovers, tea bags and coffee grounds. Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/foodwaste for details or to request a food waste bin.

Real Christmas trees: We will be collecting real Christmas trees from 2 – 12 January. Remove the decorations and base and leave your tree out with your bins on your usual collection day. Or take your tree to Shepperton Recycling Centre, Fordbridge Park in Ashford, Manor Park in Shepperton or the Old Bathing Station in Sunbury from 2-12 January.

Cardboard: Recycle flattened cardboard in your recycling bin. Place extra cardboard by your bin and we will take it away as long as it is dry. If the cardboard is wet, we cannot recycle it.

Foil: Disposable foil trays and kitchen foil can be recycled – please clean off any food/grease

Biscuit and sweet tins: these can go in recycling

Extra recycling: You can leave one extra bag of recycling next to your bin

Polystyrene: This should go in your rubbish bin

Plastic bags: These should go in your rubbish bin

Christmas cards: You can recycle plain cards but those with glitter or foil should go in the rubbish bin

Wrapping paper: Plain wrapping paper (not foil) can be recycled, but if it has glitter or it is plastic or foil based it cannot be recycled and should go in your rubbish bin. Remove bows, tags, ribbon and sticky tape before recycling plain wrapping paper. Remember the scrunch test! If it scrunches, it can be recycled. If it doesn't, it can't.

Christmas crackers: Christmas crackers can't be recycled if they have glitter or shiny paper

Christmas collections 2023

Collection dates over the Christmas and New Year period are as follows:

	Usual collection day	Revised collection day
Rubbish	Monday 25 December	Wednesday 27 December
	Tuesday 26 December	Thursday 28 December
	Wednesday 27 December	Friday 29 December
	Thursday 28 December	Saturday 30 December
	Friday 29 December	Sunday 31 December
Recycling 2024	Monday 1 January	Tuesday 2 January
	Tuesday 2 January	Wednesday 3 January
	Wednesday 3 January	Thursday 4 January
	Thursday 4 January	Friday 5 January
	Friday 5 January	Saturday 6 January

Numbering bins

Our crews see a lot of bins during their rounds, and sometimes it's difficult to know which bins belong to which house. It really helps our staff if you number your bins. It means we return the bin to the right property and if there was a problem with emptying it, we can identify where it came from.

Purpose made number stickers can be purchased online or from most garden centres or DIY stores. Alternatively spray paint is a durable alternative, or even a permanent marker pen will do the job.

Ashford Wide Christmas Market – Weds 6 December, 5pm-8pm

Our Christmas Market is being held from 5pm-8pm on Wednesday 6 December in Church Road, Ashford, and promises to be bigger and better than

ever this year featuring the winter fairy, the elves and their good meter, Santa's grotto and Ballonatic.

We'll also have a new food and drinks area and lots of stalls selling festive gifts and decorations. With music from the fabulous Staines and Lammas Band.

Visit www.ashfordwide.com or follow us on Facebook

Santa's grotto - Friday 22 December

Come along to Staines Market on Friday 22 December. Meet Santa and have a photo taken with him. The first 200 visitors will receive a special gift.

Winter Art Open Day

Saturday 16 December, 10am-2pm. Have fun at the Resource Centre making winter-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/carer must be present throughout).

Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/Resourcecentre

Santa is coming to Staines - 1-18 December

The Staines Rotary Santa float will be visiting roads in Staines and Laleham from 1-18 December to celebrate the coming of Christmas. Santa will be bringing his friends and helpers with him, collecting for local charities.

For detailed information on the routes, visit www.staines.rotary1145.org
Not going to be in? You can donate now at www.easydonate.org/Staines

Community Christmas lunch - Christmas Day

Join us for a jolly day of lovely food and great company. If you are on your own this year for Christmas, or looking after a vulnerable other, the charity Christmas Day at the Greeno will be hosting a free sit-down community Christmas lunch at the Greeno Centre in Shepperton on 25 December.

For more details or to book a place (booking is essential), email christmasgreeno@gmail.com or call Caroline on 07775 901035.

The snow globe is back

Saturday 9 December, 10am-3pm
The High Street, Staines-upon-Thames

Sunbury Christmas Market

Thursday 7 December, 5pm-8pm The residents of Sunbury-on-Thames are celebrating Christmas with a special event on The Avenue Parade from 5-8pm on Thursday 7 December.

Come along with the family and enjoy the festive lights, gift stalls, rides, Santa's grotto, and carol singing with the Salvation Army from 6.30pm. The road will be closed to traffic during the event. The money raised will be used for the Sunbury community.

For more details, email monica@villagematters.co.uk or call 07979 808991.

Shepperton Big Tree Night - Wednesday 13 December, 5pm

Join us at Shepperton Big Tree Night on Wednesday 13 December, a well-established festive family fair which brings in visitors from all around the Borough and beyond.

The event starts at 5pm in the High Street and Father Christmas will be arriving with his reindeer from 5.30pm. The ever-popular carols start at 6pm by the main stage and there will also be plenty of other festive attractions including craft stalls and rides for the children.

Entertainment will be on throughout the evening and a fantastic selection of food. The High Street will be closed to traffic from 4pm, with some side roads closing at 1pm.

For more details visit www.bigtreenight.

Welcome to our Residents' Charter

Our aim is to deliver efficient and effective services which meet the changing needs of our residents; adapting to meet new challenges, new ways of working and different ways of interacting with our communities. Our pledge 'putting residents at the heart of everything we do' captures our commitment to improve the quality of life for local people.

We will:

- be polite, listen and remain professional
- provide you with clear, accurate information
- ensure our employees are skilled, knowledgeable and able to provide high-quality customer care
- give you a clear explanation as to why we have made a particular decision
- endeavour to make Council premises and services accessible to everyone
- treat everyone equally regardless of race, family/marital status, gender, religious belief, age, disability or sexuality
- ensure our information is in a format that can be easily accessed and understood
- provide a single point of contact wherever possible
- provide a consistent, co-ordinated and proactive service
- provide a range of convenient communication channels to contact us
- enable customers to provide feedback

If you telephone us, we will:

- answer 90% of calls within 15 seconds
- greet you, clearly stating a name and department
- when returning your calls, staff will clearly state their name, department and their reason for calling

If you write (email/letter) to us, we will:

- send an acknowledgment email within two working days of receipt
- send an acknowledgement to all letters within five working days of receipt
- provide timescales for a full response to be sent
- use plain and correct English
- provide details of the person dealing with the enquiry
- if required, provide information in Braille, in another language, in audio or in large print

If you visit us, we will:

- keep Council premises clean, tidy, safe, well signed and welcoming
- wear identification
- undertake to resolve your enquiry as quickly as possible
- respect confidentiality
- endeavour to see you at your appointment time, if there is a delay we will keep you informed

If we visit you, we will:

- provide details of the person attending and wear identification
- resolve your enquiry as quickly as possible
- endeavour to see you at your appointment time. If however, there is a delay we will keep you informed
- clearly explain the purpose of the visit
- be polite and respect your home
- provide timescales for a full response to be sent
- use plain and correct English

What you can do to help:

There are a few things you can do to help ensure your enquiry is resolved as quickly as possible:

- treat Council staff with respect
- provide the Council with all the information required to resolve your query
- access the Council's website for services and information if you can
- notify the Council of any change in your circumstances
- complete the feedback forms to help us improve our service

Freedom of Information requests:

- we will supply information requested in Freedom of Information requests within 20 working days, except in exceptional circumstances

Complaints:

- we aim to reply to all complaints within 10 working days. If we need longer, we will tell you why and confirm who is dealing with your complaint

How to contact us:

- In writing: Spelthorne Borough Council, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB
- Website: www.spelthorne.gov.uk
- Email: customer.services@spelthorne.gov.uk
- Telephone: 01784 451499

Specsavers Surrey Youth Games 2024

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is taking place on Saturday 15 June 2024 and free, inclusive, local activity sessions will run for up to 8 weeks prior to the Games in a variety of sports and activities. Sessions will be open to young residents who live or go to school in Spelthorne and located across the Borough. Registration will open on Monday 4 March 2024.

Check for updates at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/surreyyouthgames

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 to register your details.

Leisure Directory

Our Leisure Directory is full of activities to help you to make the most of your leisure time in Spelthorne. There's something to suit all ages and interests. You can also advertise your club or activity for free, if it's not already listed.

To download a copy of the directory or include your activity/club, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/leisuredirectory

Free adult cycle training

Keen to be more active? Considering cycling more and driving less? Led by experienced instructors, Surrey County Council is running free cycling courses in Staines Park during the school holidays to help residents learn to ride or improve their confidence on the road

Spelthorne Youth Awards – where unfound stars can shine!

Do you know a special young person aged 5 - 19 who is living or receiving education in Spelthorne who deserves recognition for their achievements? Why not nominate them for a Spelthorne Youth Award!

We are looking for nominations in the following categories:

- Outstanding academic achievement
- Personal achievement
- Community spirit
- Triumph over adversity
- Sports achievement
- Unselfishness, kindness and bravery
- Arts achievement (including performing arts)

Anyone can nominate a young person for an award. All the nominees will be made aware of their nomination and then short-listed for an award. The top nominees from each category will be invited to a special awards ceremony and presented with a certificate and prize from the Mayor of Spelthorne.

The deadline for nominations is Friday 9 February 2024.

For more information and to make a nomination, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/youthawards

Cycle leaders needed

We need more volunteer leaders for our Cycling for Health scheme which offers guided cycle rides of around 5-12 miles during the week. The scheme is aimed at older adults who are looking to join a sociable group. The rides are scheduled to suit the leader's availability and there is no specified time commitment. Training is provided.

If you would like to get involved, email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk

New leisure centre is taking shape

Work is progressing well on the new leisure centre with the build remaining on track and just a few months to go until its expected completion in summer next year.

The state-of-the-art facility, located in Staines-upon-Thames, is being built to world-class environmental standards and will provide a fantastic range of facilities including roof-top 3G pitches, a large fitness suite and an eight-lane 25m pool.

The structural frame has gone up and the contractors are now working on the swimming pool, changing areas, roof top pitches, external façade and electrical work. The current leisure centre will remain open while the new one is being built to minimise disruption.

It was recently announced that Places Leisure has been awarded the contract to manage the new Spelthorne Leisure Centre and existing Sunbury Leisure Centre for the next 10 years.

Places Leisure is one of the UK's leading providers, with a strong track-record of working with local authorities to provide excellent sport, leisure and fitness facilities. As a social enterprise, the company's profits are reinvested back into its core business of creating and maintaining thriving communities.

In addition to operating the centres, Places Leisure will be delivering an extensive outreach programme, bringing wellbeing activity to residents in all areas of the Borough. They will take over the management of both centres next year when the new centre opens.

For more information, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/newleisurecentre

Recognising dedicated volunteers

Do you know someone who should be recognised for their voluntary service in Spelthorne? The Spelthorne Civic Awards Trust is inviting local residents and organisations to nominate individuals who have given a minimum of 12 years' voluntary service to the Borough so that they can be considered for an award.

Candidates do not have to live in the Borough but their work should have benefitted Spelthorne residents. Nominations will be considered by the Trustees and the winners will receive their awards from the Mayor at a special presentation evening in April 2024. The closing date for nominations is 31 January 2024.

For more information or a nomination form, email David Martin at civicawards@gmail.com

New kitchen for St Saviour's Church

Congratulations to the team and volunteers at St Saviour's Community Food Bank in Sunbury on the recent opening of their new kitchen. It will be used to teach cooking skills to residents; taking simple, inexpensive ingredients and using these to prepare fresh, wholesome meals.

Cllr Harry Boparai, ward councillor for Sunbury Common Ward, allocated £50k from Surrey County Council's Small Community Projects Fund to help fund the new facility.

For more information about St Saviour's Church, visit www.stsavs.org

Become a mentor

MCR Pathways is an educational charity which believes that young people's backgrounds and circumstances should not determine their future. We seek to address inequality in education outcomes by working with young people in secondary schools in the local area.

We provide volunteer mentors for these young people, who meet with them once a week and inspire them to engage with school, reach their potential and plan for their future. If you can commit to giving an hour a week for at least one year to help a young person in a school near you, please get in touch.

For more information, visit www.mcrpathways.co.uk, email info@mcrpathways.org or call 0141 221 0200.

Stanwell good neighbour scheme

Stanwell SIGNS is a volunteer run community service which provides transport for people living in Stanwell and Stanwell Moor. Our drivers can provide transport to medical appointments, the supermarket, hairdressers, opticians and dentists and day centres.

If you need help, call 07553 221796 between 10am and noon Monday to Friday.

If you are able to drive or help answer the phone, please call Melanie on 01784 390461.

Crime Stoppers

It can sometimes be difficult to come forward with information about a crime. You may have seen or heard something but don't know what to do or feel worried about going to the Police. You can contact Crimestoppers, an independent charity that gives residents the power to speak up and stop crime, completely anonymously.

Visit www.crimestoppers-uk.org or call 0800 555 111.

Flooding advice

Due to the geography in Spelthorne, flooding is a year-round threat, and during the winter months this threat increases. However, there are steps we can all take to ensure we are prepared. Start by signing up for flood alert

warnings at www.gov.uk/signup-for-flood-warnings and look into the best ways to stop flood water from entering your property.

It's also good to have a personal flood plan – think about who can help you in the event of flooding - where you can go and store possessions – and what you would do with any pets. Check that your insurance policy covers you for flooding. Make sure you know where the stop-valves are for your water, gas and electricity supplies and prepare a flood kit, ready to grab in the event of a flood. Store important documents somewhere safe - preferably high up. For more information and advice, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/flooding

Sing Spelthorne

Sing Spelthorne is a friendly community choir for adults, running for over 18 years. We meet at St Michael's Primary School in Ashford every Thursday during term-time from 7.15pm - 8.45pm.

Ulrika Bergalind, our amazing Musical Director, is a professional voice coach and has worked on various television programmes including X Factor, Britain's Got Talent and Britain Get Singing.

There are no auditions and we sing a mix of pop, rock and soul songs from all decades, so something for everyone. New members are very welcome so come along and try a free session. Bring a pencil and some water as well as your enthusiasm and joy for singing! The cost is £6 per week, payable half termly.

For more information, search Sing Spelthorne on Facebook or Instagram.

Daybreak respite care

At Daybreak we offer respite care and support for older people in the community and people with chronic illnesses, physical disabilities, dementia or social isolation.

We give carers a well-earned break for five hours on a Tuesday, while their family member receives respite care of the highest standard. We provide a happy and vibrant environment where people can enjoy some company, a home cooked meal and regular musical entertainment.

Our provision of care includes blood pressure/sugar monitoring, continence care, dietary needs, personal care and supervision of prescribed medication. Each guest has an individual care plan.

We are based at St. Peter's Church Hall on the Laleham Road in Staines and are open from 10am - 3pm every Tuesday (excluding Christmas and Easter). The cost is £30 per day which includes a two-course lunch and all refreshments.

For more information, email Sally Kidd at sallykdaybreak@gmail.com or call 077610 47930 (Monday-Friday).

Spelthorne in Bloom 2023

The winners of the 2023 Spelthorne in Bloom competition were announced at a celebration evening on 30 October at Notcutts Garden Centre in Staines-upon-Thames to celebrate the work of Spelthorne's green-fingered residents and businesses who are helping make the Borough a brighter place to live. Congratulations to the winners:

Category	Winner
Best Kept Front Garden	Linda Osborne, Manor Farm Avenue, Shepperton
Best Hanging Basket	Paula Johnson, Templedene Ave, Staines
Best Community Garden	Lords Bridge Garden, Shepperton
Best Kept Allotment	Plot 16, Sunbury Cemetery
Best Riverside Garden	Julia Gee, Walton Lane, Shepperton
Best Community Allotment	Stanwell Community Allotment
Best War Memorial	Stanwell War Memorial
Best Kept Place of Worship	Our Lady of the Rosary Church, Staines
Best Kept Large Pub	Three Horseshoes, Shepperton
Best Kept Small Pub	The Harrow, Charlton Village
Best Environmental Planting Project	Stanwell Events Community Allotment
Best New Entrant	Stanwell Events Community Allotment
Schools in Bloom: Tallest Sunflower	Laleham Primary School
Schools in Bloom: Best Edible Garden	Meadhurst School
Best School Garden	Laleham Primary School
Best in Show	Linda Osborne, Manor Farm Avenue, Shepperton

Spelthorne in Bloom opens again in early 2024. For more information, email Emma Paver at spelthorne.inbloom@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446411.

Meals on Wheels at Christmas

We will be providing our usual Meals on Wheels service up to, and including, Christmas Eve and will have a limited service on Christmas Day, Boxing Day, and New Year's Day for those who are eligible.

For more details or to change your usual arrangements, please email m.wheels@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444265 by Thursday 14 December.

Cancer support group

Cancer support group meetings are held at 1.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at Shepperton Medical Practice.

The group members support each other in a friendly and informal atmosphere and guest speakers are also invited from time-to-time. Tea and coffee is provided. The group is independent from the medical practice and is open to all cancer patients, carers and close family. Please come and join us irrespective of where you live.

For more information, email Andy at andyanderson66aa@gmail.com

Community Centres

The Fordbridge Community Centre in Ashford and Greeno Centre in Shepperton are continuing to take it in turns to open on alternate Saturdays.

Members of the Community Centres and non-members over 50 are welcome. Please call the Fordbridge Community Centre (01784 243880) or the Greeno Centre (01932 246173) to book a place for lunch by the Wednesday before.

Reduce your energy use this winter

Energy bills have increased significantly in recent years and this rising cost has changed our relationship with how we use energy at home.

We are constantly looking at ways to reduce the amount of energy we use, and the amount we spend.

No matter what your budget or property type, there are ways to make improvements:

- get a smart meter - this can help you see when you are using the most energy
- insulate and draught-proof windows and doors - you can install self-adhesive draught seals, insulation tape, heavy curtains or material draught excluders
- radiators - try not to block them with objects or materials. Put foil on the wall behind your radiator to reflect the heat back into the room
- lower your thermostat – the recommended optimum temperature for your home is 18-21 degrees
- unplug chargers and devices and don't leave appliances on standby
- add window film to your windows to retain heat and reduce noise and condensation
- switch to LED light bulbs
- bleed your radiators to optimise their performance. Schedule routine maintenance for your boiler to reduce chance of breakdown over the colder months
- avoid using the tumble dryer

Visit www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/energy-at-home or call Simple Energy Advice on 0800 098 7950.

A Leisure Centre for all

Right from the start of the project to build a new Leisure Centre for Spelthorne, we knew we wanted a facility which would be accessible to all our residents.

During the early design stages, we drew on a wide range of evidence and spoke to charities and local groups to ensure we could provide a centre fit for all, so it was accessible and inclusive for people with physical or sensory/cognitive impairments.

We know that access to community and leisure activities provide great benefits to the health and wellbeing of people with disabilities, improving their quality of life and social interaction.

Building a dementia-friendly centre was also a priority for the design team. Working with local charities we were able to identify and incorporate measures that would have a positive impact for our users. The type and position of signage, floor colours, mats and positioning of mirrors were all considered.

Our ambition is for residents to have an improved connection with the local community by removing barriers for users with disabilities by offering:

- clear and easy navigation routes for wheelchair users
- a logical layout, clear signage and the avoidance of glare to assist users with visual impairments
- ramps to provide safe and convenient access
- wheelchair spaces inside the centre and disabled car parking
- poolpod pool access which offers independent and comfortable access to the pools for anyone with mobility issues
- installation of assistive hearing systems
- disability-friendly gym equipment
- a Changing Places toilet facility with a hoist

The new centre, opening summer 2024, will also offer many activities and classes tailored to meet different requirements.

For more information, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/newleisurecentre

Are you recycling your food waste?

A few facts about food waste:

1. Food waste is on average about 70% water. All the rubbish in Spelthorne is burnt at the Shepperton Recycling Centre and used to generate electricity. This process works best with dry waste. Burning wet food waste - when it's in your general rubbish bin - is inefficient and takes more energy to burn than it produces so less electricity is generated.
2. Using food waste to produce green energy reduces our need to use fossil fuels which damage our wildlife, health and environment by replacing it with an environmentally friendly and sustainable alternative. It's also cleaner than other energy production processes, meaning it creates fewer greenhouse gases.
3. A ton of food waste will generate approximately 300 kwh of electricity (an average household uses 10 kwh of electricity per day). In 2021 an analysis of Spelthorne's waste showed that on average each household throws away 2kg of food waste each week in the rubbish bin. Over a year, this is around 90 tonnes of food waste that could be recycled. This would generate enough electricity to fully power 14,000 homes for a year, roughly 30% of all the homes in Spelthorne.

If you would like to find out more, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/foodwaste. To request food waste bins, call Neighbourhood Services on 01784 446411.

Food support in Spelthorne

If you are struggling to afford food, there are several places in the Borough where you can access low-cost food, free surplus food, food banks and free community lunches.

Spelthorne Pantry for low-cost food

The new Spelthorne Pantry in Stanwell welcomes everyone. You don't need a referral and it is suitable for families and individuals.

If you live in the Spelthorne area, you can become a member and enjoy the benefits. The pantry is stocked with a wide range of high-quality food, including fresh fruit and vegetables, frozen and chilled items, meat and dairy products, as well as long-lasting tinned and packaged goods. By paying a small fee each week, members can select groceries worth significantly more, saving up to £1,000 per year. Just like a regular shop, you have the freedom to choose the food you want.

Once you become a member, you can purchase a variety of healthy foods at subsidised prices. We are open four days a week, with flexible hours.

For more information, email info@spelthornepantry.org.uk or call 07429 584286.

Free surplus food and community lunches

Surplus food is excess food from supermarkets and food producers that would otherwise go to waste and is available from the following places:

Stanwell:

The community building, Long Lane Recreation Ground, Stanwell. Surplus Food - Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday 1-2pm. £1 donation per box. To book contact 07429 584286.

Sunbury:

The Haven, St Saviour's Church, Vicarage Road, Sunbury Common

Monday: 10am - 12 noon. Free surplus food, breakfast, tea, coffee and cake. Citizens Advice from 10am.

Thursday: 10am - 1.30pm Free surplus food, lunch, tea, coffee and cake. Financial and housing advice.

Food banks

A referral is often, but not always, needed from an external agency such as a school, doctor, housing officer or Citizens Advice. The contact details are below:

The Salvation Army - Ashford

Email staines@salvationarmy.org.uk or call 01784 423424.

Bags of Food - Shepperton

Email bagsoffood@jubileechurchshepperton.org or call 01932 228882.

Manna Food Bank - Staines and surrounding areas

Email info@mannafoodbank.org.uk or visit www.mannafoodbank.co.uk.

Referrals only.

Stanwell Food Bank

Email info@stanwellfoodbank.org.uk or call 07429 584286.

Community Food Bank - Sunbury Common

Email community@stsavs.org or call 07496 524693.

Surplus to Supper

Surplus to Supper is a surplus food redistribution charity based at Sunbury Cricket Club in Lower Sunbury. Their mission is to bridge the gap between food waste and food poverty. They distribute food to the surplus food sessions and community lunch venues and their Surplus Kitchen also prepares meals which are then frozen and distributed via food banks.

A surplus food market is held each Saturday and Sunday at their hub between 11.30am and 1pm and a free community lunch on the first Tuesday of the month. To find out more, email info@surplustosupper.org or call 07912 677932.

All the above food charities rely on food and financial donations and the work of volunteers. If you would like to support the foodbanks in any of these ways, please contact them directly.