

Spelthorne Borough Council
Winter Bulletin 2021

Welcome to the winter edition of the Bulletin

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Letter from the Leader of the Council

Dear Residents,

This is a special edition of the Bulletin, with seven pages dedicated to the topic of flooding. Due to our geography here in Spelthorne, flooding is a year-round threat, and during winter months this risk increases.

However, there are several steps we all can take, such as having a flood plan and signing-up for flood alerts, to ensure you are ready to act should the worst ever happen.

I'm very proud to say that we have welcomed five Afghan families to Spelthorne. Under the ARAP scheme, current/former HM Government employees who were at serious risk in Afghanistan are eligible to permanently settle in the UK. Accommodation for the families has been sourced through private landlords and is being funded by Central Government.

I would like to congratulate all the finalists and winners of the Spelthorne Business Awards. The quality of this year's entries really showed the hard work and resilience of our local businesses which have gone from strength-to-strength despite extremely challenging conditions.

Finally, it just remains for me to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year. Whatever you may have planned, I hope you are able to enjoy a Christmas break and have the chance to spend time with friends and family.

Cllr Lawrence Nichols, Leader of the Council

Helpline numbers

We have put together a list of contact numbers which may be useful over Christmas and New Year.

Spelthorne Borough Council	01784 451499 (including out-of-hours) www.spelthorne.gov.uk
Police (non-emergency)	101 www.police.uk
NHS (non-emergency) Find an NHS service near you (e.g. out-of-hours pharmacy, mental health services, walk-in clinics)	111 www.nhs.uk www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/services-near-you
Mind	0300 123 3393 www.mind.org.uk
Samaritans	116 123 www.samaritans.org
Cruse - bereavement support	0808 808 1677 www.cruse.org.uk
Refuge - domestic abuse helpline	0808 2000 247 www.refuge.org.uk
Age UK	0800 678 1602 www.ageuk.org.uk
Action Fraud	0300 123 2040 www.actionfraud.police.uk

Message from the Mayor

Dear Residents, how time flies! It's almost Christmas and after last year's lockdown, let us make the most of this season of peace and goodwill!

For many, including myself, Christmas is a very special time of year. It is important to remember the true meaning of Christmas is to celebrate the birth of Christ and ultimately the expectation of forgiveness and rebirth. Christmas is also a time of giving and as we join with family and friends this Christmas, it is pertinent to remember those who are in less fortunate situations, particularly those families impacted by the pandemic.

Our chosen charities, East to West and Ashford Youth Club, reflect our desire to bring additional specialist support to the young people and their families who are struggling with serious mental health challenges, and in particular suicidal ideation and self-harm. We very much hope that you will join us in

raising funds for these very worthy charities and will be hosting fundraising events in the New Year which we hope you will attend.

The Mayoress joins me in wishing you and your families a very happy Christmas and a healthy and blessed 2022.

Cllr Ian Harvey, Mayor of Spelthorne

Be cab aware this Christmas

Chair of Spelthorne Council's Licensing Committee, Cllr Robin Sider BEM, is reminding everyone who books a cab this Christmas to follow these safety tips:

- all taxis (showing an illuminated sign marked 'taxi') and private hire vehicles (minicabs) must be licensed by the local authority. Look for the licence plate on the back of the car with the registration number and expiry date
- don't use unlicensed cabs – cars cruising the streets looking for customers are illegal, uninsured and potentially dangerous
- if possible, plan the journey and book a taxi or private hire vehicle in advance. Ask for the driver's name as well as the make/model and registration number of the vehicle
- confirm the driver's details when they arrive - is it the vehicle you booked? If not, don't get in
- tell someone you trust about your journey and share the vehicle details you are travelling in
- if you chat to the driver, be careful not to give out personal details
- if you feel unsafe, ask the driver to stop in a busy well-lit area and get out of the vehicle, trust your instincts
- keep your mobile phone charged

For more information or to report concerns, contact the Council's Licensing team by emailing licensing@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444202

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 contact us on 01784 444265 by Monday 13 December.

Shopping in Staines?

Choose the Elmsleigh car parks for the cheapest parking.

Monday - Saturday 8am - 7pm:

Up to 1 hour £1

Up to 2 hour £2

Up to 3 hour £3

Up to 4 hour £4

Up to 5 hour £7

Sunday All day £2

Council Office - Christmas closure

The Council Offices in Knowle Green will be closed from 3.45pm on Friday 24 December until 8.45am on Tuesday 4 January 2022.

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

Funding for community projects

We are welcoming applications for funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for local projects and improvements. CIL is money raised from new development to help fund the infrastructure needed to alleviate the impacts of extra homes.

CIL funds are used for either local infrastructure or wider strategic infrastructure. Over £5m of CIL funding has already been agreed for projects in the Borough which include highway improvement and outdoor gyms. It is now time to consider how the local element of CIL will be spent, which is allocated for infrastructure in areas where development has taken place and accounts for 15% of overall funds collected. Examples of the types of projects CIL can be used for are community centre improvements, community notice boards, bike shelters and local signage.

We expect applications to come from statutory infrastructure providers and not-for-profit organisations such as state schools, community groups and registered charities for projects that demonstrate a wider community benefit.

The deadline for this round of applications is 31 March 2022. Decisions will be made by local spending boards, made up of ward councillors for each area in the Borough.

For more information visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/levy or email cil@spelthorne.gov.uk

Spelthorne supporting Afghan families

Following the decision of the Community Wellbeing and Housing Committee in September, Spelthorne has welcomed five families to Spelthorne under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme. Accommodation for the families has been sourced through private landlords and is being funded by Central Government.

Under the ARAP scheme, current/former HM Government employees who are at serious risk in Afghanistan are eligible to be housed under the scheme and can bring certain family members with them to the UK.

Spelthorne has been providing temporary support for Afghan refugees since the crisis began in August, using funding from the Home Office. Families have been accommodated in the Borough before being found longer-term accommodation in other parts of the country by the Home Office.

The Council's Family Support team has registered all the families with GPs and is helping them with tasks such as finding schools for their children and opening bank accounts. The families have adapted well to their new environment and are very appreciative of the support provided for them. Our Leisure Centre operator, Everyone Active, is providing concessionary access for the families, several businesses are offering free or concessionary services and a local church has been arranging English lessons.

Similar support will be provided for the families who will be staying in Spelthorne on a longer-term basis.

Staines Development Framework

We have now finished compiling all the responses to our Staines Development Framework consultation which ran from 18 May to 29 June. This was to ask the public what issues the new Framework should address. Around 750 people responded to the consultation, generating over 15,000 individual comments. This feedback will help us develop the draft Framework and there will be another consultation when the draft has been produced.

Visit our website at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/sdf to view the consultation feedback and for future key dates.

Spelthorne Volunteer Drivers

Do you own a car and have an hour or two each week to help support your local community? Then why not join the Spelthorne Volunteer Drivers? We are a group of volunteers who take elderly/disabled residents to hospital and other medical appointments. It's a rewarding role and the amount of time you give is entirely up to you. We reimburse expenses.

For more information, please call 07817 926736, 10am - 12 noon Monday to Friday.

Spelthorne Business Awards

The hard work and achievements of local businesses was celebrated at the Spelthorne Business Awards at the Holiday Inn in Shepperton on 11 November. Finalists for each of the award categories gathered with the sponsors to celebrate their successes and toast the winners in each category. Many congratulations to everyone:

Category	Finalists	Winner
Best New Start-up Sponsored by Federation of Small Businesses	Capability Clarke Palmer's Dog Grooming Ballero	Palmer's Dog Grooming
Best Business in Staines BID Sponsored by Staines-upon-Thames BID	Mums and Sons Designinc Lewis Thames Side Brewery	Designinc
Best Corporate Social Responsibility Sponsored by Worldwide Energy Logistics	McDonald's Acacia Homecare I Choose Local	Acacia Homecare Ltd
Best Small Business Sponsored by A2 Dominion	Willow & Finn Palmer's Dog Grooming Mums and Sons Thames Side Brewery	Palmer's Dog Grooming
Exporter of the Year Sponsored by Heathrow Airport	Limited Blackstone Printing Experium Sustainable2	Experium Ltd

Best Franchise of the Year Sponsored by McDonalds	Edwards Conlon Ltd InXpress Guy Salmon Jaguar Land Rover	InXpress
Creative/Innovative Business of the Year Sponsored by Shepperton Studios	Silverpasta Crafts Taste Creative Arca Industries Ltd Thames Side Brewery	Thames Side Brewery
Healthy Business Award Sponsored by Everyone Active	Totally Tangerine Cookery KH Dance Academy JSA Service	KH Dance Academy
Best Sustainable Business of the Year Sponsored by Kwasi Kwarteng MP	Norse Supply Taste Creative Silverpasta Crafts	Taste Creative
Best Business in Ashford and Stanwell Sponsored by The Powerhouse	Xscream Escapes Totally Tangerine Cookery Mortgage Matchmakers	Totally Tangerine Cookery
Best Business in Shepperton and Charlton Sponsored by Spelthorne Business Forum	Dramatize Tea Room Palmer's Dog Grooming Capability Clarke	Palmer's Dog Grooming
Best Business in Staines- upon-Thames and Laleham Sponsored by Enterprise Holdings	Designinc Taste Creative The Thames Club	Taste Creative
Best Business in Sunbury and Halliford Sponsored by Hazelwood, the home of London Irish	Acacia Homecare Animateys Layka Recruitment	Animateys
Best Business in Spelthorne Sponsored by Spelthorne Borough Council	Overall winner	Taste Creative

Flooding: information and advice

Due to the geography of Spelthorne, some properties and land are at risk of flooding. This risk is present all year round. However, as winter approaches, flood risk is heightened due to an increased likelihood of rainfall which could cause groundwater to rise, rivers to burst their banks and surface water to

build on highways. This article has been written to provide you with some of the key information to help you prepare for flooding events.

Flooding responsibilities and contacts

It can be difficult to know exactly who is responsible for what. If there is a threat to life you should call 999. In other instances, please find more information below.

Who?	What?	Telephone	Website/webpage/text info
Environment Agency	Lead flood responder in major flooding incidents General flooding advice Report a flood Floodline: Check the current alert and warning status, and sign up for future automated notifications Deployment of temporary defences and other strategic assets Maintenance of structures on main rivers	Switchboard: 03708 506 506 EA Incident Line: 0800 80 70 60 Floodline: 0345 988 1188	www.gov.uk/environment-agency www.gov.uk/check-flood-risk https://flood-warning-information.service.gov.uk/warnings
Surrey County Council	Lead Flood Authority, surface water and ground water flooding management,	Switchboard: 0345 600 9009 Flooded Highways: 0300 200 1003	www.surreycc.gov.uk www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport

	highways management, animal disease, Rights of Way, social care and health information	Social care: 01932 794800 Out of hours: 01483 517898	www.surreycc.gov.uk/social-care-and-health Report an issue using "Report it" on the Surrey County Council website (general enquiries about flooding: flooding.enquiries@surreycc.gov.uk)
Spelthorne Borough Council	Rest centres, housing, assisting with transportation, government grant schemes, management of public open spaces, provision of Environmental Health advice and Building Control	01784 451 499 Out of hours (emergency use only): 01932 425 060	www.spelthorne.gov.uk https://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/16996/Flooding-advice Please follow us on social media. We will use these accounts to provide up-to-date emergency information: Spelthorne Borough Council – Facebook @Spelthornebc – Twitter @spelthorneboroughcouncil - Instagram
Thames Water	Sewage, flooded sewers and sewer cleaning	0800 316 9800	www.thameswater.co.uk
UK Power Networks	Run the electricity supply network (We would advise that you do not	0800 316 3105	www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk Sign up for text alerts: https://www.ukpowernetworks.co.uk/power-cut/text-updates

	contact your energy supplier e.g. SSE, EDF, Virgin etc. as these companies are your own electricity supplier but do not run the electricity supply network		Or text: "Power" followed by your postcode to 80876
Affinity Water	Drinking water	Emergency number: 0345 357 2407	www.affinitywater.co.uk
Insurance	To advise what is and is not insured and to process claims	Various – specific to the company	Various – specific to the company

How Spelthorne Borough Council aims to help

The Council has an experienced team who work towards increasing the resilience of Spelthorne to flooding, and who also coordinate the flood response from the Borough Emergency Coordination Centre during a major incident. This response can consist of the following:

- Further supporting established community volunteer groups to increase community resilience.
- Working with partner agencies to support vulnerable residents.
- Facilitating the running of Community Sandbag Distribution Centres in major incidents.
- Assisting evacuation through our community transport and opening Rest Centres for residents in need of temporary shelter.
- Providing short and long-term accommodation solutions for residents who have had to evacuate their homes.
- Assisting in community clear-up following flooding.

Community resilience

Local knowledge, experience and goodwill is one of the Borough's main assets before, during and after a flood event.

Spelthorne Borough Council, like other responding agencies, is constantly seeking ways to learn from past events and continually improve its processes for dealing with flooding on a large scale. The Council is looking to work closer than ever with local residents to harness this experience, goodwill, and effort. It is recognised that formalising volunteer roles and offering additional help and support to community groups will enable the Borough to establish robust and effective communication networks and maximise resources for localised needs.

We work with the Environment Agency and Surrey County Council to prepare local communities to cope in times of emergency. We can provide community groups with templates and advice on how to create a community plan that complements the plans of the emergency services and other responding agencies. We can also hold events to bring community groups together to discuss their plans and share knowledge, issues and experiences.

If you are interested in setting up a community group, or already have a group and would like to know more, please contact us so we can update you on important news and events. We can also answer any questions you might have or meet to discuss potential or existing plans.

Sandbags

Whilst Spelthorne Council cannot provide sandbags for all residents at risk of flooding, we may look to deploy them at a very local level e.g. to protect infrastructure or where sandbags may have a positive net effect on reducing flood risk in some areas. The Council would not deliver sandbags to specific properties, so it is advisable to identify alternative sources from which to acquire sandbags – builders' merchants and local DIY stores may stock sandbags and sand. Hydrosacs can also be purchased as an alternative to sandbags, which are easier to store and inflated when the threat of flooding is imminent.

If widescale flooding is expected, Community Sandbag Distribution Centres may be set up to allow greater access to sandbags. These centres will be run by volunteers and community groups, facilitated by the Council who will provide equipment, sand and an operating framework. Sandbags will offer only limited protection and should only be used as a last resort when other measures are not in place - the array of products listed by the National Flood Forum are more likely to protect your home than sandbags.

For full details on Spelthorne's Sandbag Policy, please see our website at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/17008/Sandbags

Rest centres

The primary purpose of a Rest Centre (usually put in place at the community centres or a suitable hall) is to enable the assessment of affected people's needs during an incident, and in extreme cases to provide basic amenity for people who have evacuated their homes, with provisions such as meals and overnight accommodation. Two types of assessment will be carried out for any person sheltered at a Rest Centre:

1. Housing options assessment:

This is the responsibility of Spelthorne Borough Council. This involves considering all of the housing options that may be available for a flood victim, including the provision of emergency accommodation and subsequently longer-term housing options. This process works alongside the Adult Social Care assessment, to address any vulnerabilities that are identified amongst flood victims by Spelthorne Borough Council staff.

2. Adult Social Care assessment:

This is the responsibility of Surrey County Council. This process involves assessing the specific needs of any flood victim who may be identified as vulnerable or is previously known to the multi-agency services already regularly assisting them. It is then the responsibility of Adult Social Care to ensure these individuals may access specific and suitable support, including any necessary medication and health professionals. This will also include the placement into residential care of any flood victims for whom this level of care is required. A Rest Centre is intended to provide short-term shelter only, therefore Spelthorne Borough Council will be able to provide transport to assist in moving individuals to more suitable, long-term accommodation.

Rest centre locations

The Greeno Centre in Shepperton and Fordbridge Centre in Ashford are used as two rest centre locations within Spelthorne. However, depending on the scale of the incident, another larger centre may be sought. Spelthorne Borough Council will communicate the location of a rest centre with residents and partner agencies if one is deemed necessary at the time of the flooding.

Resilience checklist

If your home or business is at risk of flooding, you should make sure you have your own personal flood plan. Flooding can become a serious problem faster than you'd think, so don't leave this until it actually happens as you will not have time. The Environment Agency have a guide to help with preparing a personal flood plan but below are a few important actions you can take now, to ensure you're ready for a flood in the future:

Actions

- store important documents somewhere safe - preferably higher than the flood waters can reach, but if this is not possible then protect them in polythene
- look into the best ways to stop flood water from entering your property - don't just rely on sandbags, they may not always be available and there are plenty of flood protection products available which can protect your home much more effectively. A directory of these is provided by the National Flood Forum and can be viewed at www.bluepages.org.uk
- check that your insurance policy covers you for flooding
- familiarise yourself with flood warning levels, so that you understand an event as it is unfolding
- identify who can help you in the event of flooding - where you can go, or store possessions, when flooding is imminent. Similarly, identify who you can help - look out for your friends, family and neighbours, particularly those most vulnerable such as the elderly
- if you have pets, identify somewhere safe you can take them before a flood
- if you have a car, identify somewhere safe to move it to ahead of a flood - if this is not possible and your car is already in flood water do not attempt to move it
- make sure you know where the stop-valves are for your water, gas and electricity supplies so that you can turn these off quickly if necessary
- prepare a flood kit, ready to grab in the event of a flood

Emergency kit items

- important documents, such as your passports and insurance certificates
- wind up torch and radio in case of a loss of power
- rubber gloves and wellington boots – in case you have to come into contact with flood water
- a first aid kit - including any prescription medicine
- bottled water - the water from the tap may become contaminated and certainly do not ever drink flood water

- non-perishable and/or tinned food
- blankets and warm clothing, in case of a prolonged loss of power
- families with children may wish to include some toys - to keep them entertained and distracted

Flooding dos and don'ts

Do:

- keep together and safe with your family and those around you. Particularly consider any vulnerable or elderly neighbours and make sure they are aware of the situation
- have an emergency 'grab bag' prepared
- pay close attention to the advice of the emergency services and local authority. Take all warnings seriously and respond quickly
- switch off all electrical and gas appliances at the mains - make sure you know how to do this quickly
- stay alert, and monitor the ongoing situation
- block downstairs toilets and drains to prevent backflow of sewage - use a sandbag or a strong bin bag filled with soil
- move important items to a high and safe place within the home

Don't

- don't enter flood water. Only six inches of fast flowing water can knock a person over and there may be unseen hazards - uncovered manholes, sharp edges and unstable surfaces may be hidden beneath the surface
- don't drive through flood water. Less than two feet of water can be enough to float a car and beneath the water may be hidden hazards such as sudden drops, debris and fallen power lines
- don't come into contact with flood water - it is often contaminated with sewage and other substances. Wear rubber gloves and boots, and wash thoroughly if you do accidentally come into contact with flood water
- do not ever attempt to swim through flood water. You may be swept away and being a strong swimmer will not protect you from being struck by floating debris
- do not re-enter a flooded area until you are advised it is safe to do so
- do not enter a property that has been flooded unless you are sure it is structurally safe - if in doubt it should be professionally checked
- do not turn on your electricity or gas supplies until they have been checked by a qualified electrician/engineer. Be aware of gas leaks - do not smoke or use open flames

Groundwater and surface water in Spelthorne

When people think of flooding, they often picture rivers bursting their banks. However, surface water flooding, where heavy rainfall overwhelms the drainage system, and groundwater flooding, where the water table rises and seeps upwards, can also be a problem.

There is the potential for groundwater to occur across most of Spelthorne due to the geological makeup of the local area. The underlying bedrock geology in Spelthorne is known as London Clay. On top of the clay there is a layer of river gravel deposits. The cause of groundwater is that water is unable to drain into the impermeable London Clay. This results in the 5-7 metres of gravel lying on top of the clay to be left to hold the groundwater until saturation point, which occurs when there is excessive rain. In this situation the water will appear on the land surface at the lowest points, often overloading foul sewer networks, which can result in a mixture of ground water, surface water and foul sewage flooding from drains to local areas and properties. Pumping the floodwater out will have very little benefit as the high groundwater will continue to replace any water which is pumped out. Only when the groundwater levels drop will the floodwater recede.

For more information on groundwater flooding and how to prepare, please visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/flooding

The work of our partner agencies

Environment Agency

Spelthorne Borough Council works with the Environment Agency to help residents become more resilient in emergencies. The Environment Agency's free Floodline service gives flooding forecasts, local situation updates and advice for residents and professional partners 24 hours a day, seven days a week (0345 988 1188). It is worth signing up to flood warnings at <https://www.gov.uk/sign-up-for-flood-warnings>.

The Environment Agency's maintenance teams continue to carry out annual maintenance and respond to incident reports on the main rivers in Spelthorne. The works have included tree and vegetation clearance, de-silting and removing blockages.

To report watercourse blockages or property flooding please call the EA Incident Line which is staffed 24/7 on 0800 80 70 60. The Environment Agency also support community groups to raise flood awareness and

prepare for flood incidents. Information on creating a personal flood plan and a community flood plan can be found on their website.

Thames Water

Thames Water provide wastewater services throughout Spelthorne. Sewer flooding can occur due to several factors, including blockages caused by wet wipes and cooking fat, as well as very heavy rainfall which can occasionally overwhelm the sewage system.

If you experience flooding from a sewer, you should get in touch with Thames Water on 0800 316 9800 who will try to stop the flooding and investigate the cause. Any clean-up will include removing excess liquids, removing most of what has been discharged from the sewer and disinfecting hard surfaced areas (outside only). It is not usually Thames Water's responsibility to dry out your property from internal flooding, remove or replace damaged items, or provide alternative accommodation. In the first instance, you should contact your insurer.

Surrey County Council

Surrey County Council (SCC) as Lead Local Flood Authority for the Spelthorne area is responsible for managing the risks of surface water, ground water and small watercourse flooding. However, insufficient watercourse maintenance is often the cause of wider flooding, including floods to the road network. Maintenance of ditches and culverts often remains the responsibility of the relevant private landowners and not that of Spelthorne or Surrey County Council. Further details on riparian responsibilities can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/owning-a-watercourse.

If you need to report a flood to SCC, please use the 'Report It' link page at www.surreycc.gov.uk, call their Contact Centre on 03456 009 009, or email floodingenquiries@surreycc.gov.uk. To report highway related issues please use the 'Report It' links or visit the "Roads and transport" page at www.surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport. It can then be considered for investigation.

Spelthorne Youth Hub

Spelthorne Council has announced that a new Youth Hub is launching this winter to help young people into education and employment. Aimed at 16-24-year-olds, the Youth Hub will offer advice, training and mentoring for

young people currently not in education, employment or training, those with special needs and disabilities, as well as young carers/parents.

The initiative is being delivered by Spelthorne Council in partnership with A2 Dominion, Brooklands College, Association of Learning Providers (ALPS), Ashford Youth and Community CIC and Transfer to Transform, under the leadership of Partnership Manager Nick Charalambous. The Department for Work and Pensions has funded the project with a grant for £118k for this 12-month project.

To find out more about signing up to the scheme, email e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk or call Tracey Carter on 01784 446200.

Calling all local suppliers

Are you a local business in Spelthorne and interested in providing goods, services or works to the Council? If so, we want to hear from you and would like to include you in the Spelthorne Business Forum business directory (free of charge).

Whether you offer cleaning services or window blinds, project management services or landscaping works, you may be able to provide something we need. Following recent changes to our procurement procedures, we now aim to buy exclusively from local providers for smaller value requirements (under £5,000) whenever possible.

To register your business, you will need to join the SBF at www.sbf.biz and add your details to the business directory.

Laptops for learning

The Digital Class, supported by Timeless IMS, is an initiative providing pupils with the technology needed to access online education. When the pandemic began, some children were unable to connect with their schools and participate in remote learning from home. Although pupils have returned to face-to-face teaching, our aim is to ensure all pupils can access online educational opportunities to fulfil their potential.

We are looking for donations of working laptops or tablets with chargers. All devices will be securely wiped upon collection.

If you can help by donating a device, please email hellodigitalclass@gmail.com, or help us spread the message on social media (our Twitter is @thedgtlclass).

I Choose Local

Spelthorne Council, Brooklands College, BUPA, the Federation of Small Businesses and the Department of Work and Pensions are backing an initiative to get 16-24-year-olds in Spelthorne who are not in employment education or training, into work.

The brainchild of two tech entrepreneurs, I Choose Local has its roots in providing a digital platform that connects 16-24 years olds in Spelthorne to local employers looking to recruit talented people.

I Choose Local has been described as the 'Instagram for jobs' with instant phone notifications when a job or apprenticeship becomes available. It offers a user-friendly solution to job searching, which is more in keeping with the way young people use technology. It is hoped that I Choose Local, which launches in the New Year, will help local young people take their first step into work and support the local economy.

For more information, please email gary.hudson@ichooselocal.co.uk

Festive waste and recycling

The Christmas period can be a time when we create a lot more waste and rubbish than at other times of year - parties, presents, shopping, they all add up and generate mountains of packaging, boxes, cards, tinsel, trees and leftovers that all need to be thrown away somewhere. But where?

Wrapping paper

It's paper, right? So, it should go in the recycling? Well not always. Any wrapping paper that has shiny metal foil or glitter on it can't go into the recycling. The best test is to scrunch the paper up. If it stays scrunched up, it's paper and can be recycled. If it springs back into shape, it can't.

Large cardboard boxes

We all love presents that come in big boxes. But what to do with them afterwards? They're big, bulky and take up loads of room. The best option is

to flatten them and then put them in your recycling bin. If it won't fit in your bin, you can put the flattened cardboard next to your bin on collection day but make sure it's not raining as we can't accept wet card.

Real Christmas trees

We will be operating free Christmas tree collections from 3 - 14 January. Simply remove the base and decorations and leave your tree out with your bins on your usual collection day. If you miss the collection, you can take your tree to the Community Recycling Centre in Shepperton or one of the following drop-off points:

- Fordbridge Park, Ashford
- Manor Park, Shepperton
- Old Bathing Station, Fordbridge Road, Sunbury

Leftover festive food

For all your festive food leftovers, make use of the free weekly food collection service. A recent study showed that almost 30% of the contents of Spelthorne's rubbish bins was food waste that could have been recycled. As our food waste is used to generate electricity, that is a lot of potential power that was wasted. Recycling your food waste means there is more space in your rubbish bin for those things that can't be recycled. To order food waste bins, email neighbourhoodservices@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446411.

Christmas rubbish and recycling collections

We are pleased to advise there are no changes to the collection days for your rubbish and recycling over Christmas and New Year.

Garden waste

Garden waste collections stop for six weeks from December (week commencing 6 December or 13 December, depending on your collection round). For more details, check your garden waste calendar or visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/gardenwaste.

Update from Maxine Cilia, Spelthorne Borough Commander

As we head into winter and the darker nights set in, we will be focusing on tackling the following crimes:

Burglary: Darker nights mean more burglaries as burglars can see which homes are lit. There are several devices that can help your home look occupied, such as timer lights. You can find out more on our website www.surrey.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention Burglary also extends to outbuildings and sheds, so ensure these are locked and the items inside are marked or registered.

Theft: We are seeing an increase in theft from motor vehicles which are mostly targeting coins and sunglasses. Please remember to lock your car, even if it is on your driveway.

Drugs: We have greatly reduced the risk in the Borough from County Lines. Proactive work is constantly helping to disband these lines and we work closely with the Metropolitan Police to tackle this.

One of the keys to ensuring safe neighbourhoods is Neighbourhood Watch. Not only do you get to meet your local neighbours, who will be a support group for you, but you also get to look out for each other's property. Find out more about joining your local Neighbourhood Watch at www.ourwatch.org.uk

Please report any crimes to us via our website or by direct messaging us on social media. If it is an emergency, dial 999.

Key statistics:

Since April, we have seen:

- 3.9% decrease in the number of reported residential burglaries
- 21% decrease in the number of reported drug offences
- 5.1% decrease in the number of reported vehicle crimes

Maxine Cilia
Borough Commander, Surrey Police

Your waste is your responsibility

If you hire someone to dispose of your waste, always make sure they are a licensed waste carrier to avoid being fined or prosecuted.

In September, Spelthorne Council introduced a £200 fixed penalty notice for households that fail to ensure their waste is managed properly. Residents

and businesses are required to take reasonable steps to check that people removing waste from their homes and premises are authorised to do so.

Make sure you:

- Ask the waste carrier to provide you with their full address and telephone number
- Ask to see their waste carrier licence issued by the Environment Agency
- Contact the Environment Agency directly on 03708 506 506 and ask for a free instant Waste Carrier Validation Check (or check on the Environment Agency's website)

To check a licence visit

<https://environment.data.gov.uk/publicregister/view/search-wastecarriers-brokers> or call 03708 506 506.

Stanwell good neighbour scheme

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

If you need our help, call 07553 221796, 10am - 12noon Monday - Friday. You will need to have had both Covid jabs and wear a mask in the car. If you can volunteer as a driver/help answer the phone, please call Melanie on 01784 390461.

Surplus to Supper

Surplus to Supper helps to bridge the gap between food waste and food poverty. Founded in 2017 in Sunbury-on-Thames, the charity has been active in sourcing and redistributing surplus food that would otherwise have gone to waste. This is on a substantial scale with the charity currently collecting and donating on average 10 tons of food per week to foodbanks, schools, care homes, shelters, clubs, refuges, religious organisations and others.

Not only do Surplus to Supper redistribute fresh food, they also cook fresh food which is then frozen and sent to other organisations. In the past six months, we have delivered over 262,000 cooked meals to 80 organisations across North Surrey and London.

Surplus to Supper is located at Sunbury Cricket Club. Every weekend there is a surplus shop where you can pick up some surplus food in exchange for a

mindful donation. The Surplus Café is run by a professional chef cooking surplus food. Our ethos is to provide one free meal for charity from each meal sold at the café. The menu is varied with a range of staple and special items. Produce will change weekly, so come down to see what's on offer. For more details, visit www.surplustosupper.org

Spelthorne Leisure Centre rated 'outstanding'

Spelthorne Leisure Centre, managed by Everyone Active on behalf of the Council, has been recognised for its outstanding services following a thorough assessment by Sport England's leading national quality scheme, Quest.

The centre was awarded the status of 'outstanding' through the Quest process for the second time running, becoming the first leisure facility in the country to achieve the accolade since the UK national lockdown. The centre went through a rigorous inspection process to achieve the accolade, including mystery-shopper visits and a two-day on-site assessment to evaluate all aspects of its operations and management.

This good news follows Sunbury Leisure Centre being rated Excellent in their Quest assessment earlier in the year and highlights the great leisure facilities available for Spelthorne residents. Come down, try something new and see for yourself.

For more information visit www.everyoneactive.com/centre

Wiggle and Scribble

A new temporary artistic installation is coming to the Elmsleigh Shopping Centre in the New Year. Wiggle and Scribble puts play back on the map and invites you and your family to move, shake, scribble, shuffle, hop, bop, dance, star jump and wriggle your way around a new illustrated playground. The installation will remain in place for up to three months.

More details will be published on Spelthorne Council's website in early January.

Look before you book

Before you book a restaurant or order a takeaway this Christmas, make sure you check the food hygiene rating at <http://ratings.food.gov.uk/spelthorne> or call Environmental Health on 01784 446291

Bouncing back

There's lots on offer in Spelthorne throughout the year. Our Leisure Directory is packed full of things to see and do, and activities to suit all ages and interests. Make the most of your free time; view our online directory at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/leisuredirectory and try something new in '22.

Older People Actively Living (OPAL)

In Spelthorne we run two OPAL groups for older people who would benefit from visiting our Community Centres but have additional support needs which make it difficult for them to visit on their own. Clients may need some extra support if they have mobility issues, memory loss, hearing problems, mild or onset dementia, are partially sighted or have other long-term conditions.

They may need to use a wheelchair or other mobility aids or just be lonely and want a little help and support. Our aim is for our OPAL clients to enjoy social interaction, stimulating activities and a hot nutritious meal during the day, with any help being provided by our support workers.

We run daily OPAL groups from 9.30am - 3.30pm at the Fordbridge Centre in Ashford and the Greeno Centre in Shepperton. There is a daily charge of £40 to attend the group which can be paid privately or as part of a social care package. A hot lunch and pudding are provided for £4 and transport can be arranged on our OPAL mini-buses (£7.25 return journey / £4.20 one way). We work closely with our colleagues in Adult Social Care to see if funding is available or an existing care package can be altered to include OPAL attendance. For more information, please contact:

The Greeno Centre (Sunbury, Shepperton and Laleham clients).
Call Zoe or Vanessa on 01932 246173 or email
greenocentre@spelthorne.gov.uk

The Fordbridge Centre (Ashford, Staines and Stanwell clients)
Call Janice, Jan or Iain on 01784 243880 or email
fordbridgecentre@spelthorne.gov.uk

Walk and cycle leader volunteers needed

Interested in becoming a walk or cycle leader? We are appealing for volunteers to join an enthusiastic team of leaders who lead short walks,

designed for beginners, between one and three miles. The walks take place at least three times a week in various parts of the Borough and surrounding areas.

We are also recruiting leaders to offer 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 walks/cycle rides are scheduled to suit the leader's availability and there is no specified time commitment. Training is provided for both roles.

For more details, email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446433.

Recognising dedicated volunteers

Do you know someone who should be recognised for dedicated voluntary service in the Borough of Spelthorne?

The Spelthorne Civic Award Trust is now in its 38th year, having been founded in 1983 by Mr Alf Goddard MBE to acknowledge the work of Spelthorne residents who have devoted their time to voluntary service in the Borough. We are inviting local residents and voluntary organisations to nominate individuals who have given a minimum of 12 years' service so that the Trustees can consider them for an award. Candidates do not have to live in the Borough, but their work should have benefitted Spelthorne residents.

Nomination forms and further details are available from the Trust Secretary David Martin, email civicawards@gmail.com. The closing date for nominations is 31 January 2022.

Spelthorne Rentstart

Spelthorne Rentstart assists 18 years+ single people and childless couples who are homeless or vulnerably housed.

The Extra project funded by The Big Lottery started in 2018 and has reached the end of its three-year term. It assisted clients with problems such as depression, anxiety and addiction issues to enter the private rented sector with the assistance of a deposit bond and intensive on-going support. The project adopted a multiagency approach, with the aim of encouraging self-reliance and resilience so that individuals were able to maintain their tenancies and improve their life opportunities. We were proud to make a

difference in the lives of 105 local individuals who were given safe and secure housing, a world away from their previous chaotic lives.

If you would like to donate, access or refer someone to the Rentstart service, please email info@spelthornerentstart.org.uk or call 01784 446422.

Spelthorne in Bloom 2021

The winners of the 2021 Spelthorne in Bloom competition were announced at a celebration evening on 11 October at Notcutts Garden Centre in Staines-upon-Thames.

The competition celebrates the work of Spelthorne's green-fingered residents and businesses who are helping make the Borough a brighter, cleaner, greener place to live. The judging took place in July and August with marks being awarded for a range of criteria including the design, colour, biodiversity and sustainability of the entry. Congratulations to the winners:

Category	Winner
Best Kept Front Garden	15 The Drive, Ashford
Best Container/Hanging Basket	26 Lindsay Drive, Shepperton
Best Kept Place of Worship	Joint winners: St Mary's Church, Stanwell and St Nicholas Church, Shepperton
Best Environmental Planting Project	Stanwell Community Allotments
Best Kept Public Building/Community Garden	Stanwell Community Allotments
Best War Memorial	Laleham
Best Small Pub	Three Horseshoes, Shepperton
Best Large Pub	Freemans Arms, Ashford

Best Riverside Garden	87 Thames Side, Staines
Best Kept Allotment	27/28 London Road, Staines
Best School Scarecrow	Ashford Park School, Ashford
Best School Edible Garden	Ashford Park School, Ashford
Best School Garden	Ashford Park School, Ashford
Best Overall School Entry	Ashford Park School, Ashford
Best New Entrant	48 Stewart Avenue, Shepperton
Best in Show	15 The Drive, Ashford

Spelthorne in Bloom opens again in spring 2022. The organisers are looking for new members to join the Spelthorne in Bloom Committee so if you are interested in helping to judge entries for this annual competition, they would love to hear from you. More sponsors are also needed, so please get in touch if you are looking for a great way to promote your company whilst supporting a much-loved community initiative.

For more information, email Vanessa Surmon at spelthorne.inbloom@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444288.

Bonfires

Complaints regarding bonfires at residential properties have dramatically increased since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bonfires can be a danger to people, property and wildlife. Fumes from bonfires are harmful to health and can be distressing for nearby residents. They are also harmful to the environment, causing air pollution and impacting climate change. Repeated bonfires can cause a statutory nuisance, and it's illegal to burn commercial waste, including builders' waste, on a bonfire.

Composting is a good way to get rid of your green waste and we also offer a garden waste collection scheme. Materials such as paper and cardboard should be put into your recycling bin. It is better for local air quality and the health of the community to use these facilities rather than having a bonfire.

For more information on bonfires visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/bonfires
Visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/gardenwaste for information on our garden waste collection scheme and composting.

Please don't feed me

In Spelthorne, many of our green spaces have grazing livestock to help improve plant biodiversity.

We ask you not to feed the cows and horses as it can make them extremely ill. They are highly sensitive to sudden dietary changes and often have individual food requirements. There are also chemicals, particularly in human food products, which livestock are unable to digest and cause pain and bloating for the animals. Even grass cuttings are unsafe as gases released during fermentation create blockages in the gut.

Thank you for helping us keep our livestock safe.