

Spelthorne Borough Council Spring Bulletin 2021

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Letter from the Leader

Dear Residents,

For the spring Bulletin we have chosen to focus on environmental issues and our commitment to make Spelthorne a cleaner, greener and more sustainable place to live, work and visit.

We have always regarded climate change as a very serious threat and have made good progress in reducing the Council's own carbon footprint.

However, to avoid any doubt about how concerned we are about climate change, we took the decision to declare a climate emergency in Spelthorne toward the end of last year as we believe there needs to be a greater step change to reduce carbon emissions and damage to the environment for our residents and future generations.

Across the Council's services, all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions will be aligned with the goal of achieving a shift to carbon neutrality. We intend to accelerate our efforts by introducing greener buildings, vehicles, investments and moving to renewable energy. You can read more about the work we are doing, and what residents can do to help, on pages 9-17.

Supporting new businesses continues to be a key priority for the Council and we are delighted to be opening our new business incubator this spring to provide a creative and supportive environment for start-ups and small businesses. Starting a new business is challenging but this new co-working space with office facilities, business support, mentoring and training will be a real

boost for Spelthorne's fledgling businesses. You can find out more about this on page 20.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has been following the rules to help stop the spread of Covid-19 and also pay tribute to the essential workers and volunteers in our Borough who have provided healthcare, sustenance, education, support and safety. You have been pillars of our community and your work is truly appreciated.

Cllr John Boughtflower, Leader of the Council

Message from Kwasi Kwarteng MP

The past year has been an incredibly difficult and frightening time and I would like to thank everyone for sticking to the rules and helping to stop the spread of this dreadful virus. The way everyone has pulled together as a community and looked out for those needing a bit of extra help has been truly exceptional.

I would like to thank Spelthorne Council for continuing to deliver vital services throughout the pandemic and their ongoing support for residents. The Council's Support4Spelthorne community helpline is still open and ready to take your call if you need any kind of help – phone 01784 446446 or email covid19welfare@spelthorne.gov.uk.

As Business Secretary I am very excited about the opening of Spelthorne Council's new business incubator. British businesses are facing extraordinary pressures at the moment but we will build back better and stronger and this is exactly the kind of support that new businesses will need to get started.

Farewell from the Mayor

We are now approaching the end of this mayoral year which has been like no other that has gone before. I regret that there has been no shaking of hands or hugs to thank and congratulate those who have been awarded for service in the community.

Even though we were unable to hold ceremonies such as the Civic Awards, I was determined to make the award presentations as personal as possible. So each recipient was presented on their

doorstep, from a distance of course! Spelthorne in Bloom awards were presented likewise, so I was able to see the excellent floral displays around the Borough. Particular thanks go to my secretary Sheila Kimpton for her enormous work in organising the routes and times.

Whilst it was possible, I have tried to support and promote local initiatives such as the Stanwell Community Allotment Group and Spelthorne Litter Pickers. The Mayoress and I joined in ourselves and found it very satisfying to help maintain our Borough in a tidy state. The opportunity for fund raising took a major blow as a number of events, concerts, garden parties and festivals scheduled throughout the summer and autumn had to be cancelled due to the pandemic.

Alas the Mayor's Ball, the highlight of the fundraising year, will also not be able to take place in April. This is very concerning as we rely on these events to raise money for the Mayor's Charities which this year are Girlguiding River Ash Division, Shooting Star Chase and Spelthorne District Scouts. If you would like to make a donation to support these amazing organisations, please contact my office.

I wish to say a special thank you to all those organisations and individuals who have in their own time provided food or vouchers to families struggling during the lockdown, including Manna Food Bank, the Salvation Army, St Saviour's Foodbank, Jubilee Church, and in particular Stanwell Community Group which is new and fast growing.

I am grateful to former Mayor, Cllr Mary Madams, for allowing us the opportunity to carry out some of her engagements last year, including attending the Surrey Youth Games at Guildford Sports Park. It was wonderful to see hundreds of children competing and enjoying themselves so much at the same time. I would also like thank my Deputy Mayor Cllr Tony Harman and his wife Daphne. We may not have had the events to attend but his words of encouragement have been invaluable. Finally, thank you to Barbara, my wife and Mayoress, for her support and being at my side in all we do.

Elections: 6 May 2021

Elections will be held on 6 May 2021 for the Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner, Surrey County Council and Spelthorne Borough Council byelection in Staines South Ward.

To keep yourself and others safe on polling day, please wear a face covering inside the polling station, sanitise your hands using the hand sanitiser provided, maintain and follow the social distancing instructions and bring your own pen or pencil to mark your ballot paper if possible.

How will you vote?

- By post - we will send you a postal voting pack so you can complete your ballot paper at home and return it by post. Apply by 5pm on 20 April.
- In person - going to the polling station to vote on polling day.
- By proxy - appointing a person to vote on your behalf at your polling station. The deadline to apply is 5pm on 27 April.

Download an application to vote by post or proxy at electoralcommission.org.uk/voter or contact us to request one.

Register to vote at www.gov.uk/register-to-vote by 19 April 2021, if you're not already registered.

Contact the Electoral Services team by email electoral.services@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 444218.

Armed Forces Covenant

2021 marks the 10th anniversary of the Armed Forces Covenant, the pledge by the nation to ensure that those who are serving or who have served in the Armed Forces, and their families, are treated fairly and are not disadvantaged as a result of the unique nature of their service.

Parliament is currently considering legislation to further incorporate the Armed Forces Covenant into law, honouring the commitment set out in the Queen's Speech, December 2019.

In addition, following a campaign by The Royal British Legion and Poppyscotland, the 2021 Census for the first time asked whether someone in the household has served in HM Armed Forces. From NHS planning for veteran care, to helping local authorities meet veterans' housing needs, the new census question will ensure that as a nation we are better equipped to deliver the best services possible for our Armed Forces community and target our resources more effectively.

As a council we remain committed to the Armed Forces Covenant and have pledged to continue in our efforts to increase support for the Armed Forces community. We are building on our achievement of securing the silver award in the MoD's employer recognition scheme by acting as an advocate to other local authorities and local businesses to do all they can to support the aims of the Covenant.

Over the past year our Armed Forces have stepped forward to support our nation through the Covid-19 pandemic. From constructing NHS Nightingale Hospitals to delivering testing, veterans continue to be at the heart of the voluntary effort that is making such a difference to so many people. We encourage all local businesses to join with us in signing the covenant to demonstrate their support to the Armed Forces community and the massive contribution that they make to our society. You can find out how to do this on the business pages on our website.

If you are a member of the Armed Forces community visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/AFC for support information or follow the Fordbridge Veteran Hub on Twitter @Fordbridgehub, and Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/fordbridgehub/

Send a smile in Spelthorne

Spelthorne Council has partnered with the Purple Angel Ambassadors to launch the 'send a smile' campaign. The national lockdown has meant we are all spending more time at home and, with lots of people looking to make a positive difference, we are inviting young people to write a letter, draw a picture or make a card for local residents living with dementia.

Children may like to include their first name and age, their

favourite hobbies, activities, school subject, or a picture of their pet among other things. For those living with dementia, these messages can make a real difference.

Please send your letters/drawings/cards to Leisure Services, Spelthorne Borough Council, Council Offices, Staines-upon-Thames, TW18 1XB or email leisure@spelthorne.gov.uk and we can print your letter.

For more information about Purple Angel Ambassadors visit www.spelthorne-dementia-support.org.uk.

Opportunity for first time buyers

Buying a home in any region of the UK can feel out of reach for many first-time buyers and this is particularly a problem in the South East and Surrey.

However, a more affordable option for potential buyers can be shared ownership, such as the scheme offered for Ascot House by Clarion Housing, in Staines-upon-Thames.

Open to local buyers in any occupation, the scheme enables purchasers to buy a share of the property's value, between 25% and 75%, and pay rent on the remaining share. The lower deposit level required with the scheme means buyers need only put down a deposit on the share they purchase, rather than the full market value of the property. Homeowners can then buy additional shares when they can afford to, right up to 100% ownership.

The new development comprises studios and one and two-bedroom apartments and features stunning podium gardens and a roof top terrace. With an abundance of walkable amenities to explore, an excellent choice of outdoor pursuits to enjoy and fast trains to London Waterloo, the stylish homes are ideal for first-time buyers.

Prices at Ascot House start at £76,250 for a 25% share of a studio shared ownership apartment with a full market value of £305,000. Deposits start from £3,750.

If you are interested in finding out more about the scheme or

viewing a home at Ascot House, visit www.ascothousestaines.co.uk or call 0333 3638269.

Step down homes in Spelthorne

Spelthorne Council has secured funding to provide 'step down' housing for residents who are ready to be discharged from hospital but aren't yet able to move back to their own homes. Four fully equipped flats at Beechwood Court in Sunbury-on-Thames and Chestnut Court in Stanwell have been reserved for this purpose and provide a 'home from home' environment whilst helping to free up hospital beds at a time when there is huge pressure on the NHS.

The accommodation is intended to be used on a short-term basis, usually up to six weeks, whilst plans are made for residents to move to a permanent home. Some people may be waiting for adaptations to be made to their home, while others will be waiting for alternative accommodation which meets their individual needs.

The step-down project is managed by Spelthorne Council and the properties are owned by the Council's housing partner, A2Dominion. Funding has been provided by Surrey Heartlands Health and Care Partnership.

Spelthorne purchases M&S store

In January this year, Spelthorne Council announced the purchase of the freehold of the former Marks & Spencer building in the heart of Staines-upon-Thames. Having bought the Elmsleigh Centre in February 2020, this opportunity supports the Council's regeneration and housing strategy for Staines town centre.

The Elmsleigh Centre, which was opened in February 1980 by Her Majesty The Queen, is at the very centre of Staines. The former M&S premises is in a key location on the High Street and forms a gateway linking up with the East Mall within the Centre.

This new acquisition completes the Council's ownership of a clear block of real estate giving it full control over the future of the Elmsleigh Centre and immediate surroundings, ensuring prosperity and vibrancy for the town.

Making changes in the present to save all our futures

As a topic close to my heart, this issue of Bulletin is focussing on environmental issues and a request that we – all of us – face up to the fact we cannot continue to abuse the planet we live on and assume we command control over our destiny.

Since the Industrial Revolution, we, as human beings have constantly stripped our planet of natural resources to achieve our own ends. Whether that be through mineral extraction, soil exhaustion, the destruction of plant life or being responsible for the extinction of countless other species. Quite simply, we seem to have lost the plot. What we can't afford to do is lose the planet – but we will if we do not change our behaviour.

At the end of last year, Spelthorne Council, along with many other authorities, organisations and major businesses declared a climate emergency. Our intent is to review everything we control and manage as your council and ensure we can carry out our work with the least impact on the environment. What we are hoping is that each and every resident of Spelthorne will support us and do likewise.

With nigh on 100,000 residents in our Borough, if all of us change one or two things to make ourselves a little bit 'greener' each day, the cumulative effect will make a difference. In this issue of the Bulletin you will find useful information on a number of things that you as an individual or a family unit can do to help reverse the damage we have caused and how we can work together to improve our environment and our world.

There will be plenty of naysayers who either do not believe there is a problem or are just not prepared to change the simplest of things to improve matters for everyone, but that isn't the point. It is about taking personal responsibility and adopting a more selfless attitude – if we can do that perhaps we can make the world a better place for us and every other species on the planet.

Cllr Bob Noble, Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Climate emergency in Spelthorne

At the end of last year, Spelthorne Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency and has joined a growing number of authorities that have adopted a carbon-neutral target.

By declaring a Climate Emergency, the Council is publicly prioritising this issue and acknowledging that a great effort must be made locally and nationally to reduce the effects of climate change.

Across the Council's services, all strategic decisions, budgets and approaches to planning decisions will be aligned with the goal of reducing carbon emissions. Spelthorne intends to accelerate its efforts by introducing greener buildings, energy, transport and investments and has already made excellent progress with the following actions:

- trial of electric refuse vehicles in spring
- 40% reduction in energy usage at the Council offices
- launch of a new climate change taskforce
- installation of solar panels on several council buildings
- new electric vehicles and bicycles for council staff travelling between sites
- installation of additional electric vehicle charging points across the Borough
- planting of over 1,000 new trees in the Borough
- allocation of £1.2million in grants to make homes more energy efficient
- installation of low energy lighting at all Council premises
- planning application to build a new ultra-low-energy leisure centre
- adoption of a sustainable housing strategy
- management of parks and open spaces to encourage biodiversity
- introduction of a single-use plastics policy, and paperless Council meeting
- sourcing 70% of our electricity demand from zero carbon renewable generators by 2022

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

The problem with plastic

It can seem sometimes that as individuals we cannot make an impact on things that affect us on a global scale, but nothing is further from the truth. By making small changes to our daily lives, which collectively add up, we can change how as a society we impact our environment. Take for example the issue of plastic. It's everywhere, we use it daily in a myriad of forms and it is tied to almost every aspect of our lifestyle.

Here are a few facts about plastic:

- All plastic ever manufactured is still in existence today. It may have broken down into smaller pieces but that same volume of original plastic is still present
- Half of all plastic ever manufactured has been in the last 15 years
- Our production of plastic has increased from 2.3 million tonnes in 1950 to 448 million tonnes in 2015. This is expected to double again by 2050 unless drastic action is taken
- Every year, 8 million tonnes of plastic finds its way into our oceans
- Some plastics stay in the environment for up to 400 years before they begin to break down into smaller particles which affect virtually every ecosystem

In 2018 an artist in Kent saved every single item of plastic that he used over the course of a year. He collected 4,490 pieces in total - 93% were single-use items, 70% of the items were not recyclable, and 67% of the plastic was used to package, wrap or consume food.

If we can change our own behaviour – to always use a reusable coffee cup, never accept a plastic bag in a shop or look more closely at what packaging is used on our food - we can make an impact. As consumers we all have the power to change how items are made, transported and packaged. By changing how we spend

our money and choosing products that use less plastic or more recycled material, we can reduce waste, save energy and prevent these harmful materials from entering the environment in the first place.

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

Expanding electric

Spelthorne Council will be trialling an electric refuse vehicle in April as part of a commitment to improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

Spelthorne's Neighbourhood Services team will be assessing how well the lorry performs during collection rounds to homes and businesses across the Borough.

The Council plans to take a leading role in improving air quality and an obvious place to start is with its own fleet of vehicles. Whenever possible, the Council aims to phase-out petrol and diesel vehicles and make the Council's lorries, vans and cars carbon neutral in the years ahead.

Last year, the Council made a good start by purchasing a number of electric pool cars and bicycles for staff who need to travel between sites, and two electric vans for the operational fleet.

New Leisure Centre will be top for energy efficiency

The Council has submitted a planning application to build a state-of-the-art leisure centre in Knowle Green in Staines from the middle of this year.

As well as being a modern design with all the latest facilities you would expect, it will also stand out as being incredibly energy efficient as one of the first centres in the UK to be designed and built to the ultra-low energy 'Passivhaus' standard.

The building will be orientated to make it truly south facing, enabling it to benefit from optimal natural sunlight and warmth. A 'fabric first' approach has been taken to ensure the building's roof, walls and floors are thermally efficient, well insulated and achieve

very high levels of air tightness to reduce heat loss and maintain a constant temperature.

The use of simultaneous heating and cooling air-source heat pumps will enable heat rejected from the gym and studio areas to be used to offset heat losses from the pool water. High performance triple-glazed windows and PHI compliant doors will also limit heat loss.

The swimming pool will use microfiltration technology that is virtually chlorine free, using a ceramic membrane and ultra-violet light to filter out contaminants in the water, a process which uses much less energy and water than a typical sand filtration pool. This system also provides exceptionally high water quality which improves the swimming experience for people who suffer with asthma, skin reactions or eye irritations.

Overall, by attaining Passivhaus Institute accreditation, Spelthorne Council expects the new leisure centre to use 60-70% less energy than a typical modern leisure centre, which will be a significant step in helping the Council achieve its aim of becoming carbon neutral in the coming years.

Going solar

Spelthorne Council has been granted £11,000 by the Enterprise M3 Clean Growth Programme towards the installation of solar panels at the Council's depot in Ashford.

The new solar panels will be another important step in helping the Council reduce its own carbon footprint, generating enough energy to supply a quarter of the depot's electricity and removing 5.7 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year. The installation will take place in the spring.

Installing more electric charging points

As part of its ongoing action plan on climate change, Spelthorne Council is working with Surrey County Council to increase the number of on-street charging points for electric vehicles across the Borough.

Using funding from the Enterprise M3 LEP, 10 fast on-street electric charging points will be installed across five locations in the spring as part of phase one. Each charge point will have two sockets, enabling two vehicles to charge simultaneously.

An additional 10 dual charging points will be delivered in the second phase towards the end of 2021, bringing the total in Spelthorne to 67.

Make the change

Small changes make a real difference

- reduce, recycle, reuse, repurpose and rethink where your waste goes
- always carry a spare bag for your shopping
- borrow don't buy – borrowing items will save you money and help save the planet
- join the local library – pay a visit or join online rather than buying new each time
- reduce your post – cancel paper statements and get information online
- get involved – commit to a green charity and volunteer to help
- pick up rubbish, even if it's not yours
- have concerns or ideas? Speak to your MP and local Councillors

Forward thinking food

Households in the UK throw away 7.1 million tonnes of food waste each year. That amount of food waste creates more than 20m tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions – the equivalent emissions as 3.5m cars.

Plan and prepare: Workout in advance a weekly menu. You may not stick to it exactly, but it will help you buy less, reduce car trips and cook in bulk. Freeze leftovers for another day.

The power of veg: Try to reduce meat consumption and eat more

plant based food and vegetables. It takes more than 2,400 gallons of water to produce just one pound of meat but only 25 gallons for one pound of wheat.

Drop dairy for a day: Just one day a week dairy free would be one of the most impactful things you can do to help reduce CO2 emissions.

Grow your own: Save carbon emissions and plant your own fruit and vegetables. Whether you just have a window box, balcony, garden or rent an allotment, nothing beats serving your own home-grown food.

Eat seasonally: Fruit or veg is best eaten fresh and when in season. Learn what grows best, and when, here in the UK. Talk to your local fruit and veg shop owner. Look on the wrapper of pre-packed supermarket food and take note of how far your blueberries, avocados, or strawberries have come from in winter.

Climate friendly cuppa: Before the Covid-19 pandemic, some coffee shops offered discounts to customers who bring their own cups. Check when you buy. Ensure your teabags are biodegradable as some contain traces of plastic that will end up in our oceans.

Check your dates: The 'use by' date is about safety and food isn't safe to eat after this date. The 'best before' is about quality and foods are perfectly safe to eat after this date - the texture, look and taste might just differ slightly.

Cool advice: Are you using your fridge correctly and efficiently? Check your fridge is at the correct temperature - between 0 and 5°C. Keep your fruit and veg in the fridge as it will last longer (apart from potatoes, onions, bananas, and pineapple). Keep bagged salad and spinach leaves fresher by putting a piece of kitchen towel in the bag and remember the fuller your fridge or freezer is, the less energy they take to keep it cold.

On the move

Transport is said to account for 26% of all greenhouse gases emitted in the UK.

Leave your car keys at home: In 2021 try and take steps to increase the amount you walk. Set yourself a daily target and download a step counter app to your phone to keep on track.

Pedal power: If you only travel short distances, the weather's good and you haven't the weekly shop to carry, switch to pedal power. Second-hand bikes are readily available so why not give it a go!

Cut the commute: Can you work from home? Even one day a week would reduce your travel and if we all do it, CO₂ emissions will decrease.

Cut your food shopping transport costs: Buy local produce – supermarket produce could well have travelled thousands of miles so to reduce the food air miles start buying local

Make the switch

- go green when buying electricity each month. Search 'Green Power' on the web to explore your options from a range of suppliers and begin the switch in 2021
- ensure all your light bulbs are energy efficient and always switch them off when not needed
- a poorly insulated home costs you money and wastes precious resources for everyone. Action Surrey has lots of useful information and grants available for residents. Visit www.actionsurrey.org or call 0800 783 2503
- switch your central heating thermostat down a couple of degrees. Even indoors, wrap up warm in the winter months
- never leave computers, TVs or other devices on standby. The Energy Savings Trust believe you can save up to £80 a year if you turn things off
- switch to the wind and sunshine – line drying isn't possible for some but if you can, break out the peg bag and cut your carbon footprint
- use rechargeable batteries – it could save you money and reduces waste and landfill
- switch from the tap to a cup when filling your kettle – only fill them with what you need to save water, money and energy

Wash and go!

90% of a washing machine's power is used to heat the water. Reducing the temperature from 40°C to 30°C could cut energy consumption by 46%, and give clothes an extra spin before putting them in the dryer.

Cooking green

Try a slow cooker which uses much less energy and only costs about £14 per year, if used for eight hours every day.

A bath or a shower?

A typical bath holds around 164 litres of water, meanwhile a ten-minute shower would use as much water as a 113 litre bath. If you can spend less than 5 minutes in the shower, all the better for the environment.

Buy local produce and reduce your carbon footprint

When it comes to the biggest polluters, transport is second only to industry. Every product we buy from a shop or order online has to be transported. From manufacturer to wholesaler, from wholesaler to retailer, from retailer to purchaser, every item is transported, mainly by road but also by boat or plane depending on the source of the product. The majority of us then drive to a supermarket to pick up the product ourselves.

We need to return to reducing the miles our goods travel and focus on buying local. One of the most common things we buy is food and one of the most travelled goods is food. Fresh food like fruit and vegetables, which have a short shelf life, are often flown around the world. Certain foodstuffs are shipped by sea in containers and nearly every food item will eventually be transported by road. When you then add to the 'food miles' travelled, the packaging required to keep food fresh and safe, mainly plastic, this adds another major pollutant to the whole process.

This year, we are encouraging residents to try and buy more local

produce where possible. It sometimes means you need to do a bit more planning but lots of people enjoy supporting local farmers and knowing more about where their food has come from. Top ways to buy local:

- do your research. Visit www.farmshop.uk.com to find your nearest farmers' market
- plan how much food you need. Most farmers' markets only happen at weekends, so be sure to get enough to last the week
- find out what's in season before you shop and plan meals accordingly
- use your local milkman - you'll be reusing glass bottles instead of single-use plastic ones and reducing the miles that the milk travels to reach you
- when shopping in the supermarket, as most of us have to, check the country of origin on the label of the product you are buying

Transformational trees

One of the most effective ways of capturing carbon is to plant more trees. If we want to lessen the damage we are already causing by producing too much Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), trees are the ultimate carbon capture and storage machines. Woods and forests absorb atmospheric carbon and lock it up for centuries.

As trees grow, they absorb and store the CO₂ emissions that are behind the cause of global warming. It is estimated that a worldwide planting programme could remove two-thirds of all the emissions from human activities that exist in the world today. Entire woodland ecosystems play a big part in locking in carbon, including the living wood, roots, leaves, even the deadwood that can surround a tree and the nurturing of associated plants.

At Spelthorne Council we are proud to have a tree as the emblem for the Borough and, as part of our climate emergency announcement, plan to plant 2,023 new trees in the Borough by 2023. Having already planted more than 1,000 new trees over the past two years, we look forward to continuing this important work

and encouraging residents, businesses, schools and landowners to get behind the initiative in future editions of the Bulletin.

For more information or advice on planting new trees, visit www.surreywildlifetrust.org/actions/how-plant-tree

Responsible waste

Recycling, waste reduction and responsible disposal of waste are all very topical at present, due to global warming and the fact that landfill space is becoming less available worldwide. We can, and should, all do our bit to reduce the environmental impact of our waste and Spelthorne Direct Services can help your business achieve this.

Over 40% of our greenhouse gas emissions come from making, moving and getting rid of items that we use. Through effective waste prevention techniques and responsible recycling we can use less energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to a healthier climate.

For businesses, paper is a good place to start. If one business with 1,000 employees recycled its office paper for one year, they would reduce their greenhouse gas emissions by 80 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide – the same as taking 50 cars off the road for a year.

If you would like to discuss your company's waste management strategy and ways to reduce your carbon footprint please get in touch by emailing customerservices@spelthorndirectservices

A warm and welcoming home

If you are struggling to keep your home warm and are finding your energy bills are too high, then Action Surrey, working in partnership with Spelthorne Borough Council can help. Our team can offer advice on the best ways to save energy, keep your home warm and reduce your energy bills.

There are several measures that can help tackle high fuel bills and vulnerabilities to the cold, such as cavity wall and loft insulation or a brand-new boiler. Insulating your loft can typically save around

£135 on your energy bills each year, meaning this measure should pay for itself many times over during its lifespan.

On top of this, you could be eligible for some grant funding towards some of the improvements, which our team can check. The best thing is, the work can all be arranged through our trusted network of installers.

To find out more, visit www.actionsurrey.org or call 0800 783 2503 to speak to one of our advisors.

Greener homes

If you're a homeowner or residential landlord you can apply for a Green Homes Grant voucher towards the cost of installing energy efficient improvements to your home, which could save up to £600 a year on energy bills.

Improvements could include insulating your home to reduce your energy use or installing low-carbon heating to lower the amount of carbon dioxide your home produces.

For more information, visit www.simpleenergyadvice.org.uk or call 0800 444202.

Spelthorne in Bloom 2021

Calling all gardeners who help to keep our Borough beautiful every year.

Spelthorne in Bloom is back for its 32nd year. At the time of writing this, we hope gardening will once again be a pleasure for local residents this summer and that the competition will receive plenty of entries, perhaps more than the 60 we had last year.

Children's poster competition

Spelthorne in Bloom kicks off as usual with the children's poster competition before Easter. This year we will be asking Headteachers to invite children to take part in school or at home, as a school art project or just with their family at home. The winning poster will be printed on the Spelthorne in Bloom entry

forms and posters. If your child would like to take part in the competition but has not heard about it, please email spelthorne.inbloom@spelthorne.gov.uk and details will be emailed to you. The closing date for entries is Friday 9 April at 4pm.

Spelthorne In Bloom competition

As we cannot hold our normal launch event, we will begin distributing entry forms from 1 May, by post to regular participants, and at local garden centres Notcutts and Squire's. Completed entry forms can be emailed to the address above, or sent by post to Spelthorne in Bloom, White House Depot, Kingston Road, Ashford TW15 3SE by 25 June at 4pm.

The volunteers who run Spelthorne in Bloom and colleagues at Spelthorne Borough Council encourage everyone to take part again this year and look forward to seeing plenty of entries.

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

Census 2021 will provide a snapshot of modern society

Households across Spelthorne will soon be asked to take part in Census 2021.

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey that gives us the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales. It has been carried out every decade since 1801, with the exception of 1941. It will be the first census run predominantly online, with households receiving a letter with a unique access code, allowing them to complete the questionnaire on their computers, phones or tablets.

“A successful census will ensure everyone from local government to charities can put services and funding in the places where they are most needed,” Iain Bell, deputy national statistician at the Office for National Statistics, said. “This could mean things like doctors’ surgeries, schools and new transport routes. That’s why it is so important everyone takes part and we have made it easier for people to do so online on any device, with help and paper questionnaires for those that need them.”

Census day will be on 21 March, but households across the country will receive letters with online codes allowing them to take part from early March. The census will include questions about your sex, age, work, health, education, household size and ethnicity. And, for the first time, there will be a question asking people whether they have served in the Armed Forces, as well as voluntary questions for those aged 16 and over on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Results will be available within 12 months, although personal records will be locked away for 100 years, kept safe for future generations. For more information, visit www.census.gov.uk

Spelthorne Business Incubator

Do you want to start, develop, and grow your business in a cost effective and vibrant location with fellow entrepreneurs, start-ups and small businesses with the added benefit of mentoring, training, and networking opportunities? The Spelthorne Hub could be the ideal location for you.

Created by Spelthorne Council, the Spelthorne Hub will provide a co-working environment for new start-ups and early stage businesses to develop their ideas and turn an innovative spark into a strong commercial enterprise. Offering a choice of hot desks, permanent desks and serviced office facilities, various packages will be available, with prices starting from £99 per month.

Most of the packages include:

- broadband up to 1GB
- workshops and seminars
- access to mentors
- membership of the Spelthorne Business Forum
- access to meeting rooms and informal break-out areas
- parking
- tea and coffee
- 'start your own business' book

Located just off junction 1 of the M3 on the Hanworth Road in Sunbury-on-Thames, next to the A316 opposite Costco, the hub is well located with excellent transport links for London, the South

East and beyond.

Open days will be held soon.

For more information about the Spelthorne Hub, email e.development@spelthorne.gov.uk

New digital screens for the Elmsleigh Centre

New digital screens have been installed at the Elmsleigh Centre in Staines-upon-Thames to display information about the shopping centre and its retailers, as well as public health information and updates from the Council.

The large screens will provide an important communication tool to help keep residents informed and provide support for the local businesses. Initially the main priority will be messages to help shoppers stay safe during the pandemic but in time it is hoped the information can be expanded to include information about the centre's retailers, community safety information, leisure events, council updates, consultations and other local information.

Spelthorne Council obtained funding from the Enterprise M3 LEP for the screens and other town centre improvements including additional cycle racks, improved signage and help to make the high street Covid safe. Another digital screen is also being planned for the Two Rivers Shopping Centre.

Supporting Spelthorne families

Spelthorne Council has been going over and above its usual responsibilities to support vulnerable families and residents during the pandemic. Throughout the school holidays, staff at the Council's Community Centres have been providing hot nutritious meals for hundreds of local children who are eligible for free school lunches, to ensure no child is left hungry and that families are supported in what has been a very difficult year for many residents.

Last year, the Council also donated £71,000 to local food banks, Voluntary Support North Surrey and Citizens Advice to support their vital services and create a fund which is being distributed to

voluntary and community groups in the Borough.

Our Support4Spelthorne Community Helpline is still open, so if you need our help, please get in touch by email at covid19welfare@spelthorne.gov.uk or call 01784 446446 (Mon - Fri, 9am - 4pm).

Meals on Wheels

The Council's Meals on Wheels team offer an evening service in addition to the regular lunchtime round. Meals are delivered between 5pm–8pm, Monday to Friday, not including bank holidays.

For more information and availability, call the Meals on Wheels team on 01784 444265.

Leisure Directory

The Spelthorne Leisure Directory is packed full of special interest clubs, social groups and sporting activities to help you make the most of your leisure time. Browse or search our Spelthorne Leisure Directory at www.spelthorne.gov.uk/leisuredirectory

If you run a local activity or are part of a club or group and would like to be included for free in the directory, visit the web address mentioned above and complete the online form or call the Leisure and Wellbeing Team on 01784 446433.

Specsavers Surrey Youth Games

Due to the uncertainty surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, the difficult decision has been made to cancel the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games event for 2021. The risks connected with large numbers of people from across Surrey congregating at one venue are too great and it would not be safe for the event to take place.

We hope that it will return in its usual format for 2022. In the meantime, keep an eye on our website and social media pages for other opportunities for young people to get active in Spelthorne this summer.

Getting back to normal

Some of our regular activities including Walking and Cycling for Health and Xplorer have had to pause on occasions over the last year due to the various lockdowns. We hope to get things up and running again as soon as possible so keep an eye on our website and social media pages for updates on when activities will restart and ideas on ways to keep active outside.

In the meantime, Joe Wicks and the Diana Moran both have some excellent online videos which you can find at www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1 and www.spelthorne.gov.uk/greengoddess.

Walking for Health

Local resident Joan Gardam became one of the first leaders of Spelthorne's Walking for Health Scheme in 2003 and has always promoted the scheme and its health benefits whenever she has the opportunity.

Joan said: "At the height of the lockdown in June 2020 I was diagnosed with breast cancer which was treated immediately by the amazing team at Ashford Hospital. All the specialists were impressed at my level of fitness which I explained to them was because I was, until lockdown, an active leader of the Spelthorne Walking for Health scheme.

"Their skill ensured that I received the very best treatment, completed by December, and I am convinced that my good recovery was due to walking regularly, which they agreed with. When I get back to leading, I will now be able to add a personal testimony to how important it is to remain active just by simply walking!"

Walking is one of the easiest ways to stay active for free. It improves your mood, gives you more energy, reduces stress and blood pressure, improves sleep and helps you manage your weight.

For more information on the Spelthorne Walking for Health

Scheme and our self-led walk packs, visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/walkingforhealth

Capture Spelthorne 2020: photography competition winners

In the last edition of the Bulletin, we published the photographs of the 2020 Capture Spelthorne finalists and are pleased to announce that the following photographers were selected as winners of their category:

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|---------------------------|----------------|
| • My Spelthorne: | Monica Chard |
| • Spelthorne in Action: | Joanna Ginger |
| • Through the Seasons: | John Harris |
| • Spelthorne in Business: | Victoria Allum |
| • Under 16s: | Mason Glazier |

Many congratulations to Monica Chard who was chosen as the overall winner of Capture Spelthorne 2020.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions we were unable to hold our awards evening so we delivered the prizes to the winners individually.

Capture Spelthorne 2021

Capture Spelthorne 2021 is now open for entries and we are looking for the best photographs of the Borough. This is a great opportunity for you to embrace the outdoors, explore our beautiful borough and showcase your photography skills. The overall winner will see their photo on the cover of the Bulletin magazine and across our social media pages.

You don't need an expensive camera to take part, any camera or smartphone will do, provided the photograph was taken in Spelthorne after 1 May 2020 and is submitted by the closing date. We are looking for pictures that tell a story about Spelthorne in the following categories:

- Community in Spelthorne: Reflecting the spirit of Spelthorne's warm and vibrant community.
- Business in Action: Construction sites, scenes from our high

streets, factories, transport and more.

- Nature in Spelthorne: Capturing the diversity of Spelthorne's beautiful natural features and wildlife.
- Sporting Spelthorne: Showing all the drama, energy, athleticism and excitement of sport in Spelthorne.
- Under 16s: There is also a prize for the best entry in this age group for each of the above categories.

Three finalists for each category will be invited to a private screening of their entries at the Cinema at Shepperton Studios where the winners will be announced. Each category winner will receive a £50 cheque, a framed picture of their winning photo and a pair of tickets to the Pinewood Cinema. The overall winner will receive a trophy, £100 and see their photo on the cover of the Bulletin magazine.

The closing date for entries is 31 August 2021.

For terms and conditions and details on how to enter visit www.spelthorne.gov.uk/capture