

SPRING 2024 Local



news from your borough council

Literary Festival Returns

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Dear resident

Daffodils are popping up, days are lighter; must be the start of spring! That means we're getting closer to the elections on Thursday 2 May. I want to remind everyone that photo ID was introduced last year and will be required again this year at the polling stations. We have produced information to explain how you can vote and what you need to do on pages 8 and 9.



Speaking of elections, boundary changes will come into effect after May.

I can't believe we are now introducing our third literary festival in May. I absolutely loved the previous two and am now excited for 2024 - fact, fiction, from the serious to the outrageously funny - Lit Fest 24 will have something for everyone. The marquee in Calverley Grounds is new for this year which will combine cooking demonstrations with chefs discussing their new releases, sounds exciting! Find out more on page 5.

Feeling safe where you live is important to everyone, and in our What We Do feature we are showcasing the breadth of what our Community Safety team do each day, and the agencies they work with to maintain the borough as one of the safest in the county. Read more on pages 18-19.

There's still time to complete our survey about the draft strategic plan. Your feedback will shape the second phase of consultation in the summer, when we ask for feedback on the actions the Council will focus on over the next five years. More on page 17.

And finally, read our latest news, articles and forthcoming events and shows.

Best wishes
William Benson
Chief Executive

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We produce Local to keep you up-to-date about Council services and news. If you have any comments about the magazine, we'd love to hear from you. Contact us by:
Email: Local@tunbridgewells.gov.uk Phone: **01892 526121**

Post: **Lizzie Goodwin, Communications Manager,**
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS

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The information in this publication was correct at the time of going to print. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council cannot accept responsibility for any errors, omissions or subsequent changes.

If you require Local magazine in large print or on audio please phone **01892 526121**.



Wellbeing in the Community

Throughout 2024 The Amelia will be offering a wide variety of courses specifically designed and managed to help everyone within our community.

Take Some Time

This fantastic initiative is for anyone who feels lonely or isolated and would like to make new friends and make connections. The 12-week course will feature a range of objects from our collection, giving you the chance to look, think and talk about them. You'll also make art inspired by the fascinating objects at The Amelia Scott.

Course runs for 12 weeks from 18 March.

The Curiosity Project

Our monthly group for people living with dementia and their carers. The group is friendly and relaxed with free tea/coffee and biscuits! The sessions include an object from our collection which we discuss and use as inspiration for artwork. There is a full range of art materials available to use.

The Curiosity Project is held every first Thursday of the month from 10.30am-12pm.



Get in touch

For more information on our wellbeing activities contact Daniel Huckfield: Daniel.huckfield@tunbridgewells.gov.uk call 01892 554146, visit theamelia.co.uk or visit us at The Amelia Scott.

Digitalisation at The Amelia Scott

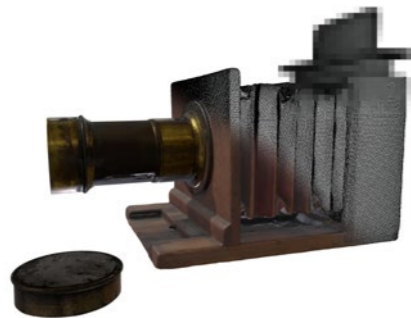
At The Amelia we have started an ambitious project to digitise objects from the collection in 3D.

Using structured light scanners and photogrammetry, the collections team will

preserve digital copies of our collection, viewable in 360 degrees for generations to come. With much of The Amelia's collection held in secure storage, this initiative will also make our collection available anywhere in the world. Digital copies can be sent straight to the classroom in seconds, providing new learning opportunities for schools and new insights for researchers.

Imagine now being able to get up close with your favourite artefact or see how it might look projected into your own home. These digital objects are also compatible with 3D printing technology which will allow us to create replicas for tactile learning or to go on display. Using computer-aided design technology, we can see and recreate objects from our scans to help with conservation. This new and exciting project aims to make our collection available for all to view and enjoy.

If you would like to request a digital replica of an object from The Amelia, please email info@theamelia.co.uk



Being Inbetween: Carolyn Mendelsohn

A new exhibition of powerful photographic portraits exploring the complex transition between childhood and young adulthood is now open at The Amelia Scott.

Award-winning photographer Carolyn Mendelsohn has worked collaboratively with 90 girls who are in the midst of navigating this complex, and potentially defining, period in their lives. Through her photography and accompanying interviews, Mendelsohn allows everyone an opportunity to express their identity, encouraging a dialogue on ambitions and aspirations, hopes and fears.

Taken as a whole, the exhibition offers a highly personal insight into this group of unique young women, with each girl the author of her own look and artist of her own image.

Being Inbetween is an Impressions Gallery touring exhibition and will be on display at The Amelia Scott from 9 February-16 June. Free admission. For more information visit theamelia.co.uk.



© Carolyn Mendelsohn/courtesy Impressions Gallery



Tunbridge Wells Literary Festival

Returns from Thursday 9 May - Sunday 12 May

Lit Fest 2024 is set to enthrall and engage whether you love books or simply have a curious mind. Headlining this year's literary festival will be Radio 2 star and West End legend Michael Ball, with his funny and insightful first memoir *Different Aspects*.

Also confirmed to speak are comedy pioneer Lenny Henry and travel guru and national treasure Michael Palin, discussing his new book *Great Uncle Harry: A Tale of War and Empire*.

Barrister Michael Mansfield KC presents his powerful memoir *The Power in the People* about a career spent fighting injustice, persecution and corruption, be it the Birmingham Six, Stephen Lawrence, the Marchioness, Hillsborough or Grenfell.

Prolific crime fiction writer Peter James will discuss his latest book in the Brighton-based DSI Roy Grace series: *They Thought I Was Dead*, whilst Peter Faulding will

pick through the bones of his real-life experiences as a forensic search and rescue expert and present his new book *What Lies Beneath*.

Tracy Borman will whet the appetite of history fans at The Amelia Scott, discussing her new book *Anne Boleyn and Elizabeth I: The Mother and Daughter Who Changed History*.

The brilliant Clare Pooley, author of *The Sober Diaries* and the massively popular blog *Mummy was a Secret Drinker* sheds light on how her life has turned around since ditching the booze in 2017.

With children's authors, a Local Writers' Fair and events at The Forum, a much-loved grassroots music venue, this promises to once again be a festival with something for everyone!

Subscribe for updates as new authors are announced at theamelia.co.uk

New this year, the beautiful Calverley Grounds will become a Lit Fest 2024 venue with a large marquee showcasing chefs and food writers for practical demonstrations and Q&A sessions. Michelin starred chef Atul Kochhar will mark the launch of his Tunbridge Wells restaurant *Essence* by joining us to discuss his food philosophy and cook a dish or two. Local chef and culinary doyen Rosemary Shrager will add extra flavour to the mix, discussing not only cookery but also her latest work of crime fiction *Too Many Cooks*.

Information correct at time of going to press.



Donation to charity

Every year our crematorium recycles metals from the cremation process, donated by bereaved families.

Over a period of 12 months this can add up to a substantial amount, which is quite rightly given to charity through the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management Recycling of Metals Scheme. Last year we supported Jigsaw, a children's charity.

In 2023, the crematorium staff had a lot of communication with families; face to face and over the telephone where it became increasingly apparent how many families had lost a loved one to suicide. They found

that on the back of the pandemic mental health issues have been a common cause which is so deeply affecting many families in the borough.

Therefore, we were thrilled to be able to donate £14,000 to Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide (SOBS). The money donated will allow more families to attend a retreat, the purchase of more literature, and will support the groups who meet monthly and attend coffee mornings. All the money will support the bereaved locally who reach out to their service.



Julia D Smith, SOBS, Sheila Burgman, SOBS (and founder of SOBS Maidstone) and Cllr Ellen Neville. Sheila set up the Maidstone group (our nearest branch) in 2005 after she lost her son in 2003 when he was just 20 years old.



Grants will make a difference to residents

Community Support Fund grants have been given to organisations within the local community that are working hard to support residents.

The Community Support Fund was established by councillors last year in response to the cost-of-living crisis which impacts upon many of the most vulnerable households in the borough. Each organisation awarded a grant showed in their application that the money would be used for specific projects, the expansion of existing services due to growth in demand, or new needs that have been identified.

Nourish, for example, will be using their grant to give eligible residents who have pre-payment meters

vouchers to help with fuel costs. Age UK Tunbridge Wells will be able to provide more care packages - day-care, meals and transport. Home-Start will provide preventative holistic support for vulnerable families who have very young children and West Kent Mind will be seeing more young people for counselling and will provide mental health training to schools and other charity groups. And finally, the parish larders are already supporting over 1,000 people weekly, the grant will help them continue their work.

In January a cross-party committee of councillors agreed five grants of £20,000 for

Nourish Community Foodbank

Age UK Tunbridge Wells

Home-Start

West Kent Mind

Church parish larders

(Christ Church, St Mark's, St Matthew's, St Paul's, St Philip's and The Baptist Church)



News in brief

Find out what people are talking about in Tunbridge Wells this spring

For news and events follow us on Facebook and Twitter or find out more at [twbc.online/news](https://www.twbc.online/news)

- TunbridgeWellsBoroughCouncil
- TWellsCouncil
- TWellsbc

Home Upgrade Grant

If you're living in a cold home, there is a new government grant that might help you. The Home Upgrade Grant scheme is for hard to heat homes that are not heated by mains gas. The measures funded by the grant could help you use less energy, reduce your carbon footprint, and spend less on your energy bills. There's information on our website so if you want to find out more just search Home Upgrade Grant at [tunbridgewells.gov.uk](https://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

Competition winners

Congratulations to RA, WC, LL, KW - all winners of the competition and prize draw in the winter edition of Local. We love a competition so look out for Local in June and join in the fun.

Love Where We Live

Some of you have enquired about the Love Where We Live awards and we're very pleased to tell you that after a break in 2023 the awards are back. More information about Love Where We Live 2024 to come in the summer edition of Local in June, and look out for details on social media from May.

Household Energy Bill - additional support

Kent County Council is working with Citizens Advice North and West Kent to support residents on low incomes who are taking positive steps to address their debts.

You could be eligible for additional support towards your household energy bill and receive up to £500. Find out if you meet the eligibility criteria and get more information at [kentmoneyadvicehub.com](https://www.kentmoneyadvicehub.com)

Funding is limited so act now.

Have you heard about GO?

The GO membership scheme is free to people who live in the borough and are on low income and in receipt of benefits. It offers discounts at sport, recreational, leisure and cultural facilities provided by the Council and other participating organisations.

For further information and full details about how to apply visit [gotunbridgewells.co.uk](https://www.gotunbridgewells.co.uk)

Another car joins the club

The Co Wheels car club in Tunbridge Wells has another new vehicle making a total of nine cars available locally for use by members.

The new car is located on Duncalf Road, Hawkenbury.

Being a car club member gives you a cost-effective and environmentally-friendly way of getting around, reducing the need for privately-owned vehicles.



To find out how you can join the car club visit the Co Wheels website [co-wheels.org.uk](https://www.co-wheels.org.uk)

New grant for Weald Sports Centre

The Council recently learnt that it has been successful in a bid for funding to the Government's Swimming Pool Support Fund. A grant of £90,000 has been awarded for the Weald Sports Centre. The money will be used to replace fluorescent lighting with LED lighting, and for new pool covers. Covering the pools reduces heat loss which means using less energy reheating the water and it reduces evaporation and dehumidification; LED lighting is more energy efficient and reliable - measures that are all good for the environment and cost saving.

Easter fun

Look out for information about Easter events near you on local websites and social media. To get you started there's a Scavenger Hunt on Saturday 30 March at the KGV Playing Fields, Hawkhurst, and Easter trails at local National Trust properties.

Be ready to vote in the elections in May and in future!



You must now show photo ID when voting at a polling station at some elections. This requirement applies at the elections being held in the borough on 2 May.

Which forms of photo ID can I use to vote?

You may already have a form of photo ID that is acceptable. You can use any of the following:

- Passport
- Driving licence (including provisional licence)
- Blue badge
- Certain concessionary travel cards (including Kent County Council Bus Pass; Disabled Person's Bus Pass)
- Identity card with PASS mark (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- Biometric immigration document
- Defence Identity Card
- Certain national identity cards

For more information on which forms of photo ID will be accepted, visit

electoralcommission.org.uk/voting-and-elections/voter-id/accepted-forms-photo-id

The Electoral Commission

If you don't have an accepted form of photo ID

If you don't already have an accepted form of photo ID, you can get a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate.

To apply, search Voter Authority Certificate at gov.uk

Alternatively, complete the paper application form available for download on our website and return it to our Elections team.

As long as you are registered to vote by Tuesday 16 April, you can apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for these elections. The deadline to apply for this is 5pm Wednesday 24 April.

Need help?

If you need any help with applying or would like to apply in person, please contact the Elections team.

elections@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
01892 554024 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm)

Electoral Services
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
Town Hall
Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS

Local elections

Police and Crime Commissioner, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and, if contested, some parish elections will take place on 2 May.



All Tunbridge Wells Borough councillors will be elected in May.

The Borough elections are different this year. Following changes to the ward boundaries there are now fewer wards, 14, and the total number of councillors is reduced to 39. This means all current councillors leave office in May.

Councillors will serve for two, three or four years depending on how many votes they get and how many councillors represent each ward.

See the new ward boundaries here twbc.online/new-wards

Parish elections, if contested, will take place in

Brenchley and Matfield, Capel, Hawkhurst, Horsmonden, Lamberhurst, Sandhurst.



Can't go to a polling station?

To apply, search postal vote/proxy vote at gov.uk

If you would like an application form posted to you please contact the Elections team, see contact details on page 8.

Changes to returning postal votes

There have been changes to how you return your postal vote. We recommend you return your completed postal vote as soon as possible by taking it to a post box yourself.

If you choose to hand deliver your postal vote, you can only hand in your own and up to five others. You will be asked to complete a form when you hand them in before they can be accepted. Postal votes must not be put through the Town Hall letterbox.

Important dates to note



Final day to register to vote



Deadline to register for a postal or postal proxy vote



Deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate
Deadline to apply for a proxy vote



Polling Day
Don't forget your photo ID!



Make sure you are registered to vote

Registering to vote is quick and easy online. You need just five minutes and your National Insurance number. You don't need to register to vote before every election.

gov.uk/register-to-vote

Our top five picks around Tunbridge Wells this spring



Spring transforms Tunbridge Wells into a tapestry of blooming gardens and verdant landscapes, we are in the Garden of England after all!

Whether you seek historical charm, outdoor adventures, or artistic pursuits, there is something special in store for you this season.



Rediscover local gardens

Scotney Castle Gardens: Escape into a fairy-tale with enchanting spring blooms in the walled garden and serene woodland paths.

Sissinghurst Castle Garden: Visitors worldwide come to enjoy this gem on our doorstep! Travel through history in this iconic Elizabethan site, boasting themed gardens like the White Garden and Purple Border, bursting with seasonal beauty.

Pashley Manor Gardens: Immerse yourself in 16 acres of spring splendour with rhododendrons, tulips, and camellias in bloom. Explore the woodland garden, stroll by the lake, and find tranquillity in this hidden gem.

Dunorlan Park: Unwind in harmony with nature. The park is perfect for families. Enjoy a picnic by the lake or let the kids loose in the adventure playground.



Savour the flavours of spring

Farmers' shops and markets: Stock up on fresh, seasonal produce from your local farm shop. Highlights include Taywells in Goudhurst, Hartley Farm in Cranbrook and Groombridge Farm Shop. Don't miss the vibrant Tunbridge Wells Farmers' Market, held every other weekend in the historic Pantiles to sample local produce and discover local crafts.

Alpacas and afternoon tea: Isn't this just the best combination? At the Bewl Rookery you can enjoy afternoon tea... with a friendly bunch of alpacas. If you'd like to simply walk an alpaca, you can visit Crowbourne Alpacas in Goudhurst. You can stay for a glamping experience with lunch and breakfast included and fluffballs grazing outside your pod of course! Does this call for a staycation?

Seasonal culinary delights: Cloudberry in Cranbrook offers a seasonal locally-sourced menu. Enjoy this fine dining experience with a four-course menu for £50. Royal Tunbridge Wells welcome its first pay-as-you-feel eatery, Charlies Angel's Kitchen. The café is a not-for-profit community interest company that aims to tackle food waste and food insecurity. The café offers cooked meals, fruit, and vegetables, all of which will be donated by local farms and supermarkets.

Embrace the fresh air and discover new experiences on your doorstep! Keep an eye on our events calendar at visittunbridgewells.com

We hope this article inspires you. Share your memories, new findings and your own local recommendations with us on social media.



Unleash your inner artist

Slap'n'Dash (Hawkhurst) & Manic Ceramix (Royal Tunbridge Wells): Choose your pottery piece, get creative and glaze your masterpiece for a unique keepsake.

The Ceramic Studio (Brenchley): Intimate pottery classes for all levels. Master wheel throwing, hand-building, and create functional or decorative pieces.

Arty Farty (Southbrough): Explore your creativity through courses and workshops in various mediums. Learn new skills, express yourself, and connect with the artistic community.

Knot Works (Southbrough): Artist-led exhibitions and events including pottery workshops and artist development sessions. Dive into creativity and discover new artistic avenues.



Indulge in cultural delights

Hemsted Park, Benenden School: Discover this leading performing arts venue, Centenary Hall and The Benenden Theatre, showcasing world-class music, drama, and dance.

Assembly Hall Theatre and Trinity Theatre: Catch a captivating performance at these historic theatres, from world-class dramas and comedies to live music and dance shows.

The Amelia Scott: Delve into the rich history and heritage of Royal Tunbridge Wells and the surrounding area and explore the fascinating collections.



Embark on outdoor adventures

The Tunbridge Wells Circular: The 27.5 mile walk explores the beautiful National Landscape. Highlights include Groombridge Place, Chagall windows at Tudeley, Harrison's Rocks and picturesque villages where you will find a delicious pub meal awaits. Does this sound like an Easter Weekend Challenge?!

Bedgebury: Get your adrenaline pumping at Go Ape, the exhilarating forest adventure park. Swing through the trees on high ropes courses, zipline through the canopy, and conquer your fear of heights. Or why not join a welcoming group of women cyclists? Rhonda's MTB weekly guided bike rides are great for any level.

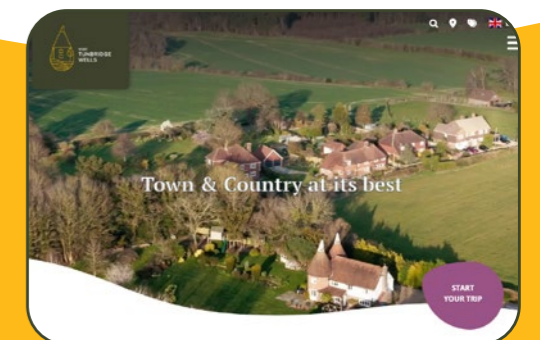
New website launch!

Visit Tunbridge Wells is launching a NEW website at the end of March! We have an array of new and exciting itineraries, locals' recommendations, and bookable experiences to fill your weekend with fun and show off the best of the borough with your visiting friends and relatives.

Receive an exclusive preview of the website and seasonal updates on new things to do via our newsletter.



sign up to our newsletter



Share your memories with us on:

@Visit_TunbridgeWells
 @Visit Tunbridge Wells

Developer contributions support local projects

A number of developer contributions' awards have been approved in recent weeks. These funds will be making their way to communities to support local projects.

The children's play area in **St John's Recreation Ground** will be acquiring new play equipment. The existing safety surfacing both here and in **Calverley Grounds'** play area will be refurbished to blend in with the surrounding area. **Showfields** play area is also going to see improvements with new play equipment, safety surfacing and landscaping work.

At **Southwood Road Recreation Ground** funds will be used towards a drainage project that will improve the football pitches and should mean more games can be played during the season.

Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council requested the release of funds to support an upgrade at **Matfield Pavilion** including replacement of old electric heating and the redecoration of the main pavilion room.

Horsmonden Sports Club will receive funds to towards the development and construction of a new sports pavilion.

The new addition to the **Co Wheels car club** in Hawkenbury is also a result of a developer contribution.



Phase 1 sold out

Space and support to start and grow businesses in Tunbridge Wells.

We've transformed the Town Hall, providing offices, coworking, meeting rooms and more.

Coworking membership from only £30+VAT and launch offers now available on offices.

Book a tour and find out more twtownhall.co.uk

Better wellbeing is just a step away!



We are very lucky to have such beautiful parks in Royal Tunbridge Wells as well as the commons of Rusthall, Tunbridge Wells and Southborough. While across the rural parts of the borough we have pretty market towns, villages and the High Weald National Landscape.

Our Wellbeing Walks take advantage of all these natural resources by providing short, regular, sociable group walks in diverse locations, so there should always be a walk happening close to where you live.

Join a Wellbeing Walk and you'll enjoy the benefits of friendly volunteer leaders, good company, fresh air and stunning scenery. Most groups also take the opportunity to stop for refreshments somewhere after the walk, to continue the conversations!

Best of all, our walks are always FREE to join and don't require booking, just pop along and say hi.



Current walk schedule

All walks are subject to change, so we recommend checking our website or getting in touch before joining a walk (contact details below).

Cranbrook

Day: Every Tuesday
Time: 9am, 9.30am, 10am
Meet: The play area on Ball Field, by Jockey Lane car park, TN17 3JB
Duration: Up to 90 minutes (first two groups) or up to 60 minutes (10am group)

Paddock Wood

Day: First Wednesday of the month
Time: 10am
Meet: By the entrance to Commercial Road car park, TN12 6EL
Duration: Up to 90 minutes

Benenden

Day: Every Thursday
Time: 11am
Meet: Hemsted Forest car park, Goddards Green Road, TN17 4AN
Duration: Up to 90 minutes

Dunorlan Park Royal Tunbridge Wells

Day: Second Friday of the month
Time: 10am
Meet: Outside the café in Dunorlan Park, TN2 3QN
Duration: Up to 60 minutes

Rusthall

Day: Bi-weekly Tuesdays (see website for dates)
Time: 10am
Meet: Outside St. Paul's Church Centre, Rusthall Road, TN4 8RE
Duration: Up to 90 minutes

Calverley Grounds Royal Tunbridge Wells

Day: Every Thursday
Time: 1.30pm
Meet: Outside café in Calverley Grounds, TN1 1QY
Duration: Up to 60 minutes

Grosvenor and Hilbert Park Royal Tunbridge Wells

Day: Every Monday
Time: 10.30am
Meet: Outside the café in G&H Park, TN1 2JB
Duration: Up to 60 minutes

Tunbridge Wells Common

Day: Second Saturday of the month
Time: 10.30am
Meet: By the car park in Fir Tree Road, TN4 8AH
Duration: Up to 60 minutes

Garden waste collections

It is easy to sign-up to the fortnightly garden waste service and pay online.

twbc.online/gw-subscribe



For more information about our walks:

ramblers.org.uk/wellbeing-walks/royal-tunbridge-wells

To get in touch with us:

health@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

01892 554411

We also send out weekly email newsletters to keep you informed about our walks, sign up at: eepurl.com/hosfiv

Cabinet updates

Our regular feature where the eight members of Cabinet share updates from their portfolio area.



Cllr Ben Chapelard
Leader of the Council

What should your Council focus on to make our borough

a better place over the next five years? You can now have your say on the draft priorities in our Strategic Plan through our public consultation. We are unashamedly ambitious about where we live and work.

The five priorities are: climate action, our environment, sustainable growth, vibrant economy and community wellbeing.

These priorities have emerged from our councillor convention and our residents' borough wide survey.

Have we got our priorities right? Please let us know your thoughts via the public consultation twbc.online/spsurvey.



Cllr Mark Ellis
New Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

In difficult times, Tunbridge Wells

Borough Council is financially stable, achieving a balanced budget for the first time since the pandemic without dipping into reserves. In a landscape of escalating cost-of-living pressures, this responsible financial management sets TWBC apart.

While numerous councils wrestle with deficits and potential insolvency, TWBC stands as a testament to prudent leadership and fiscal discipline. Tough choices were made by the Council's Cabinet, prioritising essential services, and streamlining operations for maximum efficiency.

These tough decisions yielded tangible rewards, providing greater flexibility in allocating resources to the areas residents value most.



Cllr Ellen Neville
Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

How well councils

tackle the mountain of turkey bones, wrapping paper, and cardboard boxes is a tangible service test for residents. Did we master the merry mess? Yes, we did.

Preparation is key. We adopted pre-emptive measures by adapting schedules, encouraging composting, and providing extra collections over three consecutive Saturdays. The result has been impressive collection rates. We can boast 99.5% combined refuse, food collection, garden waste and recycling over Christmas, proving that festive cheer and eco-friendliness can co-exist. Well done to all the team.

Love Where We Live and the Great British Spring Clean... right before the growing season begins can be the best time for organised litter picks. I will be out doing my bit.

Local groups need a litter picker, bags, a hi-visibility vest, and gloves - all of which we can supply you with. We can send our vehicle along after your organised event to collect all that has been gathered. Any roads over the 30mph limit that need litter picking should be done by our own contractors. Please report these roads to us.

To request your equipment, you will need to complete our online registration and risk assessment form.

Let's keep our borough looking its best!



Cllr Hugo Pound
Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

Fewer babies

have been born in Tunbridge Wells in the last few years than in any other part of Kent because we do not have the housing to either keep people in the borough or to attract them in. That impacts on employment, housing, schools' provision, the costs associated with much-needed improvements to our roads and other infrastructure. In December, the Council approved a revised Local Plan, to be submitted to the Planning Inspector very shortly, which ensures we have at least 10 years' supply of land for housing and supporting infrastructure. Once that Plan is adopted (hopefully later this year), we can really push ahead with getting more genuinely affordable housing into the borough.

Our project to help the homeless and those at risk of homelessness back into work and sustainable accommodation is delivering results. And, in partnership with Town & Country Housing, we are acquiring up to 15 properties under the Local Authority Housing Fund, all of which will revert to social housing for rent to relieve our housing waiting list. And we have started the conversion of four unused shops to family homes to further alleviate the housing pressure. And work starts on the 'cinema site,' building flats for older residents, most of whom will be vacating larger family homes to be taken by the next generation.



Cllr Justine Rutland
Cabinet Member for Economic Development

The Economic Development

team (ED) is the first point of contact for business enquiries to the Council and provides information one-to-one, at events, and online via email, social media, and our new business portal. We promote the borough as a good place to work and invest and as a visitor destination - please look out for the new Visit Tunbridge Wells website this spring. ED also oversees the distribution of the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation; we are currently in year two of three.

Following the Council's acquisition of Royal Victoria Place, we are scrutinising the updated RVP business plan and looking at projects for the future that will bring prosperity to Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and the borough.

Culture also comes under the ED portfolio. At a time when many local authorities are cutting arts funding, we are committed to delivering culture and supporting the creative sector to realise the benefits this brings in wellbeing, skills, and economic regeneration.

To this end, the Culture team is delighted to have secured £21,000 of funding from Arts Council England to support the Tunbridge Wells Literary Festival in May.

The ED team is working with neighbouring authorities Tonbridge and Malling and Sevenoaks, to launch the first West Kent Expo event at the River Centre in Tonbridge on 14 March. This event will champion local businesses, expand local networks and launch the exciting new Invest West Kent brand.



Cllr Jayne Sharratt
Cabinet Member for Carbon Reduction and Sustainability

Behind the scenes

we have been working hard towards our climate goals, decarbonising our North Farm depot and the Weald Sports Centre in Cranbrook. In November we were placed as the 31st (out of 164) best climate performing borough council in the UK. We are never complacent and there are plenty of challenges ahead, but I'm proud of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's proactive approach to reducing its impact on the environment and it is encouraging that we are performing above average across most metrics. You can view the results here: councilclimatescorecards.uk/scoring/district

Later this year we will be trialling the use of HVO (Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil) in the household waste collection vehicles that currently run on diesel - if successful switching to this renewable, sustainable and biodegradable fuel has the potential to reduce the greenhouse gas emissions of these vehicles by 90% and improve air quality - we hope to tell you more later in the year!

Our climate commitment isn't just for our own Council operations; we want to support the wider borough to decarbonise, protect nature and adapt to climate change too. In 2024 we will be consulting residents on a Borough Climate Change Strategy. We want you to be able to engage with this as much as possible and I know from talking to residents that lots of you are deeply worried about the future of our planet, and I'm inspired by the action many of you are taking already. I really believe that by working together, we can make significant change.



Cllr Nancy Warne
Cabinet Member for Rural Communities (and Deputy Leader)

Key to the

vibrancy and community wellbeing of our towns and villages is having a good variety of places and spaces outside our homes and work where we can meet up, whether that be for organised social activities, to share a cup of coffee and catch up or just to hang out with friends. With new hospitality venues popping up across the borough our high streets are beginning to buzz again. We have seen the opening of fabulous new community venues with the Amelia Scott in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre and more recently, the new Paddock Wood Community Centre - I recommend a visit to both. My focus this spring will be on speaking to community leaders to understand where I can help to safeguard existing facilities and to deliver new venues where they're most needed.



Cllr Pamela Wilkinson
Cabinet Member for Sport, Leisure and Health

After the success at the Britain

in Bloom and the TW in Bloom competition, I recently met up with the committee who are already planning for this year, with a launch in April. Building works at The Nevill Ground pavilion have commenced and we are all working hard towards a re-opening for the cricket season. As a borough council we are committed to providing leisure and sports facilities and we are currently researching different options so we can provide modern, energy-efficient facilities for all ages to enjoy.

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Strategic Plan

In January, we published the first draft of our new Strategic Plan. This plan prioritises residents' needs and will help us build a borough all residents can be proud to call home.

The plan sets out our five new priorities: climate action, community wellbeing, sustainable growth, our environment and vibrant economy.

The plan also details the Council's ambitions for the borough and the steps we will take to deliver these ambitions.

We need your feedback to make sure the Strategic Plan is a step in the right direction. You can share your views online via Talking Point twbc.online/spsurvey or by completing a paper copy.

Paper copies are available from The Amelia Scott or can be requested via telephone at 01892 554472.

The consultation closes on 15 March so make sure to take part before then.



Biodiversity

Since 2019 the Council has, through the planning process, been challenging developers to provide at least a 10% increase in biodiversity on completion of their development. Where this is has not been possible the Council has asked for contributions to improve biodiversity elsewhere.

This approach is known as Biodiversity Net Gain and it is now being adopted across the country. New government legislation came into force last month making it mandatory for larger developments to include Biodiversity Net Gain and all developments will have to include it from April.

Including Biodiversity Net Gain improves protection for existing important features for wildlife and sets high standards for the creation of new habitats to an approved 30-year management plan.

The Council is working hard to maximise the opportunities offered by Biodiversity Net Gain alongside creating and improving green spaces for residents.

The Council has a series of policies for biodiversity and works with partners to deliver improvements for biodiversity. We are currently supporting the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Kent and Medway entitled Making Space for Nature makingspacefornaturekent.org.uk

Alongside this we are now reviewing what we currently do and how it might improve outcomes for biodiversity. By December we will have produced a biodiversity report that will set out existing achievements and identify opportunities to further improve outcomes.



Biodiversity is all the different kinds of life you'll find in one area—the variety of animals, plants, fungi, and even bacteria that make up our natural world. We need biodiversity!

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Introducing the Community Safety Team



What does the Community Safety Team do?

We are a team of three and our role is to ensure the Council meets its statutory obligations around crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour (ASB) and domestic abuse, exploitation and extremism, and other related areas. We work hard with our partners to maintain the borough as one of the safest in the county.

Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership is a group of statutory, non-statutory and voluntary organisations who work together to solve issues in the borough. In some areas we take the lead and in others, we support as an active partner.

We work closely with Kent Police, Kent County Council, Town & Country Housing, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, other local authorities, and numerous other organisations to share resources, knowledge and good practice. We also work together under statutory frameworks such as the recent Domestic Abuse Act.

Our Partnership Plan

Every January we set priorities for the forthcoming year. We do this by collecting data from a variety of resources; local knowledge gathered daily through partnership interactions, regular briefings and contact with the public.

These priorities focus partner resources to deliver the actions in the annual plan.

Our priorities for 2024-25 are:

- Domestic Abuse (DA)
- Anti-Social Behaviour and Substance Abuse
- Violence, Stalking and Harassment
- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Road Safety
- Business and Environmental/Town Centre Issues (ASB, shoplifting, graffiti, nighttime economy)

We recognise, and data shows, that violence and in particular domestic violence, causes damage long after the crime has been committed. The increased risk factors for children

exposed to DA should be a priority for everybody (support is available). Victims and survivors, both male and female, can also access support from excellent local services funded by TWBC and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Violence, abuse and harassment against women and girls, in all forms, is a specific focus, and we want to make the borough as safe as we can make it. Earlier this year Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Kent Police ran online and face-to-face surveys about violence against women and girls, and feelings of safety while travelling. We've had over 1,000 responses from both men and women, and we are now analysing the results before agreeing projects for this year.

Safety on our roads is important to residents. We will work with partners on the three E's: Education, Enforcement and Engineering (such as traffic calming), using our local influence where we can to bring change or improve safety.

All these issues are recurring themes. This year, however, we will make town centre and business-related issues a priority.

It won't have gone unnoticed that the borough endured a 33 per cent increase in anti-social behaviour over the past year, with the summer months particularly high. Shoplifting increased by 27 per cent, and we've seen an increase in tagging (graffiti) across Royal Tunbridge Wells and elsewhere in the borough. Overall graffiti has shown an increase of 18 per cent across the borough from the previous year. We want to work with partners and property owners to get it removed as quickly as possible, and where possible to work on operations that may lead to prosecutions.

Anti-social behaviour, graffiti and shoplifting are not exclusive to Royal Tunbridge Wells, so our focus will be geographically broader. However, an action plan that focuses on Royal Tunbridge Wells is important for the local economy.

Despite this past year, Tunbridge Wells has consistently been the safest place to live in the county with a very low overall crime rate and modest rates of anti-social behaviour. Tunbridge Wells features within the three best performing councils in Kent on a broad range of crime types. This is borne out by the difficulty we, and our West Kent partners often have in attracting central government funding.

Support services within the borough, designed and delivered to support our priorities, are second to none. We are pleased to tell you a little about some of them on the opposite page.

Some of the agencies we work with:

Domestic Abuse Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) supporting both men and women through and beyond crisis.

Community Domestic Abuse Programme (CDAP) is a well-respected and effective perpetrators' programme for men who are ready to take responsibility for their behaviour.

Look Ahead Care and Support provide support to victims of domestic abuse whose cases have been graded as high risk, refuge places, a weekly DA One Stop Shop, and much more.

Dads Unlimited provide support to male victims of domestic abuse to provide them with emotional and practical support, to reduce risk, increase safety, and protect them and their families from harm.

Street Pastors provide a welcome presence in the nighttime economy and, as a pilot programme for children at the end of the school day.

Kenward Trust support young people in community spaces on matters of substance and alcohol abuse, as well as 1:1 support and in-school awareness raising sessions.

We Are With You provide free and confidential support to young people experiencing issues with drugs, alcohol or mental health issues.

Change. Grow. Live offer a drug and alcohol wellbeing service providing advice, information and specialist treatment options for people in the West Kent area.

Community Payback supervise groups of people on probation to do unpaid work to improve local communities.

Interventions Alliance provide treatment for domestic abuse offenders through a treatment model called Dialectical Behavioural Therapy, helping perpetrators to accept and manage the difficult emotions that trigger harmful behaviour.

Protection Against Stalking work within communities to raise public awareness about stalking and support victims of stalking through providing specialist support services.

Safe Town Partnership is a Business Crime Reduction Partnership that provides a radio system for member retailers and food and beverage outlets that links to the CCTV Control Room and helps to reduce retail crime and other forms of disorder.

Sport on Your Doorstep have been commissioned for a year to provide outreach coaching sessions in key locations where there's a risk of violence or persistent anti-social behaviour. They're working in Showfields now and will be expanding and moving further afield over the coming months.

For further information search on the words in bold above. Links are also available on the TWBC website, search 'community safety.'

Successes

Working with Culverden councillors and KCC we made improvements to a busy pedestrian route for school children, which will complete soon. We expect to be able to report on improvements in lighting, and a clean-up of walls and other street furniture and fixtures too.

Last year we employed a new Community Safety Officer, and he got straight to work serving 15 Community Protection Warnings, six Community Protection Notices and two Fixed Penalties for all manner of neighbour nuisances across the borough.

In January 2024, with assistance and funding from the Violence Reduction Unit, we have commissioned a sports coach to work in areas where sustained anti-social behaviour and assaults have occurred.

Last summer we worked with other Council colleagues and the Safe Town Partnership to improve two town centre locations plagued by anti-social behaviour.

Did you know:

1 in 4 women and **1 in 6 men** experience domestic abuse in their lifetime.

1 in 5 children in the UK have **lived with an adult** **perpetrating domestic abuse.**

41% of UK girls aged **14 to 17** in an intimate relationship experienced some form of **sexual violence** from their partner.

Domestic abuse costs the UK an estimated **£23 billion** a year.

Above data from Refuge.org.uk

Every 16 minutes someone is **killed or seriously injured** on UK roads (avg. 2013-2022)

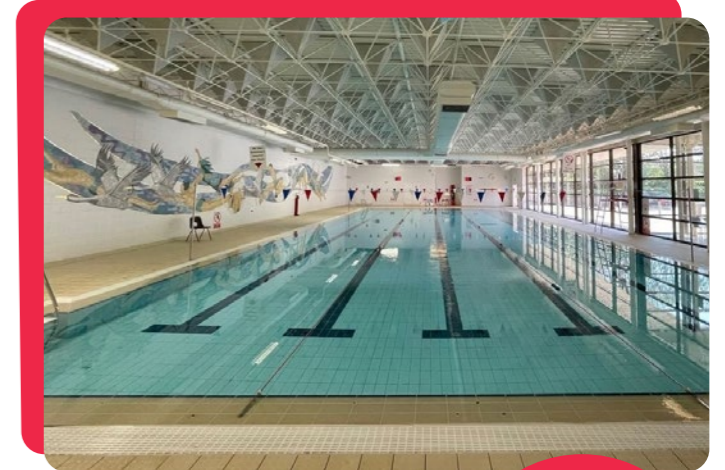
Car occupants were **not wearing seatbelts** in almost half (**42%**) of fatal collisions in the evening and night (2022).

Travelling **too fast** or exceeding the speed limit was a contributory factor in **25% of deaths** (2022)

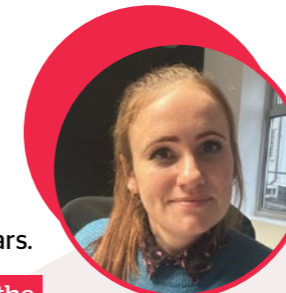
Above data from Brake.org.uk

fusion

Fusion Lifestyle operates three leisure centres in the Tunbridge Wells area, Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre, Putlands Leisure and Sports Centre in Paddock Wood and The Weald Sports Centre in Cranbrook. The centres offer a wide range of activities from swimming and group exercise classes, to pickleball, badminton and soft play, as well as a great café within the Tunbridge Wells Centre. The new team leading the centres is led by Emma at Tunbridge Wells and Jason at Putlands and The Weald and this is your opportunity to Meet the Managers!



Emma



Q: When did you join Fusion?

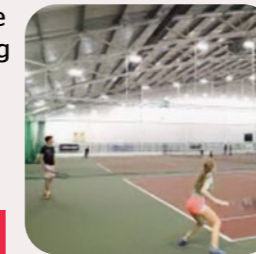
A: I joined in September 2023, having worked in leisure management for several years.

Q: What gets you out of bed in the morning?

A: Getting up and going for a run every morning kick starts my day.

Q: What's your favourite sport?

A: I love to play tennis, so the courts at Tunbridge Wells Sports Centre are my favourite place to be. And if I'm watching sport then it's got to be rugby!



Q: Cardio or weights?

A: I'm definitely a cardio fan!

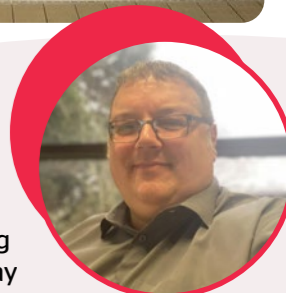
Q: What changes are you hoping to introduce?

A: I am very focussed on customer service and listening to customer needs, I want to make the centre better for my customers. I have already introduced more team members, more cleaning and more bookable swim time and that's just the beginning. I want to get more involved in the community too.

Q: What words of encouragement would you give someone thinking about starting to exercise?

A: Just start - otherwise it will never happen. There's always someone here to help and we welcome everyone, whatever their ability, so pop in and see us.

Jason



Q: When did you join Fusion?

A: I joined in May 2023. I've been working in leisure for more years than I would like to admit, starting as a lifeguard and working my way through the ranks to General Manager.

Q: What gets you out of bed in the morning?

A: A good cup of coffee!

Q: What's your favourite sport?

A: I love football and when I'm not working can be found watching it whenever I get the chance.

Q: Cardio or weights?

A: Definitely weights for me.

Q: What changes are you hoping to introduce?

A: Since I joined I have introduced more team members and am really focussed on making sure they get the training they need to develop and inspire them, ensure they get the support they need and, in turn, they can give our customers better service and support too.

Q: What words of encouragement would you give someone thinking about starting to exercise?

A: I used to be a gym instructor and I would advise people to try and form a habit so it becomes part of their lifestyle - that is the best way to stick to it. And if you miss a session don't throw in the towel, it doesn't matter, just keep going!

Emma, Jason and their teams would love to meet you. We're pleased to invite you to visit fusion-lifestyle.com/offers/free-pass and sign up for a free visit to try out the facilities, meet the team, see what they do and support your local community leisure centre.

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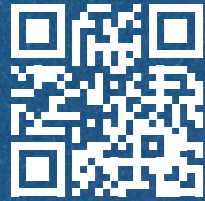
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Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom

Will 2024 be another year of medals for Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom? We certainly hope so. Last year Tunbridge Wells was awarded Gold in the South and South East in Bloom and Britain in Bloom competitions so there's a lot to live up to. Why not join us and help make it happen?

Get started with free plants and seeds

The local Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom competition is open to residents, businesses, community groups and schools across the town. It's easy to enter online or contact us for a paper entry form. The closing date for entries is 30 June (1 June for allotments).

Come along to our launch events on Friday 19 April and Saturday 20 April in Calverley Road pedestrian precinct, Royal Tunbridge Wells and pick up some free plants or seeds. You'll be able to find out all about the local competition and talk to some of our team to get their gardening hints and tips.

Find out more at royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk



Blooming Marvellous Photo Competition

The 2024 competition theme is Leaves.

Get your camera ready! We are looking for your photos capturing the beauty of leaves... trees, shrubs, annual plants, vegetables, green or colourful, young or old.

Pictures must be taken in 2024 within the borough of Tunbridge Wells. The competition is open to all and will be judged in two age categories: young people 17 and under; adults 18+. Competition closes Friday 15 November. Winning and other competition entries will be displayed in Royal Tunbridge Wells. See website for details.

Join Our Campaign!

royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk
competition@royaltunbridgewellsinbloom.org.uk
01892 554031 RTWinBloom
RoyalTunbridgeWellsinBloom

Open Gardens is taking a break

The Open Gardens event supporting Hospice in the Weald is taking a break during 2024 but we hope to back in full bloom in early June 2025.

We value our volunteers

Would you like to join them? Would being outdoors in one of our beautiful parks or open spaces or in the town centre be good for you? You could join our wonderful group of volunteers helping to keep Royal Tunbridge Wells at its blooming best. Find out more from the Parks team.

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Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan - Vision 2040

The Council is working in partnership with a range of organisations and residents to develop a strategy which will shape the future of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre. We have completed some initial engagement work and we want to know what you think about it before we move on to the next steps in creating the strategy we're calling Draft Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Centre Plan - Vision 2040.

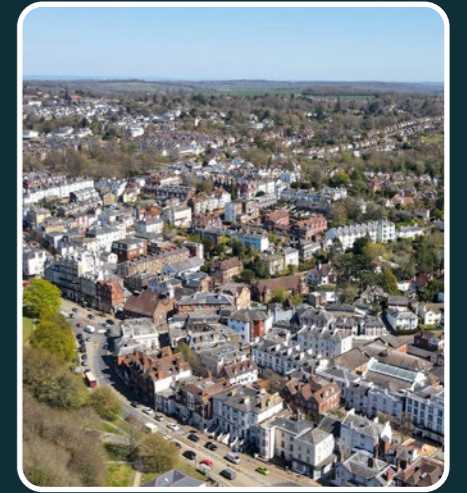
We really want your views at this early stage in the process. What do you think about the current town centre? What is important to you in the town and how would you like to see it evolve and develop in the future? What would you like to see included in the town centre?

Consultation

The public consultation is underway and continues until midnight on Monday 15 April. A number of events and drop-in sessions are being held. Several across Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre, and an event in Cranbrook. You are welcome to come along to find out more about Vision 2040 and tell us your thoughts. You'll find details of your nearest event on our website twbc.online/tcplan

A Call for Sites is running alongside the consultation and our Planning Policy team is keen to hear about any sites in Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre which might be available for development/redevelopment up to 2040. Please let us know if you are aware of or own a site which you would like to be considered through this process.

Your views/site can be submitted online, via email or by post.



You'll find further details about the consultation and the Call for Sites, including how you can comment and how you can submit a site here, twbc.online/tcplan

Please contact RTWTownCentrePlan@tunbridgewells.gov.uk should you have any questions, or alternatively call the Planning Policy team on 01892 554056.



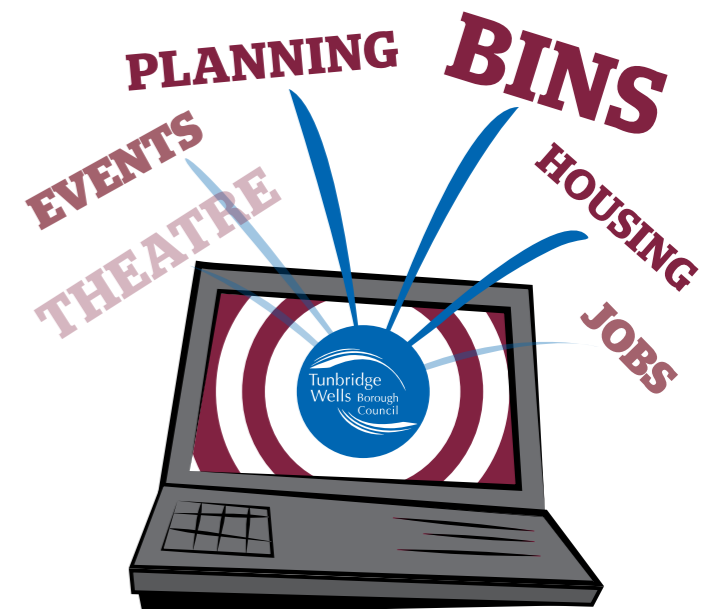
Royal Tunbridge Wells
Town Centre Plan



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| <p>THE KAST OFF KINKS</p> <p>MUSIC SAT 16 MAR</p> | <p>THE BEE GEES <i>Live In Concert</i></p> <p>MUSIC SUN 17 MAR</p> | <p>ROBERT PLANT <i>SAVING GRACE</i> FEATURING SUZI DIAN</p> <p>MUSIC MON 18 MAR</p> |
| <p>Peppa Pig <i>Fun Day Out!</i></p> <p>FAMILY WED 27 - THU 28 MAR</p> | <p>Jack and the Beanstalk <i>and the Pissed Up Panto</i></p> <p>16+</p> <p>VARIETY FRI 29 MAR</p> | <p>LUTHER Live THE MUSIC THE VOICE THE LEGEND DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY AND LEGEND THAT IS LUTHER VANDROSS</p> <p>MUSIC SUN 31 MAR</p> |
| <p>EXCITING SCIENCE PREPARE TO BE AMAZED</p> <p>FAMILY TUE 2 APR</p> | <p>THE MAKINGS OF A MURDERER WITH THE SCOTTISH DETECTIVE DAVID SWINDLE WHO CAUGHT SERIAL KILLER PETER TOBIN</p> <p>SPOKEN WORD WED 3 APR</p> | <p>MADE IN TENNESSEE</p> <p>MUSIC FRI 5 APR</p> |
| <p>FRANK SKINNER 30 YEARS OF DIRT</p> <p>COMEDY FRI 12 APR</p> | <p>JULIAN CLARY</p> <p>COMEDY SAT 13 APR</p> | <p>RADIO Gaga THE ULTIMATE TRIBUTE TO QUEEN</p> <p>MUSIC THU 25 APR</p> |

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| <p>BRITAIN'S GOT TALENT FORBIDDEN READY FOR A NEW FANTASY?</p> | <p>SWITCH SHAKE IT! A CELEBRATION OF HOUSE MUSIC</p> | <p>THE ACCLAIMED WORLD NO.1 PARANORMAL SHOW</p> <p>Most Haunted THE STAGE SHOW</p> |
| VARIETY FRI 26 APR | MUSIC SAT 27 APR | VARIETY SUN 28 APR |

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|-----------------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| <p>Kate Rusby 1975</p> | <p>RHOD GILBERT & the GIANT GRAPEFRUIT</p> | <p>Liberty Festival</p> |
| MUSIC TUE 7 MAY | COMEDY WED 8 MAY | SPOKEN WORD THU 9 MAY |

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|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <p>Liberty Festival</p> | <p>Liberty Festival</p> | <p>SCOTT BRADLEE'S POSTMODERN JUKEBOX</p> <p>THE 10 TOUR</p> |
| SPOKEN WORD FRI 10 MAY | SPOKEN WORD SAT 11 MAY | MUSIC THU 16 MAY |

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| <p>Probably the 2nd greatest rock n roll band in the world</p> <p>THE COUNTERFEIT STONES</p> | <p>SIMON REEVE TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH</p> | <p>I COULD BE WRONG, I COULD BE RIGHT.</p> <p>JOHN LYDON</p> |
| MUSIC SAT 18 MAY | SPOKEN WORD WED 22 MAY | SPOKEN WORD THU 23 MAY |

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| <p>ED BYRNE TRAGEDY PLUS TIME</p> | <p>THE SHIRES THE TWO OF US - ACOUSTIC TOUR</p> | <p>JOSEPH and the AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT</p> |
| COMEDY FRI 24 MAY | MUSIC SAT 25 MAY | MUSICAL WED 29 MAY - SAT 1 JUN |

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| <p>"GLORIOUS" NOSTALGIA TRIP</p> <p>Rare On THE ULTIMATE 50S & 60S EXPERIENCE</p> | <p>Chambers Touring Presents</p> <p>JIMMY GARR LAUGHS FUNNY BRAND NEW LIVE TOUR</p> | <p>Ed Gamble Hot Diggity Dog. Live Stand Up Tour 2024</p> |
| MUSIC WED 5 JUN | COMEDY WED 12 JUN | COMEDY FRI 14 JUN |

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| <p>A TRIBUTE TO THE GENIUS</p> <p>THE ELO TRIBUTE SHOW OF JEFF LYNNE AND ELO</p> | <p>THE UK'S LEADING MUSICAL THEATRE CONCERT TOUR</p> <p>25th BEYOND THE BARRICADE FEATURING PAST PRINCIPAL PERFORMERS FROM LES MISERABLES</p> | <p>ANTON & GIOVANNI TOGETHER THE LIVE TOUR</p> |
| MUSIC SAT 15 JUN | MUSIC SUN 16 JUN | DANCE FRI 21 JUN |

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| <p>WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S PERFORMED IN THE OPEN AIR</p> <p>HENRY V</p> | <p>WHAT'S LOVE GOT TO DO WITH IT? A TRIBUTE TO TINA TURNER</p> |
| MUSIC SUN 30 JUN - CALVERLEY GROUNDS | MUSIC SUN 30 JUN |
| <p>JOOLS HOLLAND and his Rhythm & Blues ORCHESTRA</p> | <p>JOOLS HOLLAND and his Rhythm & Blues ORCHESTRA</p> |
| MUSIC SAT 20 JUL | MUSIC SAT 20 JUL |

Help us recycle the right way



Thank you for recycling
Our recycling rate in the borough is now almost **50%** and with your help it can be even higher.

It is important that the Council collects the right materials for recycling.

Putting items that we don't currently collect into your recycling bins and boxes can spoil the rest of the recycling in your bin and may mean that the entire load is rejected by the sorting plant.

A full list of what can and can't be collected is on our website twbc.online/bins-boxes

Anything mentioned on our website as not recyclable which is put in with items you can recycle will contaminate those items, and we will not be able to empty your bin.

How to reduce contamination

Wash and squash

Metal cans (except aerosols), plastic bottles, pots, tubs, and trays. Not only does it avoid contamination, but we can get more recycling in our vehicles and reduce the journeys to the recycling centre.



Batteries

Batteries should be removed before discarding items as they contaminate the waste and are a fire risk. Please put your batteries in a small bag on top of the recycling bin on collection day.

We can't accept batteries from vape/e-cigarettes, industrial batteries or car batteries. They will need to be disposed of safely at your local household waste and recycling centre.



Cardboard

Flatten cardboard boxes and remove plastic, polystyrene, or general waste from inside.

A small amount of additional cardboard/paper tied in a bundle will be collected by the recycling crew. If you require an additional box, please visit our website at twbc.online/bins-boxes



What causes the most contamination?

Plastic film (over takeaway and ready-prepared dishes), cartons, plastic bags, and food wrapping.

What else causes contamination?

Non-recyclable plastics including, hard plastics such as children's toys and plant pots.

Some glass such as Pyrex, window glass, tealight holders, wine glasses.

Cycling around Tunbridge Wells

Cycling is a great way to get around - it's fun, cheap, good for you and at busy times can be quicker than driving.

Did you know, cycling for just 20 minutes a week can reduce your risk of heart disease by 50 per cent. Whether you are a seasoned cyclist, you've not been on a bike for years or you're simply looking for new or family-friendly places to cycle, Tunbridge Wells has trails, roads, and muddy tracks to appeal. With the help of the Council's cycle champion Cllr Peter Lidstone, we've put together some helpful tips:

- Most bikes are only a few small adjustments away from running smoothly. So, if you have one in your shed gathering cobwebs, why not take it to your local bike shop. They will often inflate the tyres and give it a quick check free of charge.
- For those on a tight budget, Tunbridge Wells Repair Cafe may be able to offer a free bike service, ask in advance and check details at tunbridgewellsrepaircafe.co.uk
- You don't need to fork out thousands for a bike - prices vary considerably whether buying new or second-hand. If you don't own a bike, hiring one first might be a good option.
- You can't escape the hills in and around Tunbridge Wells. For those who struggle with hills or prefer to arrive at their destination fresh and comfortable, it is worth looking into an e-bike. The electric motors help reduce the effort required to ride uphill. They cost more than regular bikes to buy, but significantly less to run than a car. Whatever bike you're after, there'll be a local bike store nearby.
- For those who are not comfortable mixing with traffic, there are some fantastic traffic-free or low-traffic routes locally. You can ride from Tunbridge Wells to Tonbridge via Pembury Hospital largely traffic-free thanks to the cycle paths alongside Pembury Road and the A21. There is also a great low-traffic national cycle route (#18) running from Tunbridge Wells to Tenterden.
- Keep your bike safe by investing in a good lock.
- Always use lights in dark conditions to make yourself visible to drivers. However, the new Highway Code places the responsibility for safety on the larger vehicle (so on cars to prioritise cyclists, cyclists to prioritise pedestrians etc).
- Guidance for drivers on safely passing cyclists is to allow 1.5m when overtaking. Drivers should not overtake a cyclist if it involves crossing a solid white line or cutting in sharply to avoid oncoming traffic.



You can find more information about cycling in the borough on the Visit Tunbridge Wells website. Search cycling at visittunbridgewells.com Please see pages 10 and 11 for more from Visit Tunbridge Wells.



Wells Aldo Bespoke Range

**SPECIAL
INTRODUCTORY
OFFERS**
ASK IN STORE
FOR DETAILS



We at Wells love JOHN SANKFY and are delighted to be their Premier stockist with the largest display of this gorgeous furniture. We have worked in collaboration to create unique models and fabric recipes from our vast fabric library to show off the beauty and quality of these stunning sofas and chairs in coordinated room sets which will fire the imagination.

Our fabric library includes many of the leading brands including: Linwood, Sandersons, Romo, Designers Guild, Ralph Lauren, Morris & Co and many more. The choice is amazing and we can tailor a unique item for you with the help of our in-house interior designer.

We look forward to welcoming you to our new showrooms.

