

SUMMER 2026 Local



news from your borough council

Archaeological Adventures

page 21

also inside...

Our community
awards are back
pages 10-11

The latest on RVP
page 13

Summer of fun
page 23



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Dear resident

Welcome to the summer edition of our resident magazine.

It has been a busy time for the Borough, not least with the recent local elections. I would like to extend a warm welcome to the seven newly elected councillors as they begin their work supporting the Council and their wards. You can find a full list of all borough councillors on pages 6 and 7.



We have also recently launched our Call for Sites as part of the Local Plan Review, an important step in shaping our long-term planning and ensuring we are meeting future housing and infrastructure needs. You can find out more on page 19.

Across this issue, you'll see how the Borough continues to evolve. There's an update on the Royal Victoria Place development, including images that show how the area will be transformed in the years ahead. I'm also delighted to see the return of the Love Where We Live Awards - it's hard to believe it's been almost two years since we last celebrated the achievements of our local heroes, see pages 10 and 11 for a full list of categories and the closing date for nominations.

You'll also find updates on recycling, the latest news from The Amelia Scott, and a wide range of events and shows to enjoy throughout the summer, in addition to other news and updates from across the Council.

I hope you enjoy this issue.

William Benson
Chief Executive

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**

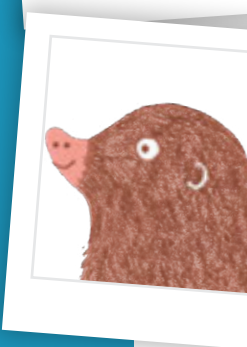
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Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, Town Hall,
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New Mayor for Tunbridge Wells

Cllr Bev Palmer is the new Mayor of Tunbridge Wells for the coming year. During her term of office, she will be supporting and fundraising for two local charities: the Sea Cadets and Hospice in the Weald.

Explaining her choice, Cllr Palmer said:

“I have chosen my charities for this mayoral year for very personal reasons.

Hospice in the Weald provided incredible support when my mother was ill. Their Outreach Team came out to assist me and helped arrange her move into a care home for the final days of her life. My partner’s mother was also cared for at the Hospice a few years ago. The work they do for local people at the most difficult of times, providing compassionate end-of-life care, is invaluable. It felt very important to support them this year.

My other charity, the Sea Cadets, plays a vital role in supporting young people in Tunbridge Wells. They are the only cadet force that does not receive financial assistance from the Ministry of Defence for their facilities, and they are currently seeking funds to redevelop their unit headquarters. The Sea Cadets provide young people with opportunities to build confidence, learn new skills and thrive in a safe, inclusive environment.

I am very much looking forward to meeting residents and promoting the Borough of Tunbridge Wells across Kent and beyond.”



Farewell to the outgoing Mayor

Outgoing Mayor, Cllr David Osborne reflected on his year in office:

“It’s been an honour to represent Tunbridge Wells as Mayor for the past year. Linda and I have been fortunate to have participated in so many tremendous community events powered by tireless volunteers, up and down our Borough. Many thanks to everyone who has supported us and my charity, the Sea Cadets, and good luck Bev.”

During his mayoral year, Cllr David Osborne raised £7,777.77 for his chosen charity, contributing to vital work supporting local young people.



News in brief

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

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



New waste contract agreed

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council have jointly awarded their new recycling, waste collection and street cleansing contract to FCC Environment, our existing service provider.



Starting on 1 April 2027, the 12-year contract will ensure continuity of service.



As the service already meets Government Simpler Recycling requirements, there will be no significant changes for residents.

Leisure centres under new management

The Council's leisure centres in Cranbrook, Paddock Wood and Tunbridge Wells will come under new management from 1 July, with Leisure Solutions Community Trust awarded a seven-year lease.

A programme of capital investment is planned to deliver improvements for members over the coming years.

Women's Shed project takes shape

Thanks to £4,000 raised through support from residents, the Rotary Club, Soroptimists and KCC Councillor Colin Sefton, a new Women's Shed project has been established in Tunbridge Wells.

The shed has now been built and will officially launch later this year, offering a creative and supportive space for local women. For more information, email cally.fiddimore@kent.gov.uk.

Local Government reorganisation update

In our last edition, we shared that the Government was consulting on proposals for new council arrangements across Kent.

We are still awaiting a decision, expected next month, to confirm which councils we will merge with to form a new unitary council in 2028.

Help with heating oil costs

If you use heating oil and are worried about running out, financial support may be available.

Kent County Council offers emergency help through its Crisis and Resilience Fund for low-income households unable to afford a refill. Find out more on our website.



Borough Councillors 2026

* New councillors

** Re-elected councillors

Cranbrook, Sissinghurst and Frittenden



Andy Fairweather
Conservative




Nancy Warne
Tunbridge Wells Alliance




* **Alexander Ellison**
Conservatives


Hawkhurst, Sandhurst and Benenden



Tom Dawlings
Conservatives



Beverley Palmer
Conservatives



** **Ellen Neville**
Tunbridge Wells Alliance

Pantiles



Jamie Johnson
Liberal Democrats




Christopher Hall
Liberal Democrats




** **Pamela Wilkinson**
Liberal Democrats


Culverden



Justine Rutland
Liberal Democrats



Martin Brice
Liberal Democrats




* **David Osborne**
Liberal Democrats

High Brooms




Dianne Hill
Labour

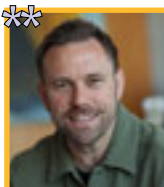
Park



Matt Lowe
Liberal Democrats



Corinna Keefe
Liberal Democrats



** **Richard Brown**
Liberal Democrats

Paddock Wood



Mark Munday
Liberal Democrats



Don Kent
Liberal Democrats



* **Christopher Digby**
Liberal Democrats

Election results

At the local elections on Thursday 7 May 2026, 15 councillors were elected to represent 13 of the borough's 14 wards, with no election in High Brooms ward.

Seats won by party:

Conservative:	2
Independent for Tunbridge Wells:	1
Liberal Democrats:	11
Tunbridge Wells Alliance:	1

The turnout for the borough elections was 45.3%

You can see a full breakdown and details of the results for each ward on our website, search **Borough Election May 2026**.

Pembury and Capel



Hugh Patterson
Liberal Democrats



Astra Birch
Liberal Democrats



David Hayward
Independent

Rusthall and Speldhurst



Jayne Sharratt
Labour



Matthew Sankey
Tunbridge Wells Alliance



Ian Standing
Liberal Democrats

Southborough and Bidborough



Mark Ellis
Liberal Democrats



Ash Shukla
Liberal Democrats



Kimberley Johnson
Liberal Democrats

Rural Tunbridge Wells



Lynne Darrah
Conservatives



Thomas Mobbs
Conservatives



David Knight
Conservatives

Sherwood



Hugo Pound
Labour



Courtney Souper
Liberal Democrats



Andrew Wallace
Liberal Democrats

St James'



Ben Chapelard
Liberal Democrats



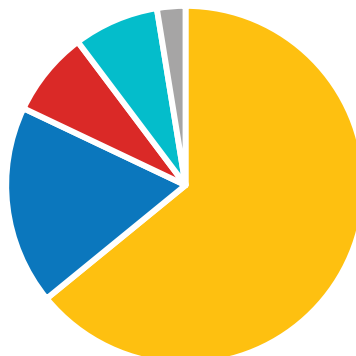
Rob Wormington
Liberal Democrats



Gavin Barrass
Liberal Democrats

Full Council breakdown by party

Conservatives	7
Independent for Tunbridge Wells	1
Labour	3
Liberal Democrats	25
Tunbridge Wells Alliance	3
Total	39



St John's



Simon Davidson
Liberal Democrats



Ukonu Obasi
Liberal Democrats

Cabinet update

Cllr Ben Chapelard

Leader of the Council

Thank you to everyone who took part in the recent local elections. Your support is greatly appreciated and gives us strong confidence as we continue working to deliver what matters most to our communities.



I was also delighted to be re-elected as Leader of the Council at the Full Council meeting on 20 May. I'm proud to continue in this role and to lead our work as we focus on turning our commitments into real outcomes for residents.

Looking ahead, we are preparing for the transition to new unitary council arrangements in 2028. I was pleased to speak with many residents earlier this year during our engagement roadshows, when the Government was consulting on the proposed geography. A decision is expected in July, and I will share more about what this means in the autumn edition.

Cllr Mark Ellis

Innovation and Transformation

I am pleased to share the results of our early voting pilot for the May 2026 borough elections. Approximately 2% of voters chose to cast their ballot



early across our three hubs, with Royal Victoria Place in Tunbridge Wells proving the busiest location, while Paddock Wood Community Centre and Vestry Hall in Cranbrook saw steadier footfall. Three other areas across the country offered different variations of flexible voting to test how engagement can be improved. We welcomed the opportunity to take part and to encourage greater participation. Findings will be shared with Government and the Electoral Commission.

Cllr Christopher Hall

Finance and Property

Since the local elections in May I have been focusing on several key priorities for the next financial year. Having balanced the budget for 2026 I will now be turning to setting the budget for 2027-28 in what is likely to be the last budget before local government re-organisation and the creation of a new West Kent authority to replace Tunbridge Wells. This will really focus minds on what we can achieve in the next two years. From my point of view, I want to ensure that we are maintaining our property to a high standard and upgrading it where possible. For instance, we've now installed solar panels on Royal Victoria Place car park and given the building a much-needed restoration. I will be focusing on improving the town centre by working with my colleagues on how we can borrow to invest in the shopping centre to create a new focal point for a cinema, restaurants and leisure options. I will be taking care to ensure the scheme is financially viable and can deliver the benefits residents have asked for in our engagement. And finally, I will be supporting the delivery of good quality services to you and making sure that your money is spent wisely to support infrastructure, our environment and our cultural and social services.



Cllr Corinna Keefe

Housing and Communities

It's been a positive few months across the Borough. I'm delighted that the new VCS Hub in Royal Victoria Place is now open - bringing partners together in one shared space to collaborate, strengthen services and make the best use of



resources. It's a real step forward for partnership working, and I'm excited to see it go from strength to strength.

We're also continuing to expand affordable housing. Most recently, we're acquiring and refurbishing three homes on Upper Grosvenor Road, alongside supporting Town and Country Housing with over £1m of affordable housing funding for 14 new homes in Cranbrook and converting others to social rent. These are important steps to help ensure more residents have access to safe, affordable homes locally.

Cllr Matt Lowe

Planning

In May we launched our Call for Sites, which is a vital early part of the review of our Local Plan. This is where we invite residents, landowners and organisations to suggest areas of land that could potentially be used for development in the future. These suggestions, whether large or small, will help shape how the Borough grows and develops over the next 20 years.



The Local Plan Review will take around three years to complete and will set out our long-term approach to housing, employment and economic growth. To make sure the plan delivers the thriving, growing economy that the Borough needs, it's important we hear from as many people as possible. Anyone can submit a site, so if you have an idea, I'd really encourage you to take part.

This summer, our Planning team will also run an early Scoping Consultation for the Local Plan Review. This is your opportunity to tell us what issues in the Borough that the Local Plan should address and how you would like to be involved as the review progresses. I hope you'll share your views when the consultation opens.

CLlr Justine Rutland

Economic Development and Deputy Leader

A major piece of work has been allocating our portion of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which comes from central government. We are delighted to have delivered many worthwhile projects. Supporting local businesses and jobseekers has been a priority. Highlights include awarding enterprise grants; business mentoring and workshops; and, in partnership with neighbouring councils, putting on the third West Kent Expo, which gets bigger and better every year. This time, there were over 60 exhibitors and more than 500 visitors. Creative Tunbridge Wells, which supports the culture and creative sector, is now firmly established, while Visit Tunbridge Wells has received additional funding to promote tourism across the Borough.

The ED team worked with Jobcentre Plus to coordinate three employer-specific recruitment events which led to 40 local people entering work, plus there have been sessions on mock interviews and apprenticeships. Creative TW has also put on a series of events for young people interested in careers in the creative industries.

RVP is also keeping us busy - please see page 12 for an update.



Cllr Pamela Wilkinson

Sports, Leisure, and Health

This July, we begin an exciting new chapter for the Borough's three sports centres as we enter a partnership with Serco to oversee their management. The new contract will bring a significant investment of approximately £3.5 million, ensuring we can improve our facilities while maintaining our steadfast commitment to community inclusion and affordable access.

In addition to our leisure centre upgrades, I am delighted to confirm the installation of two new changing facilities at Bayham sports field. This project marks a major investment in grassroots football and again reflects the goals set out in our strategic plan to enhance sporting opportunities throughout the Borough.

Beyond our sports facilities, the quality of our parks and green spaces is also vital to both the character and the health of our Borough.



Cllr Rob Wormington

Environment and Sustainability

There have been some important updates in my area since my last update.

Firstly, Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council have jointly awarded their new waste contract to FCC Environment, our existing provider. The new contract will run for an initial term of 12 years, from 1 April 2027.

Secondly, I am very happy to let readers know that Tetra-Pak cartons can now be recycled in your brown bins. This is a great step forward and should greatly increase the amount of waste that is recycled.

Thirdly, the roll out of food waste bins to the whole Borough has been a success. We have collected over 133 tonnes of additional food waste, compared with the same time last year, which can then be used to make fertiliser and biogas.

Finally, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council launched the second round of our Community Climate Action Grant last week on Monday 8 June 2026. The purpose of the grant is to support local community groups and organisations to deliver small scale climate action projects.



Love Where We Live Awards 2026



TUNBRIDGE WELLS
BUSINESS
MAGAZINE
(Media Sponsor)

 **Town & Country
Housing**
Peabody Group

TRINITY
THEATRE



**Tunbridge
Wells** Borough
Council

This year the Love Where We Live Awards are back

We've still got all the familiar categories you are used to seeing plus one new category for 2026. Nominations are open until midnight on Sunday 2 August.

Our annual community awards celebrate the people who make the Borough a great place to live and work.

With 10 categories to choose from, there's an award for everyone and every group!



Community Group of the Year

Is there a group of people who are the life blood of your community? Do you admire a group's collective energy, enthusiasm or achievements?

Charity of the Year

Tell us about a charity that enhances the lives and wellbeing of residents in the Tunbridge Wells Borough.

Sportsperson/Team of the Year

Through this award we'd like to recognise an individual, team or club who has made exceptional progress or made an important contribution to sport locally.

Green Business

Do you know or work for an organisation that is putting something back into the community or is committed to having a positive impact on the environment?

Volunteer of the Year

There are people in our Borough who make a vital contribution to their community; are you inspired by someone's dedication and commitment?

Young Volunteer of the Year

This award is for that young person you know, aged 24 or under* who gives up their spare time to volunteer and, in doing so, contributes to the welfare of others, their community as a whole or the environment.

**Nominees must be aged 24 or under on 2 August 2026.*

Young Sports Achiever of the Year

Do you know a young person, a youth team or a young coach who deserves recognition? Specifically for those aged 16 and under*.

**Nominees must be aged 16 or under on 2 August 2026.*

Green Household

Is your household moving towards a greener future?

Have you started to make some lifestyle changes, or been making some for a while? Tell us what initiatives you are introducing at home to adapt and reduce your carbon emissions to be a little 'greener' than you were last year...

Have you reduced your use of single-use plastic, improved biodiversity where you live with planting or protecting your local wildlife, started to grow your own veg? Maybe you have used the car less and walk and cycle to work or the local shops more. Are you careful about saving water or have you made a conscious effort to look at what you can reduce, reuse, or recycle before buying more or throwing something away? Nominate your household and you just might inspire others.

Good Neighbour

Has someone carried out a small act of kindness that has meant a huge amount to you?

We want to hear about residents who are doing little things to help others in the community when they most need it. Everyone needs a helping hand from time to time, whether it's emergency childcare, having some groceries delivered or help with the gardening. Someone may simply call by to check that you're OK. What a neighbour! Let us know who has helped you this past year and we'll do the rest.

New: Youth Organisation Award

This award celebrates a youth organisation that makes a positive difference to the lives of young people in the Tunbridge Wells Borough. We want to recognise groups that provide safe, inclusive and inspiring opportunities, helping young people to build confidence, develop skills and feel connected to their community. Whether through youth clubs, creative projects, social action or support services, tell us about an organisation whose dedication, energy and impact on young people truly deserves recognition.

It's quick and easy to nominate online; find out more at

[twbc.online/lwwl](https://www.twbc.online/lwwl)

By nominating you will help us recognise the achievements and commitment of some of the amazing people in the Borough.

Nominations must be received by midnight on **Sunday 2 August**.
Good luck!



If you don't use a computer or have internet access, you can go to a public library and use a computer for free. Alternatively, call Lizzie in the Communications team, who will help you with your nomination, on

01892 554273.

Save the date!

Awards Evening
6 October | 7-9.15pm

ROYAL VICTORIA PLACE

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

How we are shaping a vibrant future together

More than **8,000 people** have taken part across four rounds of engagement, with over **3,500 pieces of feedback** helping to shape plans for the transformation of Royal Victoria Place (RVP) and a more vibrant, welcoming future for the top of Royal Tunbridge Wells town centre.

Over 70% of residents have supported proposals, stating they wanted more places to meet friends, eat, shop and spend time well into the evening.

There's strong support for bringing a **cinema** back to the town centre, alongside valued venues such as Trinity Theatre and the town's wider leisure attractions.

Here's an update on the exciting proposals and what's expected next.

A livelier town centre

We're creating a place that works better for the community, including:

- A multi-screen boutique cinema, family-friendly restaurants and cafés at Ely Court.
- Major improvements to Palm Court, for which a planning application has been submitted, including upgraded shop units, a refurbished atrium, improved accessibility, a new roof and commercial leisure space.
- A long-term vision for Market Square. This is currently on hold whilst we carefully consider existing community uses, including those within the Camden Centre.

A financially sound project

The redevelopment will be funded through carefully managed external borrowing.

The annual borrowing costs will be met through the additional income generated by the scheme, including rent from new units, alongside increased business rates and car parking revenue resulting from higher levels of economic activity and footfall. The scheme is currently self-financing and does not require additional council tax.

This investment is essential to broaden the town centre offer, significantly increase visitor numbers, and strengthen its long-term future. In doing so, it will help protect essential Council services.

The redevelopment will also enhance the profile and reputation of RVP, placing it in a stronger position to attract and secure the higher-quality brands that residents have indicated they would like to see.

Strong interest from retailers and cinema operators underpins the plans and the long-term future of RVP.

The costs of planned improvements across Ely Court, Palm Court and Market Square are estimated between £42million and £68million. They are kept under regular review. Once complete, the development will support long-term employment opportunities across shops, cafés, restaurants and leisure venues.

Proposals backed by strong local support

We're pleased to have the backing of Royal Tunbridge Wells Together Business Improvement District:

"We are excited by the benefits the proposed development within the Royal Victoria Place shopping centre will bring to our members. A significant investment in the core of our town will undoubtedly assist Royal Tunbridge Wells to thrive as a desirable destination for both visitors and residents alike."



Left: Palm Court current.

Above: Proposed improvements.



Right: Camden Road proposed development



Moving forward at Ely Court

The exterior of the Friendly Societies Building remains an important part of the town centre's historical street scene, with the Ely Court plans retaining its frontage.

An application has been made to Historic England to consider whether the building should be listed, which has put the project on hold. In response, we submitted a Certificate of Immunity from Listing (COIL) to fast track the decision. This decision helps provide the clarity needed to move plans forward and deliver the strongly desired cinema. We hope to provide more updates later in the summer.



Left: Ely Court existing site.

Above: Proposed cinema with family-friendly restaurants and cafés, outdoor seating and planting.

Why it matters

Since acquiring RVP in 2023, occupancy has increased from

81% to 93%,

footfall has

returned to pre-2019 levels

24 new businesses

have opened, including

Primark,

**Søstrene Grene and
Jamaica Blue**

These exciting proposals are the next part of that story, helping create a more vibrant town centre shaped by the community, for the community.

The project has cross-party support and is overseen by the Investment Advisory Panel.

COME AS YOU ARE

Are you affected by bereavement?

Would you like to find

 **Creativity?**

 **Community?**

 **Connection?**

The Amelia Scott is running a series of free creative activity programmes for the bereaved.

The group will offer a safe space where you can 'come as you are'.

Art, music, storytelling, playing games - the choice is yours, with no pressure. No experience needed. Free tea and biscuits and a warm welcome for all!

To book your place or register your interest please contact:

creativehealth@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
01892 554097



 At The Amelia Scott

 Wednesdays from 24 June

 1-3 pm

 Free

It's all about

Food Waste Recycling success

Food waste recycling in Tunbridge Wells is on the rise - up an impressive **26.3% in just 10 weeks** since our campaign launched in January! With more food caddies rolled out to communal flats, residents have helped recycle an additional 133 tonnes of food waste - roughly the weight of 10 double-decker buses.

That's 133 tonnes more than last year!

Thank you to everyone taking part. Using your food waste caddy helps keep refuse bins free from contamination, reduces disposal costs and is far better for the environment. Your efforts are making a real difference.

 **26.3%!**

Recycle Batteries the Safe Way

Batteries should **never be placed loose or inside recycling or waste bins. When crushed during collection or processing, they can spark and cause serious fires.**

Our waste and recycling contractor, FCC, has experienced three bin lorry fires recently. Kent Fire and Rescue Service believes these incidents were caused by batteries being crushed and igniting inside vehicles. These fires put drivers, crews and the wider public at risk, and can lead to significant damage and disruption.

Please help keep everyone safe by recycling batteries responsibly:

- Place used batteries in a separate bag and put them out with your recycling on top of the bin, or
- Take them to your local Household Waste Recycling Centre (the tip)

Thank you for doing your part to reduce fire risk and recycle safely.

Protect yourself from Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping remains a serious issue across Kent, damaging our environment and costing taxpayers millions each year. Most residents want to do the right thing - but a small mistake when disposing of waste can have unintended consequences.

Remember: your waste is your responsibility, even after it leaves your home. Using unlicensed 'man with a van' services may seem convenient, but if waste is dumped illegally, you could face a fine of **£400 or more**.

Protect yourself by choosing trusted options in the Borough, such as your local household waste recycling centre at North Farm, our bulky collections service, charity reuse services or licensed waste carriers. Always check a carrier's licence online, you could use the Environment Agency's public register and ask for a receipt or waste transfer note.

Taking these simple steps can give you confidence and peace of mind that your unwanted items are being handled properly and responsibly.

Check for a waste carrier licence at environment.data.gov.uk

We don't accept vape batteries, please return used vapes to the retailer, who should provide a take-back and recycling service.



recycling!

Container Supply Update

We're currently experiencing a national shortage affecting the supply of bins, boxes and food caddies, which means requests are taking longer than usual to fulfil.

We're asking for your help and understanding by only requesting a new container if it's absolutely necessary. Before submitting a request, please consider whether your existing container could still be used, or if a temporary solution - such as reusing another box - might work for now.

By thinking carefully before ordering, you'll help reduce pressure on limited supplies, minimise waste and support a more sustainable service for everyone.

Thank you for working with us - your support helps ensure resources are used where they are most needed.



Remember, as part of simpler recycling, you can now recycle your liquid cartons, commonly known as Tetra Pak!



KCC's 'Shake It Out' campaign returns in July - remember, recycling should be loose, not in bags.



VCS hub launched in Royal Victoria Place

A new VCS (voluntary and charitable sector) hub has opened at Royal Victoria Place, with support from TWBC - bringing organisations together to collaborate, share resources and cut costs.

Launched in March, the hub offers affordable space and facilities for charities and voluntary groups, creating a central base for support services. Located on the eighth floor, it's already home to Citizens' Advice and Protection Against Stalking (PAS).

By pooling resources, the hub helps organisations reduce overheads while making it easier for residents to access support - all in one place.

Charities and voluntary groups interested in joining the hub are encouraged to contact the Council to explore available space and opportunities.

Voluntary and
Community Sector
HUB



Support when you need it most

Just some of the services we provide that can offer life-changing support for residents.

Creative Health workshops

The Amelia Scott offers creative courses for residents to learn skills, connect with others and support mental health, from creative writing to Dungeons and Dragons.

Disabled facilities grants

Residents with disabilities may be eligible for grants and support to make their homes safer, more comfortable and better suited to their needs. Assistance can include home adaptations, energy improvements and repairs. To find out more or check your eligibility contact our Private Sector Housing team:

Email: privatesectorhousing@tunbridgewells.gov.uk
Telephone: 01892 554 241

Single-person's council tax discount

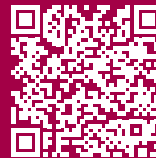
A 25% Council Tax discount is available if you are the only adult (aged 18 or over) living in your main home.

Council Tax bills assume at least two adults live in a property, so if you live alone, you are entitled to a 25% reduction.

GO card discounts

GO is a membership scheme for people living in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells offering discounts at sport, recreational, leisure and cultural facilities provided by us and other participating organisations.

The scheme is aimed at people on low income who receive benefits or students who are 16+ in full-time education. GO membership is free and valid for 12 months.



One You Kent health and behaviour change programmes

If you need support managing your weight, stopping smoking, improving your diet, reducing your alcohol consumption or being more active, the One You Kent team is here for you.

You can self-refer for support by visiting oneyoukent.org.uk or by contacting the team directly:

Call: 01892 554411

health@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Bringing services to local community larders

We are working with local community larders and cafés across the Borough to better connect residents with support services. The One You Kent Health team has visited larders in SouthBorough, Hawkhurst, High Brooms and Sherwood, sharing information on its free healthy lifestyle service and wellbeing walks.

One You Kent helps residents make positive changes, including managing weight, improving diet, increasing physical activity, and reducing smoking and alcohol use.

We've also teamed up with local police officers to provide face-to-face access to policing, with plans for other teams, including housing and creative health, to attend in future.

We're grateful for the vital support community larders provide to residents facing financial pressures, and proud to work alongside them to widen access to health, wellbeing and support services.

WE NEED YOUR HELP

Nourish helps people in food crisis across Tunbridge Wells Borough and South Tonbridge by delivering short-term, emergency food parcels.

Last year, we delivered 142,812 meals to people like you and me: teachers, nurses, care workers, retired couples, young parents working hard to make ends meet.

For the first time in our history, donations have fallen significantly, and we are now in urgent need of financial support.



£1.50 could pay for a family pack of 4 baked beans tins



£5 could pay for a meal for a family of five



£10 could buy a day's food for a family of five



£40 could provide a family of five with food for a whole week



Please give via our website or scan the QR code.



www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk

HOW CAN WE HELP YOU?

We are here to ensure no one goes hungry.

There are two ways to get food from Nourish:

Referral agency:

If you are already getting support, or help with your finances from a frontline agency, you can ask them to refer you to us for food support as well, whilst things are being worked out.

If you have children, their school, nursery, health visiting team or midwifery team can refer you to us for some short-term help.

Refer yourself:

If none of the above apply to you, you can come direct to Nourish for help.

We will book a call with you to talk about your situation and ask you some screening questions to assess your need and check your identity. Please note, you must have a static address and be within our operations area.



Get help from us via our website or scan the QR code.



www.nourishcommunityfoodbank.org.uk

Sustainability team update

We're pleased to share that the Council's 2024/25 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report has been independently checked and approved by the British Standards Institution (BSI).

This means our emissions data is clear, reliable and at least 95% accurate - the highest level BSI provides.

This gives us a strong baseline to track our progress and plan further carbon reduction.

Our emissions in 2024/25:

8,215.7 tonnes of CO₂e

That's roughly equal to:

- Annual electricity use of almost 15,000 UK homes or
- 31 million miles driven in a petrol car



Grant Scheme Case Studies Business Decarbonisation Grant

Imago Community

Project: New energy efficient head office

What they did: Installed solar panels at their Lamberhurst site

Outcome: Lower energy costs, reduced emissions, and improved staff wellbeing



Community Micro Climate Grant

Tunbridge Wells Commons Conservators

Project: Elm trees and shrub planting

What they did: Planted 15 disease-resistant trees and 100 shrubs

Outcome: Better wildlife habitat, stronger community engagement and learning, improved landscape and long-term carbon benefits.



If you run a local business or community group and are interested in funding for 26/27, keep an eye on updates from us on the TWBC Climate Action Website.

'Living Tribute' bench in Tunbridge Wells

A red bench has been unveiled in Calverley Grounds as a living tribute to local woman **Maria Smith Tilley**, who survived a cardiac arrest in August 2023.

Maria was revived in the early hours by her partner, Jamie, who performed CPR, followed by paramedics. She now lives with an implantable cardioverter defibrillator (ICD), a device that helps prevent life threatening heart rhythms.

The bench is one of 65 being installed across the UK by the British Heart Foundation (BHF) to honour people living with cardiovascular disease.

Maria said she feels honoured to be part of the campaign and hopes it encourages others to learn more and share their experiences.

The BHF hopes the benches will spark conversations, increase understanding of heart conditions, and highlight the importance of life saving skills like CPR.



Renters' Rights Act

Changes for renters and landlords in the private sector

The 2025 Renters' Rights act took effect on 01 May this year. The act enforces significant national change for renters. These changes will affect tenants in the private rented sector. The new rules have been introduced by law, so landlords cannot put anything in a tenancy agreement which changes them including:

An end to 'no fault' evictions

Providing more security for tenants and empowering them to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction.

An end to fixed term contracts

This will end the injustice of tenants being trapped paying rent for substandard properties and offer more flexibility to both parties to respond to changing circumstances.

Limits on why landlords can refuse tenants

It will be illegal to refuse tenants just because they receive benefits or have children.

Clearer processes for renting with a pet

Renters can now ask to live with a pet and landlords must consider it fairly.

Tighter regulations around rent increases

Landlords can only raise rent once a year, and renters can challenge unfair hikes.

More details of the changes and what they mean for both landlords and renters is available from the [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) website.

[gov.uk/private-renting](https://www.gov.uk/private-renting)

If you have concerns about a privately rented property, you can also contact our Private Sector Housing team: [tunbridgewells.gov.uk/housing/private-sector-housing](https://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/housing/private-sector-housing)



Have your say on the future of our borough



Tunbridge Wells Borough Council adopted its current Local Plan in December 2025, with a commitment to begin an early review within six months. That review is now underway.

The updated Local Plan will set out how the borough will grow and prosper between 2029 - 2044. It will identify land for much-needed new homes and employment space, along with the infrastructure needed to support sustainable, high-quality development. It will also help protect our countryside and support the vitality of our town and village centres.

The review will follow the Government's new planning process, designed to make plan-making more accessible, digital and efficient.

A new timetable will be published by the end of June 2026, and kept up to date on the Council's website, alongside guidance on how you can get involved. An early Scoping Consultation is planned for the summer, which is your chance to tell us about the problems and opportunities you would like the Local Plan to address.

If you wish to be notified of the Scoping Consultation and future stages of the review, you can sign up to our consultation database to receive updates.

Call for sites

As part of the review, a Call for Sites was launched in May and is open until 3 August.

Residents, landowners, developers and community groups are invited to submit sites across the borough for consideration for a range of uses. All submitted sites will be assessed for their availability, suitability and deliverability and any constraints or opportunities.

Your ideas and local knowledge will help shape a sustainable and balanced plan for the future.

To find out more about the Local Plan Review or the Call for Sites, and to sign up for updates, visit [tunbridgewells.gov.uk](https://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk) and search Local Plan Review.

What is a Local Plan?



A council document that sets out how an area will develop, showing where homes, jobs, roads and green spaces should go, and guiding what can be built.

Apprenticeships

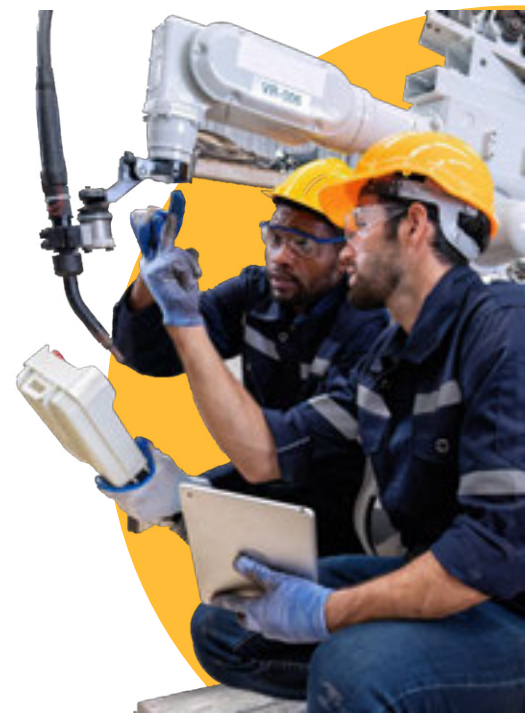
Apprenticeships offer a great way to earn while you learn, combining paid work with structured training and leading to recognised qualifications. They provide a flexible route into employment, bringing together hands-on experience with study, and are available across a wide range of sectors including construction, engineering, healthcare, business and digital roles. As a result, apprenticeships are becoming an increasingly popular choice for school leavers, career changers and those looking to develop new skills.

There are a number of national and local resources available to help people explore opportunities.

The National Apprenticeship Service website and **GOV.UK** both list current vacancies across England, making it easy to search and apply for roles.

Closer to home, the **Kent Choices website** offers guidance on apprenticeship pathways for both young people and adults. Local education providers, including North Kent College and Hadlow College, also offer apprenticeship programmes linked to industry needs.

If you're considering an apprenticeship, these resources provide useful information, support and access to local opportunities to help you get started.



Youth Programme

At The Amelia, we're committed to supporting the next generation of creatives.

New projects, courses, and programmes are under development at The Amelia; exploring transferable skills through arts based practise and creative opportunities.

To keep up to date with our programme and to be the first to know about what's coming up, why not join our Amelia Young Creatives mailing list and website.

theamelia.co.uk



Young Creatives

Documentary Making Intensive

Calling future video journalists!

This immersive and exciting 3 day course will take you through the process of creating your own documentary.

From writing a script to filming your documentary, you will have the chance to have your say on a local issue.

This collaborative, ideas-based programme will provide hands-on, practical experience with industry professionals and local experts, building participants technical film making skills, as well as Storytelling and narrative skills, research, critical thinking and Critical Reasoning skills, as well as leadership, creative problem-solving and presentation skills.

Limited spaces available. Book now.



For 13-19 year olds



Monday 26 -
Wednesday 29 October



The Amelia



10am-4pm



£120 / Go Card £90

Young Company Summer Acting Programme

Great Gatsby Immersive

Jump into the roaring 20's through this 2 week programme, designed for young performers aged 14-18. Over 10 days, participants will create their own theatre performance of the legendary tale of The Great Gatsby.

Students will work with industry professionals to create site specific magic in our art deco theatre. Covering devising, page to stage, costume design, Charleston dance, and a trip to London to visit a live theatre performance. The final works will be a performance to the public the evening of Friday 7 August.

Through this programme participants will complete a Bronze Arts Award, which is a nationally recognised qualification for arts participant; the cost of which is included in the participation cost.



For 14-18 year olds



Monday 27 July -
Friday 7 August



Assembly Hall Theatre



10am-4.30pm



£200

Restoring Elegance

A rare piece of history has been brought back to life thanks to the support from The Elizabeth Hammond Grant, awarded through The Costume Society. This funding has helped conserve a beautiful blue Georgian wedding dress from around 1797. The dress is now on display and available to visit in The Amelia's Georgian Spa Gallery on the upper floor.

The dress is made from silk and shows the style and skill of the time. Silk was a popular fabric in the Georgian period because it looked rich and felt soft. However, silk is also very delicate. As it ages, it can weaken and split, which makes caring for historic garments like this very challenging.

The conservation work was carried out with great care. The dress was first gently cleaned to remove old stains. This helped improve how it looks and protected the fabric. After cleaning, the silk was carefully humidified. This process adds controlled moisture to

relax the fibres. It allowed experts to smooth out creases and improve the shape of the dress without causing damage.

Areas where silk had split or weakened were carefully supported. These repairs help the dress stay stable so it can be safely displayed. The work has been done in a way that keeps the original look of the garment.

Some parts of the outfit were too fragile to exhibit. To solve this, replicas were made. These include a stomacher, sleeve ends, a fichu, and an underskirt. The original underskirt was too delicate to use, so a replica helps show how the dress would have looked when worn.

To complete the look, historically accurate undergarments have also been created. These include a bum pad and a petticoat. They help recreate a fashionable shape of the time and show how the dress would have been worn in the late eighteenth century.

Visitors can now see this carefully conserved dress at The Amelia Scott and enjoy a glimpse into Georgian fashion and daily life.



Archaeology Adventure

An exhibition of play and discovery

10 July - 4 October 2026

Step into the world beneath your feet and uncover the stories of Kent's past in this engaging, family-friendly exhibition.

Join Moley, our friendly archaeologist-in-training, as your guide on a hands-on journey through time. From fieldwalking to excavation, discover the real techniques archaeologists use to reveal hidden histories and try your hand at becoming a history detective.

Young explorers and curious minds of all ages can dig, discover, and decode clues from the past, learning how everyday objects help archaeologists piece together ancient lives.

Interactive activities and playful challenges invite visitors to get involved, whether you're uncovering buried finds, recording discoveries, or interpreting intriguing artefacts.

A selection of objects from archaeological excavations across Kent will be on display, offering glimpses into the region's rich and varied past, from Roman Britain to more recent history. These finds help tell the stories of the people who lived here and the landscapes they shaped.

With special loans from the Kent Archaeological Society, Cranbrook Museum, and the Guildhall Museum, Rochester, Archaeology Adventure celebrates the heritage of Kent through curiosity, creativity, and discovery.

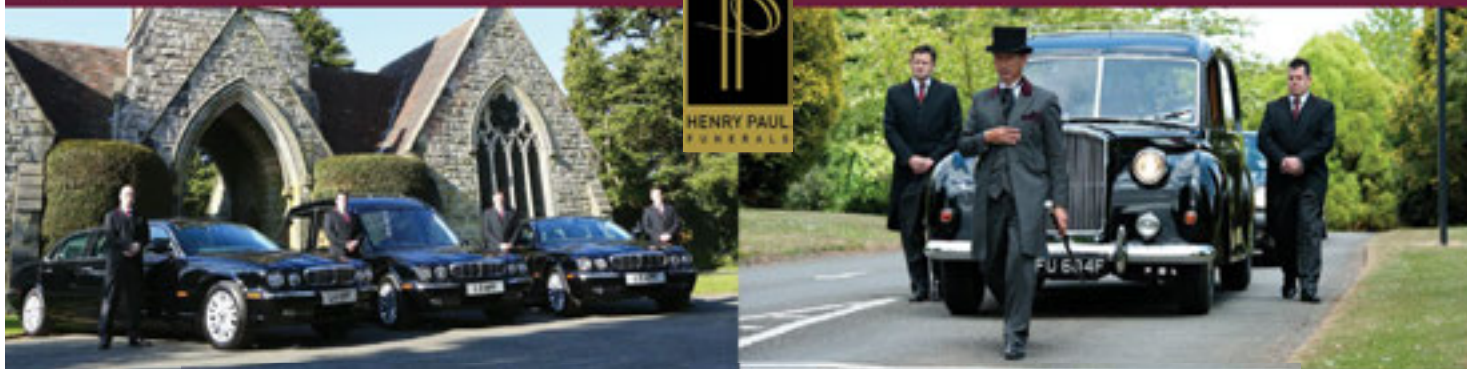
Come and dig a little deeper - who knows what you might find?



Illustrations and Local cover art: Jess Hayman



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Enjoy a *Summer of fun* in Tunbridge Wells

From live music to outdoor theatre, the parks of Tunbridge Wells are set to come alive this summer with a huge variety of family-friendly activities.

Calverley Grounds will once again play host to the Mela Festival as well as the Wimbledon Finals on the big screen.

Dunorlan Park will see its skies lit up with a dazzling drone display, plus our historic houses will play host to some spectacular outdoor theatre.

Take a look at our run down of events for the whole family to enjoy this summer.

Event type	Date	Event
OUTDOOR THEATRE 	3 July	Romeo and Juliet at Penshurst Place
	19 July	Much Ado About Nothing at Calverley Grounds
	1 August	Peter Rabbit at Scotney Castle
	7 August	Much Ado About Nothing at Sissinghurst Castle
	8 August	Much Ado About Nothing at Scotney Castle
	22 August	Treasure Island at Scotney Castle
	31 August	King Arthur and the Holy Fail at Sissinghurst Castle
LIVE MUSIC 	Every Thursday from 28 May	Live on The Pantiles
	5 July	Tunbridge Wells Mela Festival in Calverley Grounds
	1 August	Ibiza Summer Sessions at The Spa Hotel
	Bank Holiday Weekend	Local and Live in Dunorlan Park
FAMILY FUN 	10 July - 4 October	Archaeology Adventure at The Amelia
	9 & 10 July	Filmzone in Calverley Grounds
	5 September	Space Safari: The Drone Light Show in Dunorlan Park
	26 & 27 September	Tunbridge Wells Food & Drink Festival
HISTORY AND HERITAGE 	27 June	Fish & Chip Lunch Train at Spa Valley Railway
	20/26 June	The Royal Pantiles Walking Tour
	25 July	Kent Gin Train at Spa Valley Railway

See all events at visittunbridgewells.com/events or sign up to the Visit Tunbridge Wells newsletter to get a monthly run down of things to do, straight to your inbox!



The Pantiles Summer Season 2026

Where the Town Comes Alive

This summer, The Pantiles invites visitors to experience an unforgettable season of live entertainment, cultural celebrations, specialist markets and family-friendly events in the heart of Royal Tunbridge Wells.

Running from May through to September, the 2026 programme marks an exciting new chapter for the historic destination, bringing together music, food, culture, heritage and community under its refreshed brand vision:

"Where the Town Comes Alive"

With a vibrant calendar of events set against the iconic Georgian colonnade, The Pantiles continues to cement its place as one of Kent's premier lifestyle and cultural destinations.

Live at The Pantiles Returns – Now Free to Attend

A highlight of the summer calendar, Live at The Pantiles returns every Thursday evening from 28th May to 3rd September 2026 — and for the first time ever, it will be completely free to attend.

The beloved live music series has become synonymous with summer in Tunbridge Wells, attracting audiences from across the region to enjoy exceptional performances in a unique open-air setting.

In recognition of ongoing cost-of-living pressures, The Pantiles has removed the previous £7.50 entry fee, ensuring these memorable evenings remain accessible to all.



Martin O'Meara, Estate Manager at The Pantiles, said: "We are delighted to make Live At The Pantiles free to attend this year, creating an inclusive and accessible event that brings the community together. We want everyone to feel welcome and enjoy outstanding live music, soak up the unique atmosphere of The Pantiles, whilst supporting the diverse mix of hospitality, retail and independent businesses based here."

The season launches with an uplifting opening performance from KYJO on Thursday 28th May, followed throughout the summer by crowd-pleasing acts including Our Own Way, The Jive Aces, Jonah's Wail and Abalicious.

A Packed Summer of Events

Alongside live music, The Pantiles will host a diverse range of events designed to appeal to all ages and interests.

Antiques & Vintage Fair 20-21st June / 15-16 August

Step back in time and browse vintage treasures, antiques and timeless collectables from specialist traders. From rare finds and decorative pieces to retro fashion and nostalgic memorabilia, the Antiques & Vintage Fair offers visitors the perfect opportunity to discover something unique.



Polish Cultural Festival 05 July

Returning for its fifth year, the Polish Cultural Festival is a vibrant, family-friendly celebration of Polish traditions, culture and community.

Visitors can enjoy a colourful day of music, entertainment, food and discovery in the heart of Royal Tunbridge Wells. Whether you are discovering Polish culture for the first time or celebrating your heritage, the festival promises something for everyone.

Horseless Carriage Exhibition

01-02 August

Experience 130 years of motoring evolution at the spectacular Horseless Carriage Exhibition. Showcasing magnificent classic cars and motorcycles, this popular event celebrates automotive history and the craftsmanship behind some truly iconic vehicles.



General Markets

13-14th June / 11-12 July

08-09 August / 12-13 September

The Pantiles' popular General Markets continue throughout the summer, showcasing local artisan producers, independent makers and regional businesses. Visitors can explore handcrafted goods, speciality foods, gifts, homewares and more while enjoying the vibrant atmosphere of the historic colonnade.

More Than an Event Destination

Beyond the events themselves, The Pantiles offers visitors a unique all-day experience, with independent restaurants, cafés, bars, boutiques and galleries creating a lively atmosphere across the estate.

Whether enjoying a relaxed afternoon exploring the markets, an evening of live music with friends, or a family day discovering culture and heritage, The Pantiles promises a memorable summer for residents and visitors alike.

The expanded 2026 programme reflects The Pantiles' continued commitment to creating inclusive, engaging and high-quality experiences that support local businesses while bringing the community together.

Thank You to Our Sponsors

The Pantiles would like to thank its valued sponsors and partners for their continued support in helping elevate the annual programme of events:

- Targetfollow
- Thomson Snell & Passmore
- Mousehall Estate
- Royal Tunbridge Wells Together

Their support continues to play a vital role in delivering one of the region's most exciting summer event programmes.

For the latest updates and full event details, visit the official website or follow The Pantiles on social media.



thepantiles.com

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The Pantiles**

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**Where the
Town Comes Alive**

[the pantiles.com](http://thepantiles.com)

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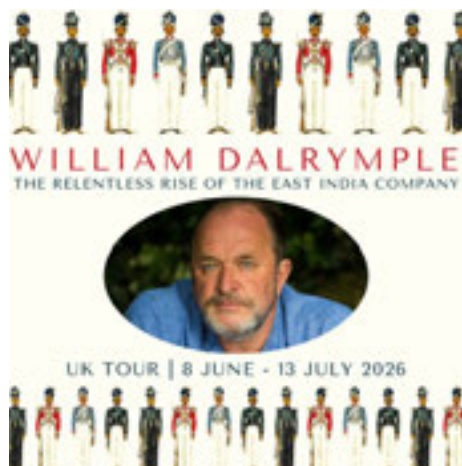
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SPOKEN WORD | MON 15 JUN



COMEDY | THU 18 JUN



MUSIC | FRI 19 JUN



FAMILY | SAT 20 JUN



SPOKEN WORD | TUE 23 JUN



MUSIC | WED 24 JUN



DANCE | THU 25 JUN



MUSIC | FRI 26 JUN



MUSIC | 27 JUN



SPOKEN WORD | WED 1 JUL



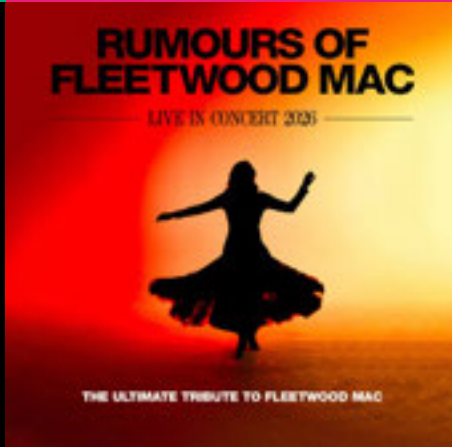
MUSIC | SAT 4 JUL



MUSIC | THU 9 JUL



DANCE | SAT 11 – SUN 12 JUL



MUSIC | WED 15 JUL



VARIETY | THU 16 JUL



THEATRE | SUN 19 JUL



MUSIC | FRI 24 JUL



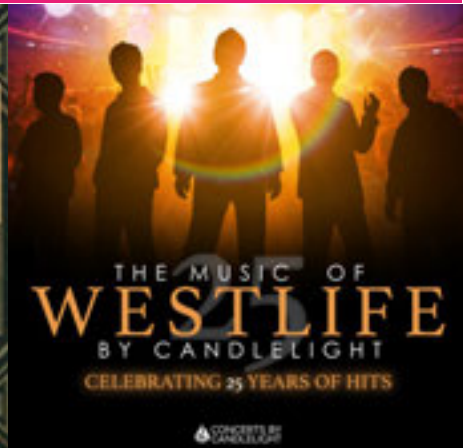
MUSIC | SAT 25 JUL



FAMILY | SUN 26 JUL



WORKSHOP | 27 JUL – 7 AUG



MUSIC | THU 30 JUL

Building a better borough



MUSIC | FRI 31 JUL



MUSICAL | TUE 18 – SAT 22 AUG



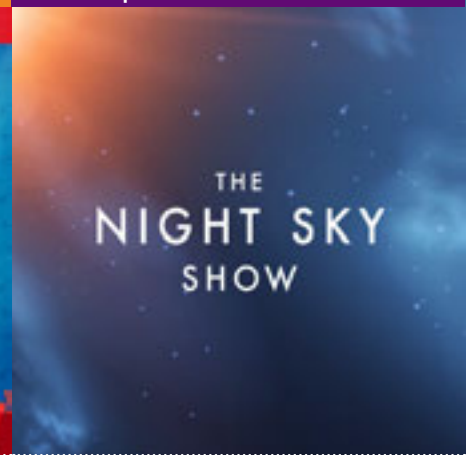
FAMILY | TUE 25 AUG



VARIETY | FRI 28 – SAT 29 AUG



FAMILY | SAT 5 SEP



SPOKEN WORD | SUN 6 SEP



FAMILY | WED 9 SEP



MUSIC | FRI 11 SEP



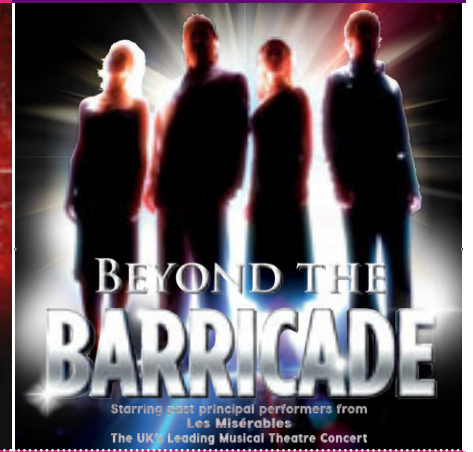
FAMILY | SAT 12 SEP



COMEDY | WED 16 SEP



MUSIC | THU 17 SEP



MUSIC | FRI 18 SEP



COMEDY | SAT 19 SEP



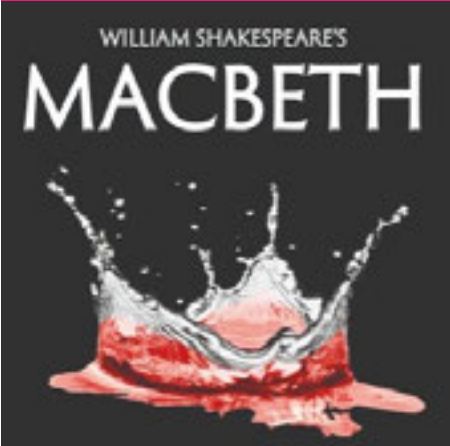
MUSIC | THU 24 SEP



MUSIC | FRI 25 SEP



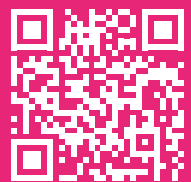
MUSIC | WED 30 SEP



THEATRE | THU 1 OCT



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TUNBRIDGE WELLS



for full details and to book tickets visit our website

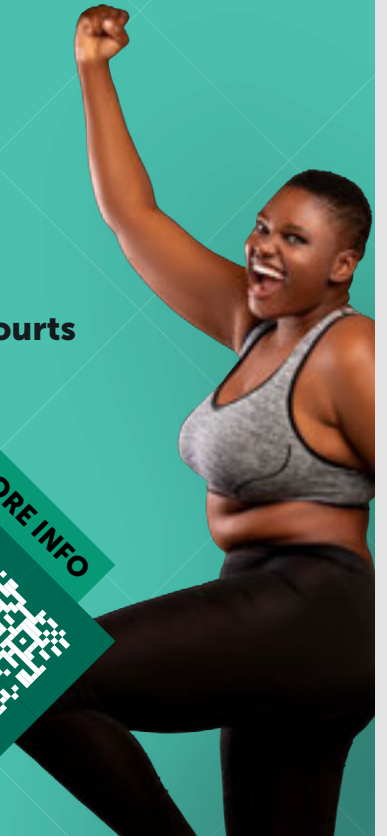
MORE
LEISURE

LET'S *do this!*

There's never been a better time to start your fitness journey at any of our Tunbridge Wells Leisure Centres.



There are **exciting changes on the way** over the coming months, keep an eye on our social channels to see what we're working on!



Under NEW management from 1st July!

Tunbridge Wells Sport Centre

St John's Road, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 9TX

The Weald Sports Centre

Angley Road, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2PN

Putlands Sports & Leisure Centre

Mascall's Court Road, Paddock Wood, Kent TN12 6NZ



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- September - Royal Sandringham
- October - Jodrell Bank National Memorial Arboretum
- February '27 - Fête du Citron
- April '27 - Keukenhof and other Dutch Surprises
- Spring/Summer '27 - Isles of Scilly
- Spring/Summer '27 - Great Gardens of Cornwall.

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Telephone: 01622 434 981
Paper brochures available on request.

The Tunbridge Wells Community Nature Reserve is growing!

Residents, schools and community groups have been busy registering their nature spaces as part of our borough wide Community Nature Reserve initiative.

From tiny sink ponds and pollinator pots to full gardens turned into wildlife sanctuaries, a wide variety of nature-friendly spaces have become part of our growing green network that combined, help contribute to local nature recovery!

To help promote the project, we had a successful free tree giveaway event in February and a bird box making workshop in April. New trees and wildlife boxes can be registered as part of the nature reserve, all nature-friendly features count, whatever size! There will be more fun community events this year so follow the project on social media to keep up to date.

If you would like to get involved or register your space, please contact Kent High Weald Partnership for more information cmp@khwp.org.uk



Changing opening hours for Royal Tunbridge Wells car parks

From 1 July, Meadow Road Car Park in Royal Tunbridge Wells will be open **24 hours a day**. This follows its transfer to Tunbridge Wells Borough Council from private management.

This change will make it easier for early-start retail staff to park, with permits available.

There will also be new opening hours for RVP car park:

Monday - Saturday: 8am - 7pm

Sunday: 9.30am - 5.30pm

