

HILLINGDON people

News from your council
November/December 2023

www.hillingdon.gov.uk

Step into Christmas
Delivering modern
family services

Could you be a
Shared Lives carer?



HILLINGDON
LONDON



NOMINATE



PANTO



WINNERS

Christmas and New Year WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTIONS

If your collection day is usually a Monday, your waste and recycling collection scheduled for Monday 25 December is moving to Saturday 23 December.

All other collections will be one day later than normal.

This will help us to keep disruption to a minimum and enable collections to return to normal as quickly as possible.

Normal collection day	Revised collection day	Normal collection day	Revised collection day
Monday 25 December	Saturday 23 December	Monday 1 January	Tuesday 2 January
Tuesday 26 December	Wednesday 27 December	Tuesday 2 January	Wednesday 3 January
Wednesday 27 December	Thursday 28 December	Wednesday 3 January	Thursday 4 January
Thursday 28 December	Friday 29 December	Thursday 4 January	Friday 5 January
Friday 29 December	Saturday 30 December	Friday 5 January	Saturday 6 January

Please leave your waste and recycling out by 6am on the day of collection by your front gate but not on the pavement. Separate arrangements are in place for flats and business premises.



www.hillingdon.gov.uk/recycling

Primary school admissions

Do you have a child born between
1 September 2019 and 31 August 2020?

If so, you must apply for a school place by
15 January 2024

For more information, key dates, how to apply and advice, visit
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schooladmissions
or call 01895 556644




www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Contents

November/December 2023

Cover stories

- ▶ **12 Spreading festive cheer across Hillingdon**
Get into the holiday spirit with our sparkling events.
- ▶ **14 Brighter future for families and young people**
Youth Offer and boroughwide family hubs on the way.
- ▶ **16 Could you be a Shared Lives carer?**
Find out how you could offer care and support at home.
- ▶ **17 Supporting the rising stars of the future**
Meet this year's Tashan Daniel Award winners.
- ▶ **18 Horticultural competitions display talent**
This year's Autumn Show and In Bloom heroes.
- ▶ **20 Behind the scenes with Trading Standards**
Find out more about the team keeping residents safe.

Regulars

- 4 Hillingdon News 28 What's on?
- 10 Older people 31 Contacts

COVER PHOTO: SHARED LIVES CARERS KHEM AND RAJ RAMJUTTUN

We've aligned stories in this magazine to our Council Strategy to keep you updated on our progress. Below is a key to explain the graphics.

Welcome



One of our key commitments in our Council Strategy is creating thriving, healthy households, where children, young people and their families and vulnerable adults live healthy, active and independent lives.

As local authority budgets continue to be under immense pressure due to inflation and rising demand for social care services, in Hillingdon we are always looking at more innovative and efficient ways we can continue to deliver our outstanding services.

At the council's Cabinet meeting in September, we were pleased to approve two key reports that are set to deliver more modern, efficient and joined-up services for children, young people and families in the heart of their communities. You can read about these on pages 14 and 15.

The first is an exciting new Youth Offer, where the views of our young people have helped to shape a diverse, flexible, wider, and more relevant youth programme that will better meet their needs. And our Family Hub Strategy will see the development of more integrated and enhanced services for families and children aged 0-19 and up to 25 for those with special educational needs.

Continuing with the theme of supporting young people, in September we celebrated our children in care at our annual Kids in Care Awards. Congratulations to everyone who won an award, well done to our dedicated council staff who support them, and of course their carers who make such a difference to the lives of the young people they look after. Find out more on page 22.

As you can read on page 23, we recently launched a new film encouraging more residents to consider becoming foster carers for Hillingdon. We're also looking to recruit more Shared Lives carers who look after adults and young people with learning difficulties, mental health needs, physical disabilities and older people. You can find out more about this scheme on page 16. Both types of carers are provided with financial and professional support. If you think you could make a difference, we look forward to hearing from you.

Finally, with Christmas around the corner, we're once again spreading festive cheer by supporting lighting displays across Hillingdon, offering a range of events, including our popular pantomime at the Compass Theatre, selling Christmas trees at the Rural Activities Garden Centre and providing free parking in the run-up to the big day. Find out more on pages 12 and 13.

I wish you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

**Cllr Ian Edwards
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**



Advertising deadline for next edition: **Friday 24 November.**

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For a copy in large print or as an audio version call 01895 556903

Helping people on low incomes get online

The council has joined forces with the Good Things Foundation to ensure residents on low incomes are digitally enabled by providing them with free SIM cards and/or monthly top-ups through the National Databank Project.

Staff in eight of our libraries (Botwell Green, Charville, Harefield, Northwood Hills, Oak Farm, Uxbridge, Yeading and Yiewsley) are helping to distribute free SIM cards and monthly top-ups from participating networks Virgin Media O2 and Vodafone.

To receive free data through the partnership, users must be aged 18 and over and live in a low-income household with no access to the internet at home, or insufficient access elsewhere.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "Nowadays, having mobile data is vital to carrying out a range of tasks, such as banking, applying for jobs and accessing essential services.

"We hope that our work with the National Databank Project will



help to level the digitally enabled playing field and support people into work and education."

Find out more at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/national-databank.

Driver fined for stolen badge use

A van driver has been ordered to pay almost £2,000 after being caught misusing a Blue Badge to park in Uxbridge.

Craig Smith, 48, of Lampard Grove, Stoke Newington, was fined for Blue Badge misuse at a hearing at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 3 October, following an investigation by the council's counter fraud team.

The court was told that on Friday 26 May 2023, members of the counter fraud team were taking part in a Blue Badge exercise in Uxbridge High Street when they noticed a blue Ford van parked on a single yellow line opposite the Underground station with a Blue Badge displayed on the dashboard.

When questioned, the driver told the council's officers he worked for Pinewood Studios and had dropped off a female passenger who had given him the badge to display before she went into the shopping centre 20 minutes earlier, the court heard.

The counter fraud officers ran details of the badge into a nationwide database which listed it as 'stolen and replaced' on 8 February 2022. Smith was unaware officers had this information.

As the Blue Badge holder was not present, Smith was issued a Penalty Charge Notice for illegally parking on a single yellow line, which was later paid for with a bank card registered in his name on 8 June 2023.

Smith was fined £660 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £264 and the council's costs of £1,030.

You can report suspected Blue Badge misuse anonymously at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/report-fraud.



Company fined £5,000 for noisy works

A construction company has been fined £5,000 after council officers caught builders carrying out noisy works outside permitted hours.

The council prosecuted Westway Construction Limited, of Boston Road, Hanwell, following reports builders had been carrying out noisy and heavy-duty building works at a site on Newport Road, Hayes.

The case was heard at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 12 September, where the company faced a charge of failing to comply with the requirements of a Control of Pollution Act notice.

The court was told the notice was issued on 1 November 2022 following complaints about noise nuisance from the site. The notice required that work at the site could only take place between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday, and from 8am to 1pm on Saturdays and that no work could take place on Sundays or bank holidays.

Following further reports of noise, council officers visited the site at around 9am on Sunday 19 February, and witnessed drilling and banging, and builders working on the upper floors in clear breach of the notice.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "We're committed to doing all we can to create safe and strong communities where residents can enjoy a good quality of life.

"Rogue businesses like this not only flout the rules but also impact adversely on the lives of residents living nearby. We won't allow that to continue and will take the strongest action wherever possible.

"I hope this case serves as a warning to others to abide by the rules, or risk paying the price."

Along with the fine, Westway Construction Limited was also ordered to pay the council's costs of £521.44.

You can report noise nuisance at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/loud-noise.

Could you sponsor a tree in your area?

Residents are being encouraged to consider sponsoring a tree in time for the winter planting season.

As part of the council's ongoing partnership with the national charity Trees for Streets, residents can apply to have a tree planted outside their home, local school, or in a park or green space.

A total of 137 trees were planted across the borough in 2022/23, featuring a range of species including lime, maple, birch and cherry.

Helena Wright and Adrian Fenton (pictured right) sponsored a cherry tree which was planted outside their home in Ruislip in February.

Helena said: "When we moved to the area, we were keen to have more trees outside our new house for shade, clean air and to have a greener view from our windows.

"I would definitely recommend Trees for Streets to other people. We really need more trees across the country to help bring down temperatures, stop flooding and pollution and address climate change. Plus, in a few years it will look great.

"We have lived in Hillingdon for a year and a half, and it is

great to see so many young trees being planted in the area."

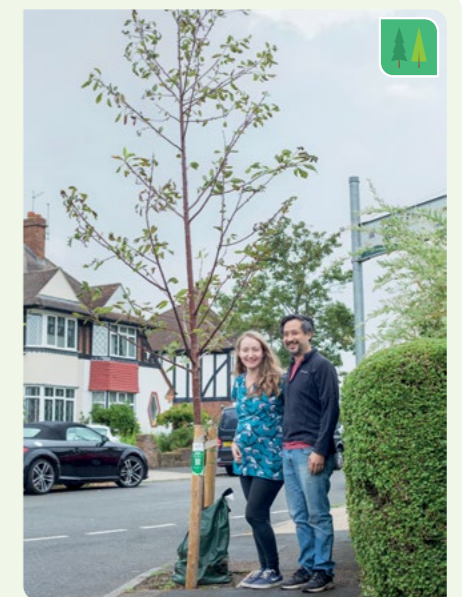
Residents can also join together to sponsor a tree, and Trees for Streets now offers a new crowd-funding feature at www.treesforstreets.org/crowdfunding. This allows local groups to pool resources so that everyone gives what they can. This helps foster a sense of community ownership and can help raise enough to plant multiple trees.

Alternatively, residents can sponsor a 'celebration' tree to be planted in one of the borough's parks or green spaces.

All applications will be assessed by the council's team and, if approved, the trees which are established 'standards' – usually around six feet tall – will be planted this winter, the best time of year to help them take root.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "We're committed to creating a green and sustainable borough and brilliant schemes like this one help residents to play their part too.

"The benefits of trees to local streets are multiple, providing shade, absorbing pollution while providing oxygen, creating homes for



wildlife and greenery is also proven to have mental health benefits.

"We already have a good number of sponsorships lined up for the winter planting season but don't want anybody to miss out, so please keep them coming in."

Applications for this year's planting window need to be submitted before the closing date on Sunday 3 December.

To find out more and request a tree to be planted in your street, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/sponsor-a-tree.

Revamped tennis courts for Harmondsworth residents

On Friday 29 September, the council celebrated the opening of Harmondsworth Recreation Ground's newly renovated tennis courts.

This marked the completion of a £240,000 investment programme, which saw the council invest £60,000 and secure a £181,175 grant from the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and the government to revitalise 15 of the borough's tennis courts.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, and Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, attended the launch event alongside the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana and 120 children from Harmondsworth Primary School.

LTA accredited coaches set the children fun tasks, including ball bouncing, running exercises and practising racquet skills.

Cllr Lavery said: "It was brilliant to see so many local children enjoying our renovated tennis courts.



"It's important that we all have the opportunity to live healthy, active lives, and exercise is central to both mental and physical health.

"Our partnership with the LTA has helped to revive tennis facilities across the borough and we hope it encourages more people to come along and give the sport a go."

The council has also renovated tennis facilities at Rosedale Park, Hayes; Northwood Recreation Ground; and Swakeleys Park, Ickenham. Renovations have included line painting, replacing fences, new nets, resurfacing courts and new gate-access technology.

Find out more at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/tennis.

West Drayton Station public realm works due to start

The council will commence works to improve the public areas and car park at West Drayton station this autumn despite the ongoing closure of Station Approach to buses.

This investment, in conjunction with TfL, will see attractive improvements to the station environment, including additional cycling stands, new paving, seating, and landscaping outside the train station. Improvements will be initially carried out behind the station before moving to Station Approach.

Network Rail, which owns the road, has notified the council that they have had to delay their planned repairs to this area into 2024. This is because there needs to be detailed investigations into the ongoing issues with the sewer that runs below the forecourt and bus stand area. This survey is expected to show whether specialist repairs are required. As a result, Network Rail have informed the council that Station Approach will remain closed to buses until the repairs are completed.



A CGI of the revamped public realm

Network Rail has apologised for the further delay and ongoing inconvenience to residents while this issue is being resolved, however the council has reiterated its extreme disappointment with the situation, formally requested an earlier resolution and will continue to press Network Rail for this.

Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, said: "We were disappointed that we couldn't

commence these improvement works in July as originally planned but now the council's work is underway, we are proud to deliver a much improved and welcoming experience for residents using the station.

"While we appreciate that the problems with the sewer are complex and require careful attention, the prolonged inconvenience of the road closure to residents is not acceptable, which is why we're urging Network Rail to carry out this work to a quicker schedule."

Director of Hayes cash and carry store fined £66,000

A store specialising in imported foods has been fined after breaching hygiene conditions and causing unnecessary suffering to animals following a rat infestation.

Asian African Foods Ltd, trading as Krishna Cash & Carry, was sentenced at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court on Friday 6 October.

Company director Santhirasegaram Ketheeswaran had admitted five breaches of food hygiene regulations, causing unnecessary suffering to rodents and failing to comply with a health and safety improvement notice when he represented Asian African Foods Ltd at the same court, on Tuesday 22 August.

The court was told the council's food and health and safety team made an unannounced visit to the business on Uxbridge Road, on 9 June 2022, following complaints from customers regarding the unhygienic storage of food.

The team discovered very poor levels of cleanliness throughout, with dirt, food debris, flies and rat droppings, and the structure of the building was in such a state of disrepair that multiple holes allowed rats to freely enter the business.



Unsanitary storage conditions uncovered by council officers

The court heard the inspectors found a dead rat beneath a pallet of rice bags and in the rear stock room an emaciated rat was found barely alive while stuck to a glueboard, next to another dead rat, indicating the boards were not being checked regularly.

Electrical sockets behind freezers were hanging off the wall.

Conditions were so appalling that the business was voluntarily closed for cleaning and repair, but when inspectors returned the next day they also found a fridge that had no power, and resulted in the disposal of 40kg of decaying and rotten fish.

The court heard Krishna Cash & Carry had a history of pest

infestations with pest control records showing evidence of rats being treated previously in February, March, April (twice) and May of 2022.

Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, said: "While the council is committed to creating a borough where residents feel safe and can live healthy lives, this horrifying case serves to show not everyone has the same sense of duty. "I thank our food and health and safety team for their diligence in following up residents' complaints and ensuring this business was quickly brought into line through a strong prosecution and very significant fine."

For the five hygiene offences, relating to pest control, food storage and cleanliness, Asian African Foods Ltd was fined £60,000 (£12,000 on each count).

For the animal welfare offence, there was an additional fine of £5,000.

For failing to comply with the terms of the health & safety improvement notice there was a further fine of £1,000.

Asian African Foods Ltd was also ordered to pay the council's costs of £11,296.75 and victim surcharge of £190.



New pothole repair system rolled out

Repairs of potholes and uneven road surfaces across the borough have been revolutionised following the council's adoption of a more efficient and cost-effective process.

Introduced in October, the new road-repair material helps prolong the life of the borough's roads and is a more environmentally conscious method of repair.

The system uses a fast-setting waterproof liquid called 'Elastomac' which is quicker to install and roads can be reopened just 10 minutes after the repair. The system uses 80 per cent less energy than traditional asphalt repairs, uses 85 per cent less carbon and halves the overall costs of repairs.

The transition to a quicker and more cost-effective and sustainable repair system will enable the council's highways repairs team to work far more efficiently, with less disruption for residents and road users while contributing to the council's pledge to reduce its carbon footprint.

Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport (pictured right), said: "This is exactly the sort of innovative approach to tackling an age old problem we've adopted as part of our commitment to being a modern and efficient council, dedicated to creating a more climate-friendly borough.

"This repair system uses recycled materials, reduces time, energy, costs and the council's carbon footprint, while also minimising disruption to the road network for motorists. It also enables us to tackle smaller

highways repairs quickly, before they become more problematic."

Traditional pothole repairs can be time consuming and energy intensive, relying heavily on fossil fuels. The hole needs to be widened and filled with asphalt which is then compacted down.

Elastomac is made from 70 per cent recycled materials, including road surface shavings and car tyres. This is poured directly into a pothole with no need to widen it, no compaction needed and there's no waste to remove as there's no excavation.

To find out more about highways improvements or to report an issue, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/highway-issues.



Plans for new 'family-style' children's home are approved

On Thursday 5 October, the council's Planning Committee approved plans to remodel Charville Lane Children's Home in Hayes to replace the current building with six family-sized homes as part of a new model of care for the borough's most vulnerable children.

The existing site will be demolished and replaced with a mixture of one-bed, two-bed and three-bed homes which will provide care and support for up to 12 children.

Each property will be built to look and feel like a family home with its own bathroom, kitchen/dining area, lounge and separate ensuite bedroom so a member of staff will be on hand to provide stability, support and targeted intervention for children with complex needs.

The new family-style homes have been designed to face each other and will benefit from a communal garden in the centre. A separate building will also be built to accommodate educational and enrichment activities.

In Hillingdon, there is currently more demand for residential beds in smaller homes and the layout of the current children's home does not align with how the council wants 21st century children's provision to look.

Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, said: "The new homes will allow us to change the way we meet children's mental and emotional needs whilst they are being looked after, by providing them with a safe and stable environment within the borough.

"We want to ensure that these homes provide a caring and supportive setting, so that each young person is given opportunities to grow, learn and develop."

Work is expected to start in December and complete in spring 2025. Children currently living in the home will be moved to other accommodation within the borough.

For more on information on our local care offer and events and opportunities for looked after children, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/kidsincare.



Pupils at Pield House School, councillors and council staff launch the new cycle hub

West London's first council-managed accessible cycle hub

In October, the council opened an accessible cycle hub in Uxbridge which will give people with health, learning and physical conditions the opportunity to use six specially adapted cycles.

The facility, at Pield House School, offers use of the new cycles on the school's cycle track. Students at the school, 12 other special educational needs schools in the borough, local organisations that work to improve residents' mobility and wellbeing, people living with dementia and their carers, and adults and young people with disabilities will all benefit through use of the hub.

The Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana, and Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, were

joined by staff from the school and members of the council's dementia friendly cycling group to celebrate the launch of west London's first council-managed accessible cycle hub and try out the cycles.

The £57,000 council-funded project not only provides specialist cycles and storage facilities, but also cycling instructors who will facilitate sessions, as necessary.

Cllr Bianco said: "I am delighted to support this wonderful initiative, which not only creates immediate opportunities for those who will benefit from the facility, but will also open up horizons and awaken opportunities that cycling can offer in terms of exercise and a sense of personal freedom.

"It will help so many people and supports the council's commitment

to helping residents live healthy, active and independent lives.

"I hope that pupils from Pield Heath House School, members of our dementia friendly cycling group, and the wider community will find much enjoyment and build strength and confidence through their use of the hub during the coming years."

Debbie Coker, a 63-year-old carer from Hayes attended the event. She said: "We love coming cycling, getting out in the fresh air, seeing other people who are in a similar position and having a great time. It's amazing what Hillingdon offers residents living with dementia and their carers."

To find out more about this scheme and how local groups can make use of the facility, email sportandphysicalactivity@hillingsdon.gov.uk.

Underused homes to be repurposed for the homeless

Two council buildings previously used for sheltered accommodation will be changed to create vital housing for homeless people.

The council's Cabinet met on Thursday 12 October where it was agreed to decommission both Yiewsley Court in West Drayton and The Gouldings in Uxbridge.

The decision follows a recent review of the council's housing, which revealed a surplus of homes dedicated to older people. The review showed 16 per cent of the council's housing stock was allocated to those over 55.

By decommissioning the two buildings and relocating residents to suitable alternative accommodation in the borough, the two sites can be made available to meet the housing needs of other priority

groups. The Gouldings comprises 42 self-contained one-bedroom flats and Yiewsley Court has 25.

The council consulted with all residents affected by the proposals earlier this year, before putting the decision before Cabinet.

Increasing the council's provision of homes set aside specifically for homeless households whom the council owes a statutory duty to house will help address both supply and cost pressures associated with temporary accommodation.

Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, said: "We're committed to creating a borough with happy, healthy households where residents can thrive.

"So, we're determined to ensure that everyone who needs a home has the opportunity to find a good one in our borough, particularly those groups or individuals with more acute needs.

"This is easier said than done in a dense, urban area like west London, so in this instance, we've looked at how we can use our provision of sheltered accommodation in a more efficient manner, rather than having buildings under capacity at a time of housing crisis.

"In return, this has freed-up buildings which will provide vital homes for other priority groups."

For residents who will have to relocate, the council will be providing them with one-to-one support from a council officer throughout the process as well as financial compensation to cover the costs and disruption.

Nominate an unsung hero for a Hillingdon Community Award

Do you know someone who goes the extra mile to help others in the community?

Now in its fourth year, nominations for the 2024 Hillingdon Community Awards are now open and offer a chance for the council to acknowledge and thank those residents and local groups whose selfless acts better the lives of those around them.

Any exceptional acts of kindness – whether it's enabling people to keep fit and active, helping keep the borough tidy, or supporting someone in need – all help to make Hillingdon an even better place to live. So put forward any person or a group of people who you think fits the bill.

Winners will be announced in March and presented with their awards at a ceremony at the Civic Centre in Uxbridge in the spring by Leader of the Council, Cllr Ian Edwards and Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana.

Among last year's winners was Scout leader Jennipher Marshall-Jenkinson, who was awarded the Civic Medal (the second highest award after the Freedom of the Borough), for her lifetime commitment to helping and supporting young people.



Our 2023 Hillingdon Community Award winners

Scooping Gold in last year's Bravery Award was then 12-year-old Nawal Rafi, whose quick actions saved her father's life after she realised he was having a stroke and called the emergency services.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Ian Edwards, said: "These awards continue to highlight the incredible levels of commitment and compassion being shown by those volunteering their time in communities across the borough.

"These extraordinary residents are the very fabric of our borough,

and we are delighted to shine a spotlight on their remarkable achievements. I'm delighted that nominations are open for this year and look forward to reading the incredible stories behind them."

To nominate someone, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/community-awards or complete a paper nomination form available from Hillingdon's libraries and the Civic Centre in Uxbridge. Nominations close at midnight on Friday 23 February 2024.

Former director of noisy Ruislip bar fined for infestation

The former director of a Ruislip bar has been ordered to pay more than £9,000 after failing to address a cockroach infestation and breaching conditions relating to noise nuisance.

Nikhil Walia, 38, of Kingsend Court, Ruislip, former director of Masala Gallery Limited, trading as Kho Kho restaurant and bar admitted four breaches of food hygiene regulations and two breaches of the conditions of his licence when he appeared at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court on Tuesday 12 September.

The council's food and health and safety team made an unannounced visit to the bar in July 2022, following a complaint a customer had found a cockroach in their meal.

The team discovered poor levels of cleanliness throughout, with ready to eat food stored uncovered in areas where there was evidence of live cockroaches and there were also maintenance issues, including

an open drain with stagnant standing water. The council's officers considered the conditions to pose an imminent risk of injury to health.

The court was told Kho Kho had a history of pest infestations with pest control records showing evidence of cockroaches being treated in both September 2021 and February 2022.

In July 2022, a judge granted a Hygiene Emergency Prohibition Order preventing Kho Kho from operating as a restaurant, but this order was lifted by the council in July 2022 following evidence that the health risk had been removed.

During the same hearing, the court was told how the council's out of hours nuisance team had received a call from a neighbouring resident complaining of amplified noise coming from Kho Kho at around 11.40pm on 14 January 2023.

The council attended the complainant's property 45 minutes

later and witnessed loud, disruptive music with repetitive bass noise.

In January 2022, the council's Licensing Sub-Committee agreed to reduce the hours of Kho Kho bar and restaurant's regulated entertainment, to end at 11pm, following complaints from neighbouring residents of late night noise dating back to summer 2019.

The court was told Walia admitted knowing this restriction and later blamed a customer for using the bar's iPad to play the music – which the staff could then not locate to stop it.

For the four hygiene offences, relating to pest control, food storage and cleanliness, Walia was fined £1,538 and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £615 and the council's prosecution costs of £4,877.

For the two licensing offences, there was no separate fine, but Walia was ordered to pay the council's costs of £2,472.

Improving our older people's wellbeing

In September and October, we hosted two events to highlight the support and activities available to help residents stay safe, healthy and independent as they get older. Find out also how our Older People's Assembly gives local people a say in how services can be improved.

On Tuesday 26 September, our Day of the Older Person event was held at the Pavilions shopping centre, Uxbridge. It was opened by the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana, with more than 350 people attending, 35 stalls offering support, advice and activities, as well as a variety of live performances and entertainment.

The event has been running for 10 years and is an opportunity for older residents to speak face-to-face with services to find out more about them as well as enjoying a fun day out with a range of activities.

Volunteers from ORCHID (a prostate cancer support charity) handed out nearly 300 leaflets, and the Metropolitan Police Service spoke to more than 200 residents, distributed personal alarms and offered advice about avoiding scams and rogue traders.

Attendees also enjoyed a seated Bollywood taster session, while others

tried walking football and Boccia, a popular seated bowls game.

Council staff distributed 90 of its new 'falls guides'. These serve as a valuable self-assessment tool, helping residents to understand their own risk of having a fall and develop a personal action plan to help stop this from happening. Find out more at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fall-prevention.

Star of stage and screen Nik Stoter sang to an enraptured crowd and performance artists Bus Pass to Broadway also put on a great show and had people singing and dancing along.

Lourdes Rapley, 78, from Harefield (pictured right), said: "I'm really enjoying today, it's a wonderful opportunity to socialise and meet up with friends, both old and new."



"A highlight for me was playing Boccia and I've also been visiting the stalls to find out more about the support available."

Sue Duke, 75, from Hayes (pictured right), said: "I've been looking forward to this day for weeks and weeks. I've particularly enjoyed the performance from Nik the singer who gets the crowd up singing and dancing."



"I'd like to thank the council for organising today, as not only have I been able to reminisce with people my own age, but I've also been able to speak to representatives from Age UK and the Carers Trust who are really knowledgeable about the support available."

Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, said: "Our Day of the Older Person and Memory Day events allow us to show how much we value Hillingdon's older residents."

"While we offer fun and games, and an opportunity for people to see old friends and make new ones, our aim is that older residents leave knowing a little more about the range of valuable local services available to them and tips that could help them to lead healthier, happier lives."



Event supports people affected by dementia

On Thursday 12 October, the council held a special Memory Day event at Hayes and Harlington Community Centre.

Organisations including Age UK, Carers Trust Hillingdon, RNIB, DASH and H4ALL were on hand to provide information about memory loss and dementia.

Attendees could also get their blood pressure checked and enjoy taster sessions, including seated Bollywood exercise and walking football.

Dorothy, 80, from Hillingdon, said: "Thank you for Thursday's event. It was lots of fun with a lot of information. I really enjoyed it."

Did you know free social groups for residents and carers living with dementia take place at many of our libraries? These informal and friendly groups are a great way to meet others also living with the condition in a relaxed setting. Activities include reminiscence sessions, chair exercise classes, bingo, art and music.

Additionally, various weekly, free sporting activities for people living with dementia are available, including golf and walking football.

For more information and to book, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/dementia-activities, email sdurner@hillingdon.gov.uk or call 01895 277137.

Have your say on services

We want residents to play their part in shaping services, and our Older People's Assembly is a way they can do just that.

The sessions offer a unique opportunity to speak to and hear from councillors and officers, as well as partners and outside experts.

Attendees can raise issues of concern relating to older people's services, discuss what's working well and make suggestions for how life in the borough can be improved.

Originally from Punjab in India, **Vijay Dhir** (pictured right) has enjoyed an illustrious career as a photographer and even captured Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II when she came to the borough as part of her Golden Jubilee celebrations in 2002.

Now residing in Uxbridge, Vijay has attended the Older People's Assembly for more than a decade. He said: "I find the assembly very interesting and uplifting. It's a chance to meet other people and share life experiences."

"The council is doing an excellent job supporting the borough's



residents as they look after and encourage us to live our life."

Either the Leader of the Council, Cllr Ian Edwards, or Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, chair the panel alongside council officers.

External guest speakers offer insight into their areas of expertise, such as public health, the NHS and Transport for London.

The next assembly takes place on Wednesday 13 December at 1.30pm at the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

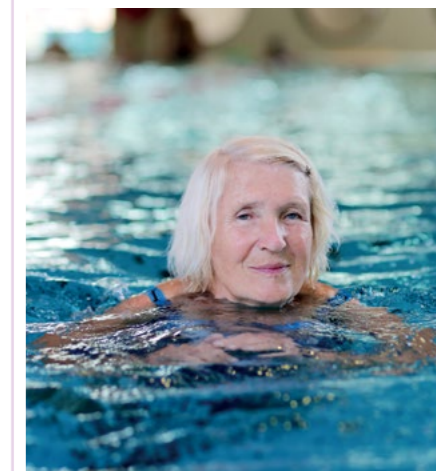
For more information and to book your place, visit discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/op-assembly.

Free activities for over-65s

The council's chairobics classes are a low-impact chair-based form of exercise, focused on improving your strength, flexibility, coordination and stamina.

The classes take place in 10 of the borough's libraries and are open to residents aged 65 and over. Booking is required, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/chairobics to find out more.

Older residents can also enjoy monthly tea dances incorporating a variety of musical styles and dances, including classic ballroom, bhangra and line dancing. The council-run events are held at Christ Church, Uxbridge, Winston Churchill Theatre, Ruislip and Botwell Green Leisure Centre, Hayes. Find out more and book at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/dances or by calling 01895 556688.



Free weekly swimming lessons, which cater for varying abilities, are available for over-65s at three of the borough's swimming pools. Older residents can also swim at these pools for free. Classes and sessions can be booked at Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Complex (indoor pool only), Botwell Green Leisure Centre or Highgrove Pool and Fitness Centre by visiting www.better.org.uk or downloading the Better UK phone app.

Find out more at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/moves.

Find out more about activities and resources for older people at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/olderpeople



SPREADING FESTIVE CHEER THIS CHRISTMAS

Get into the holiday spirit with an array of sparkling events and activities staged or supported by the council.

Borough's high streets light the way

This year, the council is supporting 28 council-led and four community-led Christmas lights schemes which will transform areas across Hillingdon's 21 wards into twinkling, winter wonderlands.

Uxbridge Civic Centre's Christmas light switch-on event takes place on Friday 24 November, from 5.45pm to 6.45pm, six days after the town centre lights are turned on. Entertainment will be provided by several primary school choirs and Hillingdon Music Service's own Young Singers and Brass Band performing carols and Christmas music.

Northwood Hills Residents' Association switch-on event takes place in Joel Street, on Saturday

18 November, from 2.30pm to 5pm, where there will be a Santa's grotto, mulled wine and a school choir concert on Namaste forecourt from 4pm, followed by the light switch-on. St Mary's Church switch-on event takes place at Harefield Village Green on Thursday 7 December at 6pm, following a community carol singalong.

Elsewhere, the high streets in Eastcote, Harlington, Harmondsworth Village, Hayes, Ruislip and Sipson are now aglow with sparkling Christmas trees.

Keep an eye on the council's social media channels or visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/christmas for further updates and details on the full programme.



Get your tree from the RAGC

The Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) on West Drayton Road, Yiewsley, will once again be selling Nordmann non-drop premium quality trees from Friday 1 December, priced competitively between £40 to £60 dependent on the height.

Rooted/potted trees grown by the centre are individually priced and can now be reserved, with some also available to pick up from 1 December.

Once you've picked out your tree, if you're unable to transport it home yourself, you can have it delivered for just £5.

The centre also sells a range of festive wreaths and other decorations.

Christmas markets return

Uxbridge town centre's Christmas market runs until Christmas Eve.

Traditional wooden chalets are offering a range of bespoke gifts, seasonal delicacies and mulled wine.

An outdoor bar area and live entertainment is open on Saturdays, from 3pm to 5pm, courtesy of Uxbridge BID.

The Duck Pond Christmas Market at Manor Farm in Ruislip also returns on Sunday 3, Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 December, from 10am to 3pm, showcasing a fine selection of delicious seasonal produce and handcrafted items from local businesses. Find out more at www.duckpondmarket.com.

Park for free and shop local

To make shopping locally this Christmas that bit easier and support the borough's high streets, the council will again be providing free parking to HillingdonFirst cardholders on two weekends in the run-up to the big day.

Those using PayByPhone must register their HillingdonFirst card on the app to enjoy this offer in council-owned car parks and on-street parking bays (except for Ruislip Lido, Botwell Green, Highgrove and Hillingdon leisure centres) on Saturday 16 and Sunday 17 December, and Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 December.

Residents who prefer to continue to use payment machines, must have their HillingdonFirst card with them and follow the instructions on the machines when getting a ticket to ensure no charge is applied.

Remember that you can also use your HillingdonFirst card to enjoy discounts at a range of local businesses in the borough's high streets.

For more information on shopping discounts and to apply for a card, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/hillingdonfirst.

Yule be glad you visited a library

Hillingdon libraries will be hosting more than 70 events and activities for residents of all ages throughout December.

Highlights include a Christmas-themed coffee morning for over-50s at Botwell Green Library on Thursday 14 December, from 11am to midday.

On Friday 8 December, from 6pm to 9pm, you can drop into a Festive Community Night at Ickenham Library with quizzes and a selection of craft activities for all the family to enjoy.

Yeading Library's Christmas Coffee Morning on Wednesday 13 December, from 11am to 12.30pm, has festive music courtesy of Ruislip Belles & Beaux Handbell Ringing Group.

Children aged seven to 11 can make their own Christmas cards at craft sessions at various libraries, including Northwood Hills Library on

Saturday 2 December, from 10am to 11am, and Hayes End Library, on Friday 22 December from 2.30pm to 3.30pm.

To delight our youngest residents, Charville Library hosts Christmas Tiny Tales, full of stories and songs for children aged up to five, on Tuesday 19 December, from 11.30am to midday.

West Drayton Library is holding a Christmas Coffee Morning and Quiz for adults on Thursday 21 December, from 10.30am to 11.30am, with mince pies and stollen.

For more information on library events and booking details, visit discover.hillingdon.gov.uk/library-events.

Leader of the Council, Cllr Ian Edwards, said: "The range of library and theatre events as well as our Christmas markets mean that Hillingdon will be a great place to be over the festive period.

"And our free parking offer will help us all to shop locally and support businesses for whom this is the most crucial time of year."

Recycle right this Christmas

Dry recycling

You can recycle cards, wrapping paper, books, magazines, paper, cans, glass, cartons, plastic and glass bottles.

Anything with glitter and foil cannot be recycled, so please put these in black waste sacks. Contaminating a recycling bag with items like these could lead to a whole batch being rejected and disposed of as general waste.

Food waste

Food waste can be recycled by residents of houses and maisonettes with private gardens, and some council-owned blocks of flats, using the kitchen caddies and liners provided by the council.

But getting creative in the kitchen to use up leftovers, rather than throwing them away, is the greenest and most cost-effective option of all.

Christmas trees

You can recycle your real Christmas tree with our usual garden waste collections.

Like your other waste and recycling bags and caddies, it should be visible to crews and placed at the edge of the property boundary on the day of your collection.

All decorations and pots must be removed and trees more than six feet tall must be cut in half.

If you live in a flat, collections are available between Monday 8 January and Sunday 21 January and can be requested by emailing wastesupervisor@hillingdon.gov.uk.

Trees should be placed next to your bin store or collection point for waste and not blocking access to bins.

Greener way to dispose of old gadgets

Some of us will be lucky enough to find a new phone, tablet, computer or other electrical items in our Christmas stockings.

If so, why not donate or gift your still-working older items to someone who could use them? You can now recycle any small gadgets that no longer work at some of Hillingdon's

The stage is set for some family fun

Christmas wouldn't be complete without a classic panto (oh no it wouldn't!). And you can get your fun-filled festive fix this year from *Dick Whittington* at the Compass Theatre.

It runs from Thursday 7 December until Saturday 6 January, with morning, afternoon and evening performances available to book.

There's also the one-hour *Santa Show*, recommended for ages two and over, which is packed full of songs and audience interaction, followed by the chance to meet

and receive a small gift from Santa himself. Find out more on page 28.



A thriving economy



Creating a brighter future for Hillingdon's families and young people

The council has approved two key strategies which will deliver more modern and joined-up services for children, young people and families in the heart of their communities.

The council is committed to creating thriving, healthy households, where children, young people and their families live healthy, active and independent lives. In September, the council's Cabinet agreed a new Youth Offer for Hillingdon's young people and to roll out a family hubs model boroughwide which will enhance support for families.

New, fun youth programme on the way

A dynamic and exciting new Youth Offer will be launched next year which reflects the diverse, flexible needs of today's young people and encompasses the development and activities young people in the borough have requested.

A nine-week public consultation on the proposed offer took place in spring and early summer, and feedback from young people, families, carers,

and partner agencies endorsed the council's modern approach.

The strategy sets out how the council will move from a static buildings-based model to a more flexible way of delivering services local to young people in the heart of communities, by using existing council buildings and new, state-of-the-art family hubs. This will be delivered alongside

more street-based youth work and further outreach work.

The new Youth Offer will create a wider programme of more modern, relevant opportunities, including digital services. It will also complement wider early help and prevention arrangements to support all young people. The number of services provided will increase, offering more opportunities at flexible times to support personal, social and educational development, and improve wellbeing.

A digital service directory will also be created, listing all council and community youth services in one place.



Family hubs to support whole families

Family hubs will be rolled out boroughwide to provide enhanced support for families within their local communities.

The decision followed an extensive 12-week consultation on the council's proposed Family Hubs Strategy.

Respondents positively received the proposals, welcoming the introduction of one system to provide all the support families might need from pregnancy through to adulthood.

What are family hubs?

Our Family Hub Strategy reflects the government's national programme of providing more integrated services to whole families, parents, carers and children aged 0 to 19 and up to 25 years of age for those with special educational needs (SEND).

Hillingdon's family hubs

Hillingdon opened its first family hub in Uxbridge in December 2021, and our ambition is to now expand this model boroughwide, building on existing services, such as children's centres, to offer more joined-up support to older children and young people.

Six family hubs and additional delivery points will be at the centre of local communities in existing children's centres, libraries, community spaces and leisure centres.

Family hubs and additional sites will be within 1.5 miles or 30 minutes' walk from residents' homes.

Family Hub services will include:

- children's centre groups and sessions
- youth services
- birth registration
- parenting programmes and workshops
- SEND support
- adult education opportunities
- information and advice for families
- pre and antenatal maternity support
- health visiting and school nursing

Family Hub Strategy and early years consultation in numbers



More than **690** families, carers, partners, providers and community organisations shared their views

71% of residents and **79%**

of community partners who responded in agreement with Family Hubs Strategy

82% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with proposed family hub services



- mental health services
- programmes to encourage healthy weight
- communication, speech and language support.

The council also approved a recommendation to maintain childcare provision in its three early years centres. Consultation responses from local parents highlighted how strongly valued its early years nurseries (Nestles Avenue, South Ruislip and Uxbridge) are by them.



Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education,

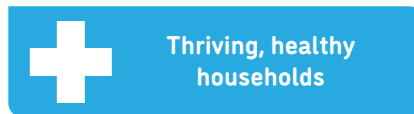
said: "Thank you to all of the families, partners and young people who took the time to respond to our consultations.

"It was imperative that our young residents using the array of youth services had a say in what could be delivered and how to ensure the council is offering an innovative and fit for purpose model for today and the future.

"Your views have also helped to inform our decision to proceed with the expansion of the family hubs model boroughwide.

"Both of these services will help us to provide even more support to children, young people and families, when and where they need it most."

Find out more about services to support families, children and young people at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/families



'I became a Shared Lives carer, and I have never looked back'

Do you have space in your heart and room in your home? Because that's all it takes to be part of the council's Shared Lives scheme, according to one carer who opened his home to care for vulnerable adults.

For more than 35 years, the council's Shared Lives Scheme has helped residents to share their homes with someone who needs care and support. The scheme provides care for adults and young people (aged 16 and over), including people with learning difficulties, mental health needs, physical disabilities, or older people. It can be a full-time caring arrangement as an alternative to living in a care home. Or carers can help by providing respite care – giving other families a break, either for a week or two, a weekend, or just overnight.

Khem's story
Khem Ramjuttun from Hayes, left a full-time job in a care home to become a dedicated Shared Lives carer five years ago

He said: "I lived next door to a wonderful man who had been a Shared Lives carer for many years. I saw the difference he made to people's lives, and I wanted to do the same. "I was already working in a care home, which I loved. My dad, Raj, who's been a nurse for many years and I used our experience of working in care services to design an extension to the house. I became a Shared Lives carer and I've never looked back. "You get lots of training and support from the council's Shared Lives team, social services officers and therapists to help you take care of the people living with you. "Anyone can do it. My background helped, but if you're compassionate, caring, flexible and patient you can

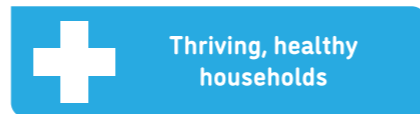


learn how to look after an adult and take care of their needs. In much the same way as you get foster carers who look after children, this is very similar and equally important for adults. "You end up creating this big family, made up of your relatives and the people you care for – they become a part of your life. "If you love caring for people, have space in your home and the

time to commit then you should find out more. It's rewarding and you're helping someone live with dignity and independence and become part of your shared family."

Want to find out more?
 Shared Lives is looking to recruit more carers. They are paid and receive training and support, as well as holidays. Visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/shared-lives or you can call 01895 277025 or email hillingtonsharedlives@hillington.gov.uk to find out more.

Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, said: "Schemes such as Shared Lives play such an important part in supporting adults with additional needs and we'd love to see more people like Khem come forward and offer their support. "If vulnerable adults are supported in a safe, caring, family environment they can often go on to live independently once they are ready. This scheme is one way we can help them on their journey."



Supporting stars of the future

The council's Tashan Daniel Award scheme continues to nurture the ambitions of talented local young people. *Hillingdon People* met this year's bursary winners hoping to take their sporting and cultural pursuits to the next level.

The funding initiative was created in 2020 in memory of Tashan Daniel who was tragically killed in 2019. Tashan was a keen photographer, footballer and athlete who dreamt of becoming an Olympic sprinter. The bursary scheme is open to applications from residents aged up to 21 and offers grants which can be used to pay for sports equipment and competitions, gain

qualifications in art and culture and enrol on vocational courses. In September, the judging panel consisting of Tashan's father, Chandy Daniel; Tashan's sister, Oceanna; Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care; and Priscilla Simpson, the council's Sport and Physical Activity Manager met to review this year's applications. Here are this year's winners' stories...

Zara Khan, 13, from Northwood

Zara (pictured below right with Cllr Palmer) has a passion for musical theatre and has landed several roles in past productions, both at her drama club, Future Stars, in Northwood, and at her school. She has performed in a Bright Stars dance ensemble at the Royal Albert Hall and sang in school choirs at St Martin-in-the-Fields in Trafalgar Square. Her talent has been recognised elsewhere too, with awards from Trinity College London and distinctions in acting exams at the prestigious London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art. Zara is currently preparing for her Grade 3 exams from the Associated Board of the Royal School of Music. Her ultimate dream is to one day perform the lead role of Christine Daae in *The Phantom of the Opera*. A keen netball player, Zara also plays regularly for her local team, the Newlife Netball Club, and helps develop the younger members. However, due to recent serious illness in her family she has had to step back from many drama and sports activities and has struggled to continue her singing lessons. The experience has inspired her to explore the role of drama therapists,

who use drama and arts therapy to build resilience and support children undergoing traumatic events. Zara's parents, Imran and Seema, said the support from the Tashan Daniel Award has given her the opportunity to further develop her own creative talents, along with her ability to act as a mentor to younger children. Zara added: "I am extremely grateful for this award because it will enable me to continue to build my skills in dramatic arts. "I hope to honour Tashan's legacy by excelling in my field, not only to perform on stage but also to use this skill as a drama therapist to support children through challenging times."



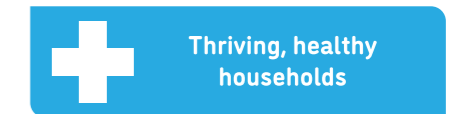
Cllr Palmer said: "We're so pleased to have been able to support the dreams of two more outstanding young people in our borough in memory of Tashan. "We wish them the very best in their future endeavours and are sure they will do themselves and Tashan's family proud."



Arjun Bhandal, 17, from Hayes

Arjun (pictured above) began practising Taekwondo at the age of 10 and is aiming to reach the top of his sport. The double black belt's talent has won him a place in the British Taekwondo south region poomsae (non-contact patterns) squad. He plans to apply next year to join the national Talent Draft scheme, which allows athletes to prepare for the Olympic pathway. Arjun who also recently completed a referee course and is studying to qualify as an assistant coach, said: "I am really delighted and honoured to be a recipient of the Tashan Daniel Award. Tashan's sudden death was tragic, and it had an impact on a lot of people in the community. "I am grateful that I can, in some small way, help to keep his memory alive through my Taekwondo journey and this award. Thank you to Hillingdon Council and the Daniel family. "The funding will really help me to be able to compete in more tournaments and ensure I can continue my elite squad training long-term."

Applications for the next round of funding open in June 2024. For more information on the award, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/tashan-daniel-award



Bloomin' marvellous: horticultural excellence

The council's annual free-to-enter gardening competitions – the Autumn Show and Hillingdon in Bloom – once again showed off the wealth of green-fingered talent in the borough with a dazzling array of plants and produce.

Autumn Show

The ever-popular growing competition – a highlight in the council's calendar – showcased some barnstorming entries with resident-grown produce and crafts that delighted the judges.

An impressive 459 exhibits were submitted from residents across 57 categories, ranging from best turnips to vegetable or fruit-themed works of art.

Entries were judged by a panel led by Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) and Middlesex Guild Judge, Gerry Edwards; the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana; Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, and members of the council's green spaces team, which runs the show.

The judges deliberated for more than three hours in the Great Barn at Manor Farm, Ruislip, on Saturday 16 September before announcing the lucky winners.

One winner was regular competitor, **Peter Bird, of Harefield Road, Uxbridge** (pictured top right), who claimed one of the two 'Best in Show' awards for his 'Two matching cucumbers grown under glass'.

Peter said: "It feels very surprising actually to get 'best in show', because they [cucumbers] just grow very nicely in our greenhouse."

"We have quite a large vegetable garden and grow all our own produce, it's just a bit of fun and I just like to enter the show."

Peter, who believes the secret to his success is avoiding insecticides and keeping it all organic, also scooped prizes in numerous other categories, including first prizes for both his carrots and onions.

Susan Munro, from Ickenham (pictured right), was awarded second prize in the 'Art (Adult), with a fruit or vegetable theme' category for her incredibly detailed drawing of a cabbage.

She said: "It took a few hours, maybe five or six, but it was fabulous, I loved drawing it and enjoyed the whole process, going to the show and meeting the Mayor."

A full list of winners is available at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/autumnshow.



Hillingdon in Bloom competition

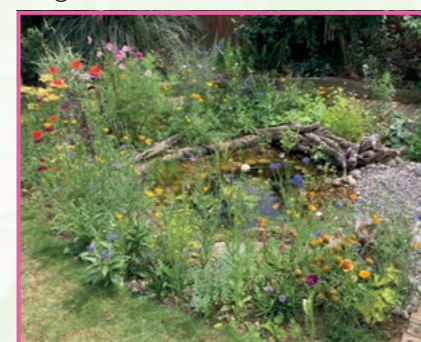
A total of 54 residents submitted 116 entries across the 10 categories with 26 new applicants this year.

The most popular categories were Best Residential Garden Display, Best Park and Bloom Display and Best Hanging Basket. The judges Cllr Eddie Lavery, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services, and Stuart Hunt, Head of Green Spaces, Sports and Culture, were impressed by the excellent standard of entries throughout, exhibiting horticultural excellence which really brightens up the borough and people's daily lives.

Last October, **Ian Bartholomew**, from Ruislip, looked out on to a garden where the main focal point was his son's 10-foot trampoline. Now he looks out over a nature pond and wildflower meadow, literally buzzing with wildlife (pictured below).

Ian was awarded the prizes for both First Time Entrant and the Roome Cup – which recognises entries which have a conservation impact.

Ian said: "When the trampoline was removed, I had a bit of dead space in the garden and I wanted to encourage more wildlife so I dug a pond and made a wildflower meadow around it. By March I was surprised to find I had frogspawn in the pond and then got newts, dragonflies and damselflies."



"Winning the awards was amazing. I was really pleased. You're nervous when you start about whether you'll be successful, but it's been incredibly successful. I only planted four plants, the rest were grown from wildflower seeds."

"In the peak of summer, it was looking stunning. Even looking out at it now in October, I have scabious, cosmos and Californian poppies still flowering."

Judy Zamiskova, from Hayes, was delighted to be one of the two joint winners of the Best Hanging Basket category.

Judy said: "I love my hanging baskets – I had nine this summer."

"They require time and dedication but the final results are very rewarding. We had quite a few hot days this summer where I had to water them twice a day, but it was all worth it."

Deanesfield Primary School in South Ruislip scooped the award for the Best King's Coronation Display (pictured top right) – a new category introduced for 2023 to mark the historic event, which required regal-themed entries of red, white and blue.

David Butterfield, site manager, said: "The children of Deanesfield enjoyed planting, watering and looking after the flowers, however it was a shame the Royal Highness's Coronation wasn't a few weeks later when the bloom of the flowers were in their full glory."

"It was very difficult sourcing red, white and blue flowers for the children to see at the time of the coronation, in May, as there were none in bloom."

To mark their achievements, prize winners will receive a mixture of RHS and RAGC garden centre vouchers, certificates and rosettes.

A full list of the winners is available at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/bloom.

The first-prize winners were:

- **Best first-time entrant**
Ian Bartholomew
- **Best Window Box Display**
Aileen Fiona Fernandes and Caetano Gonsalves
- **Best King's Coronation Display**
Deanesfield Primary School
- **Best Hanging Basket**
Gemma Blake and Judy Zamiskova (joint winners)
- **Best Balcony Display**
Sandra Karunasinghe Herath
- **Best Residential Garden Display**
Lyn Sutherland

- **The Roome Cup (for gardens making the greatest contribution to wildlife conservation)**
Ian Bartholomew
- **Best Park and Bloom Display (a front garden with plants, flowers, and room for a car)**
Shino Thomas and Shallet Antony
- **Best Novelty Garden Display**
Maxine Coleman
- **Best Business Establishment Display**
The Woodman



Community groups scoop top awards

Congratulations to Harmondsworth Village Allotments and Horticultural Association and the Friends of Eastcote House Gardens for bringing home a haul of awards at this year's London in Bloom Awards.

Harmondsworth Village Allotments and Horticultural Association won silver in the Best Small Village category and silver gilt in the Health and Wellbeing and Community Engagement categories.

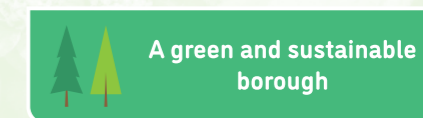


Hardip Singh MBE, Chair of Harmondsworth Village Allotments and Horticultural Association, said: "I am a passionate believer that horticulture is a great way to bring people together and improve lives, that is what drives Harmondsworth Village Allotments and Horticultural Association."

"We are already planning for next year's entry and urge people across our wonderful borough to enjoy the excellent outdoor parks and spaces."

The Friends of Eastcote House Gardens brought home five gold awards, including Level 5 (outstanding) in the 'It's your neighbourhood' award.

Find out more about London in Bloom at londoninbloom.co.uk.



Illegal vapes, fireworks and a tobacco dog – a day in the life of a Trading Standards officer

Hillingdon People joins the council team keeping residents safe, as they carry out routine inspections on shops in the borough to check they're not selling illegal tobacco.

The men all dressed in black take the backstreets to minimise their visibility and walk with purpose, the springer spaniel in front pulls on its lead, sensing something is about to happen.

Their route to the location and low-key appearance is by design – if there are any 'spotters' they won't be able to tip-off their mates that Hillingdon's Trading Standards team is in town.

These operations are part of the day-to-day life of a Trading Standards officer and the spike of excitement they provide is the culmination of months of intelligence-led planning.

Today, Hillingdon People joins the team as it carries out a series of unannounced checks at eight locations across the borough seeking out shops selling illegal tobacco – a persistent issue nationwide, including in Hillingdon.

The council doesn't have a dedicated dog handler, so a specialist has been brought in from Wales just for this operation. Pippa, the six-and-a-half-year-old springer is trained to detect illicit tobacco, but more recently has also been trained to detect illegal vapes – an increasingly prevalent issue.

The team conducts these operations regularly across the borough. At the first store, a small shop in Uxbridge, nothing is found.

"That just goes to show, some of the complaints we get may be spurious," says King-Yip Cheung, the council's Trading Standards officer who organised the operation.

He explains that sometimes the tip-offs and complaints the team receives deliver results, but not in this instance. However, King-Yip – who brings 33

years trading standards experience – is confident in success at one of the team's visits later in the day.

"We've done test purchases there, so we know they sell it," he explained.

By the end of the day, 1,260 illegal cigarettes were found in three of the shops visited, as well as 100 illegal vapes, with oversized tanks, containing more than the 2ml legal limit.

Depending on the quantity of goods seized and whether the business has prior history of illegal goods, those three shops will get a warning, formal caution or face prosecution.

The council's Trading Standards team has one key ambition – to keep the residents of Hillingdon safe. Their work is vast and varied, from today's operation for illegal tobacco, to investigating sales of dangerous or counterfeit goods, test purchases for under-age sales of restricted items, rooting out rogue traders and tackling the aforementioned boom in illegal vapes.

At this time of year, the team is also entrenched in the mammoth

task of ensuring legitimate sales of fireworks from stores across the borough. The team's work here will include processing fireworks storage licence applications and further site and inspection visits.

The team also conducts undercover test purchase operations of age-restricted products throughout the year. This may include products such as fireworks, but also alcohol, vapes, tobacco and knives. All these products can only be bought by adults aged 18 or over.

Of the variety in the role, King-Yip said: "I lead on product safety and age-restricted sales and fireworks safe storage for our team. I also handle other work areas such as misleading claims and descriptions such as clocked cars, weights and measures – ensuring weight and quantity descriptions on products are as stated. I also investigate fake goods and doorstep cold caller scams, such as rogue tradesmen who target the elderly and vulnerable."

The role is highly skilled and requires a broad knowledge of the law and legislation that covers the marketing of goods. There's a lot of paperwork involved, with some investigations taking months and sometimes it can be a year, or more, before the team's endeavours are rewarded with a positive result in court.

The work takes a particular type of person, with huge dedication and minute attention to detail. But the rewards are great.

Eastcote business fined for carrying out under-age vape sale

The directors of an Eastcote newsagents have been ordered to pay more than £8,000 after selling a vape to a 15-year-old and for supplying illegal, oversized vapes.

Narinder and Kartar Lamba, the directors of Eastcote Newsbox Ltd each admitted the two offences when they appeared at Uxbridge Magistrates' Court together on Tuesday 3 October, following a prosecution brought by the council's Trading Standards team.

The court was told the team was conducting under-age test sales using a 15-year-old child on 13 February 2023 and the youth was sold a 1,500 puff 'Blue Razz' disposable vape (pictured right), which contained nicotine, by Narinder Singh who was serving at the Field End Road store.

The legal limit for disposable e-vapes is 2ml of liquid, or around



Tobacco uncovered during a previous raid by the team

King-Yip adds: "It is an enjoyable role, both when I'm working on my own, but also the work I do together with the team.

"It is rewarding that our work helps protect consumers from unsafe products and other misleading and illegal practices. And it helps ensure a level playing field for legitimate businesses in the borough who comply with the law."

Find out more about the team's work at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/trading-standards.



Selling fireworks safely

An annual licence allows premises to store all year, but they can only sell fireworks at the following times:

- between 15 October and 10 November
- between 26 and 31 December
- first day of Chinese New Year and the three days prior
- Diwali and the three days prior.

If a trader wishes to sell outside of the above dates, then they will need to have an all-year selling licence which they can apply for.



Enjoying fireworks safely

When buying fireworks, the council's Trading Standards team advises residents to only buy from licensed sellers, both in-store and online.

Do not buy from unknown retailers on social media sites. Remember, it is illegal for under-18s to buy fireworks.

Only fireworks that carry the CE mark or UKCA mark and are correctly labelled with details of the manufacturer and importer can legally be supplied to consumers.

Fireworks cannot be let off between 11pm and 7am, except for on 5 November, Diwali, New Year's Eve and Chinese New Year. To find out more, or report noise nuisance from fireworks, visit www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fireworks.

For information on setting off fireworks safely, visit www.britishfireworksassociation.co.uk/firework-advice-for-consumers/.

Find out more about the law around using fireworks and safety at www.gov.uk/fireworks-the-law and www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/fireworks.



Pippa sniffing out a stock room for illegal tobacco and vapes



Celebrating our children in care and supporting our caregivers

In September, our annual Kids in Care Awards (KICA) recognised the fantastic accomplishments of our young people in care, and we also launched a new film to inspire more people to become foster carers.

The remarkable achievements of care experienced children and young people were celebrated at the council's fun-filled and glamorous annual KICA event on Sunday 17 September.

Four hundred children, carers and friends were brought together to recognise the children and care leavers' determination and successes at the special ceremony at Stockley Marquee at Stockley Park Golf Course.

Those nominating the children and young people for the awards acknowledged them for a range of achievements, including excellence in education, moving into independent living and being involved with the Children in Care Council. Qualities such as resilience, kindness, strength and determination were also celebrated.

The young people walked the red carpet to meet the Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana, and Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education, who presented their awards.

Care experienced young person **Beanie** (pictured right with fellow care leaver and KICA awardee Lewis) delivered a passionate and inspirational speech about what KICA means to her.

She is 20 years old and now living independently. Since attending KICA last year, Beanie has been inspired to volunteer with the council's children's rights and participation team, supporting younger care experienced children and helping train council staff in how best

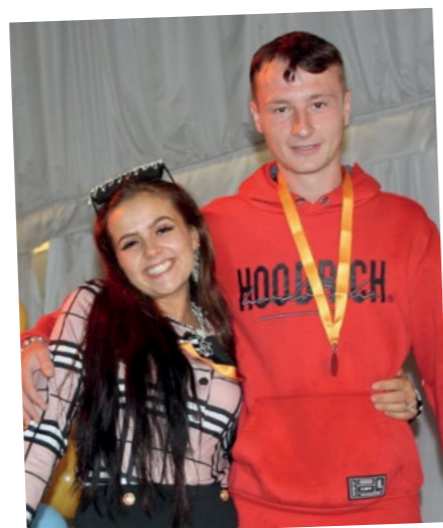
to support them. She has also been included on interview panels, helping to recruit new council



social workers and the council's new Director of SEND and Education.

Beanie was nominated by six different professionals and presented with a KICA award for her voluntary work.

Addressing a packed room, she said: "For us young people, being in care we may face many challenges and get labelled and be judged. For years I let this affect me. I used to be embarrassed and



ashamed but now I am so proud of being in care. I am so proud of the person I have become; of the brothers and sisters I have made and how I have helped other children in care along their journey.

"My life has been like a roller coaster with lots of highs and lows. But I had a team around me who didn't think negatively and who saw my strengths and encouraged me to achieve what I am capable of."

Other highlights of the event included games, face painting, biscuit making, a caricature portrait artist, food trucks, an ice cream van, and arts and crafts.

I am strong
KICA
I am capable 2023



Cllr O'Brien said: "We are proud of each and every child in our care, and our Kids in Care Awards event is a great way to express not just our pride, but that of our children's carers and contemporaries.

"We are committed to creating safe and strong communities and thriving, healthy households and the KICA awards are an opportunity to shine a spotlight on the fantastic achievements of children and young people in the borough and their dedication and commitment to overcoming challenges.

"We are equally proud of our dedicated team of foster carers who give local children and young people a safe and nurturing home when they need it the most.

"We hope our emotive new film encourages caring residents to visit our website to learn more about fostering with Hillingdon and to register their interest."



Could you be a foster carer?

On Tuesday 26 September, we launched a powerful new advertising film encouraging residents to consider becoming a foster carer.

Any Of Us illustrates that any of us can foster a child or young person, if we have the capacity to care.

It tells three different stories from diverse foster carers, based around them sharing their experiences with people considering fostering. Each show some of the caring attributes and qualities fundamental to being a foster carer through incidents from their daily lives.

The council has more than 40 years of experience in fostering, and is proud to work with our exceptional foster carers to make sure that children in need of care receive love and care in a safe family home.

Around the clock support is provided to our foster children and their caregivers, and a team of expert social workers, psychologists, and other professionals work tirelessly to meet the needs of each foster family.

Generous financial support is also provided to carers to help with the cost of looking after a child.



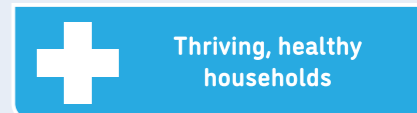
Online fostering information event

Join us online on Tuesday 12 December, from 2pm to 3pm, to find out more about fostering with Hillingdon.

Members of our team, including a foster carer, will guide you through the fostering recruitment process and the support available to you. You will also have the opportunity to ask us questions.

Find out more at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fostering-events.

Watch our new film, find out more about fostering and register your interest in becoming a carer at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fostering



Update from the Neighbourhoods Superintendent

With darker nights drawing in, I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you how your local policing teams will be tackling crime and reducing anti-social behaviour as we move further into winter.

Anti-social behaviour and incidents of burglary tend to increase around this time of year, and we recognise that many people, including the elderly and vulnerable members of our communities, can be left feeling anxious and worried. Please be reassured that your local police will be working proactively to keep you all safe during this period.

Officers will be out within communities speaking to vulnerable residents and offering them crime prevention advice, and officers will be undertaking enhanced patrols to ensure safety on the streets of Hillingdon. To supplement the work of your local teams, the Roads and Transport Policing Command in partnership with Transport for London will be carrying out patrols in the borough to prevent disorder on buses and at transport hubs and will be engaging with people to offer them travel safety advice.

Hillingdon, as with the rest of London, can experience an increase in burglaries as the nights draw in and it's important that we are all aware of some basic information and security advice to keep our properties

safe. Please be aware that:

- burglaries increase during the week with fewer, on average, over the weekend
- burglars are most active between midday and 9pm
- 15 per cent of burglaries are opportunistic – burglars take advantage of open/unlocked doors and windows.

To protect your property from burglars, follow our three-step advice to keep your home safe:

- 1) protect your valuables
- 2) safeguard your building
- 3) secure your outside gates and sheds/garages.

Practical measures you can take to achieve these steps include:

- ensuring doors and windows are closed and locked
- keeping valuables out of sight of windows and letterboxes
- ensuring any mail and/or deliveries are taken in from the doorstep
- securing your garage and shed with robust locks
- ensuring any side or back gates are closed and locked secure.

New Met for London Update

In the September/October edition of *Hillingdon People*, we shared details of how we launched the 'A New Met for London Plan' locally at Brunel University.

The plan sets out the priority areas that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) will focus on to ensure a quality service is received by Londoners through more effective policing.

Locally plans are progressing quickly across a number of areas, including (but not exclusively) work to:

- increase the number of ward-based Police Community Support Officers
- increase the number of Neighbourhood Police Team Sergeants
- assess additional accommodation requirements to try and ensure all Neighbourhood Teams are within a 20-minute walking distance of the wards they police
- review how we engage with communities, including work to improve Ward Panels.

We will look to keep you regularly updated on progress as we move forward in our work to improve the MPS in the way the communities of London, including Hillingdon, want us to.



Superintendent Anthony Bennett

Get vaccinated. Get winter strong.

It's not too late to protect yourself this winter with the COVID-19 booster and flu vaccines. Both are available for free to those who are at risk of becoming seriously ill if they contract the viruses.

This means that people over 65, residents of care homes and people in clinical risk groups, including people who are pregnant, are all eligible. Anyone aged 12 to 64 who are household contacts of people with weakened immune systems, carers, and health and social care staff can have both too.

If you're pregnant, getting your flu and COVID-19 vaccines will help protect you and your baby against the viruses. This is important

because pregnancy changes how your body responds to infections, increasing the risk of developing complications if you do get flu or COVID-19.

Both vaccines are proven to be safe to have at any stage of your pregnancy and the protection passes on to your baby for the first few months of their life.

Both vaccines are free for those who are eligible. If you have not yet had your vaccines contact your local pharmacy, midwife, GP surgery or book online.

More information, including booking links and where to



find local pharmacy and walk-in vaccination services can be found at www.nwlondonicb.nhs.uk/your-health-services/Winter.

Fighting fraud and protecting the public purse

To mark Fraud Awareness Week (12 to 18 November), *Hillingdon People* shines a spotlight on the excellent work of the council's counter fraud team and the role you can play in catching fraudsters.

Counter fraud is responsible for investigating a raft of potential frauds and dishonesty offences, including tenancy fraud, giving false information on applications, not declaring income and misusing parking Blue Badges.

Fraud is a serious crime which can have a devastating impact on its victims and negatively impact on the availability of the council's resources.

Update on the team's good work so far in 2023/24

Tenancy fraud and other housing-related frauds deprives genuinely eligible families of a much-needed home. Through its continued work to investigate and take action where fraud is suspected, the council has so far this financial year prevented the loss of £2.6 million and recovered 48 council properties due to non-occupation, subletting and abandonment.

Following a check of all the council's emergency accommodation to expose fraud, such as non-occupation and false homelessness applications, 19 accommodation placements have been cancelled since April 2023, saving the council £159,000.

More than £127,000 has also been saved through action taken against people fraudulently receiving financial assistance from the council for adult social care services where they haven't properly disclosed their income, savings or property ownership. Additionally, a further £92,000 has been saved in children's social care as a result of the identification of false applications for assistance.

The counter fraud team also includes an onsite Immigration Official who is able to verify documentation and provide up-to-date immigration status information for prospective or current council service users. This has prevented a loss of more than £68,000 so far this year by identifying people no longer eligible for support due to their immigration status.

Additionally, the council has prosecuted three people for Blue Badge fraud, which has collectively cost the offenders more than £5,000 in fines and costs. Blue Badges are only intended to be used by the holder and misusing them limits the number of accessible parking spaces available to those residents who really need them.

Furthermore, the team's proactive data matching through the National Fraud Initiative highlights cases of fraud or loss across a variety of council services. Through this work, the team has identified cases to the value of £75,000 where people have claimed a single person's discount for council tax when they were not entitled to do so.

In total, this financial year the council's fraud team has identified savings related to fraud and prevented the loss of more £3.4 million through its proactive activity and investigative work.

Cllr Martin Goddard, Cabinet Member for Finance, said:

"The council has a zero-tolerance approach to fraud, bribery and corruption. "We will continue to investigate all claims of fraud against the council and use the full force of the law to prosecute where we find evidence of fraudulent activity."

If you suspect that someone is committing fraud against the council, you can report it directly to us in confidence at www.hillingdon.gov.uk/report-fraud or call 0800 389 8313



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www.hillingdon.gov.uk/buy-back-scheme

Update from the London Fire Brigade

I'm proud and pleased to introduce myself in this edition of *Hillingdon People* as the recently promoted Borough Commander for Hillingdon.

I've served in the London Fire Brigade (LFB) for 25 years working through the ranks from firefighter to Borough Commander in a variety of roles, from search and rescue to regulatory fire safety.

I'm eager to support both operational and non-operational LFB personnel at our four fire stations located at Hillingdon, Hayes, Heathrow and Ruislip.

I want to create the best service for Hillingdon residents, organisations, businesses and visitors through prevention, protection and response. I'm keen to work collaboratively and effectively with the council, emergency service partners, local companies and community groups to educate people about our services and emergency response.

Home fire safety visits

We've changed our approach to home fire safety visits.

The main change is that firefighters will now complete home fire safety visits at any time, 24 hours a day, including during night shifts for people who are classified as very high risk.

We've also created an online Home Fire Safety Checker which allows you to carry out a thorough check of your home in only a few minutes. Scan the QR code below, visit www.london-fire.gov.uk/protect or call the LFB Home Fire Safety Team on 0800 028 4428.



#Chargesafe

Fires involving lithium batteries are the fastest growing fire risk in London. So far in 2023 we've been called to, on average, an e-bike or e-scooter fire once every two days. Whilst e-bikes and e-scooters offer a great way round the city, if the batteries become damaged or begin to fail, they can start incredibly ferocious fires.

Our #chargesafe campaign is designed to educate people on the risk posed by lithium batteries and provide guidance on how to charge and store them correctly. Find out more at www.london-fire.gov.uk/safety/lithium-batteries.

Automatic Fire Alarms – changing how we respond

We're consulting on how we respond to Automatic Fire Alarms (AFA).

Across London, less than one per cent of AFAs end up being recorded as fires. Ninety-nine per cent are false alarms.

We intend to stop attending AFAs between 7am and 6pm (when most buildings will have staff on site who can confirm whether the alarm is genuine).

There are exceptions to this. We'll continue to attend:

- buildings with sleeping quarters (student accommodation, care homes, hospitals, hotels, prisons etc)
- premises that contain dangerous substances under the Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Regulations
- other non-domestic buildings of substantial public significance where we consider exemption appropriate through our annual assessment of risk.

Find out more and have your say on the proposed change at www.london-fire.gov.uk/afa-consultation.

Borough Commander
Paul Eastland



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www.hillingdon.gov.uk/great-barn-weddings

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- request recycling bags
- order a new Hillingdon First card and much more...

USEFUL CONTACTS

Adult education
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/adultlearning

Businesses and licensing
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/business

Benefits
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/benefits

Births, deaths and ceremonies
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/births-deaths-ceremonies

Families' Information Service, fostering and adoption
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/families

Fraud Hotline
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/report-fraud
 0800 389 8313

Health and wellbeing
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/health

Housing Services
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing
 01895 556666

Hillingdon Social Care Direct (adults) (including TeleCareLine and Meals Service)
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/socialcare
 01895 556633

Leisure (including parks, leisure centres, theatres and events)
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leisure

Libraries
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/libraries

Planning and Building Control
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/planning

School admissions
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schooladmissions

Stronger Families Hub
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/stronger-families

Transport, roads and parking
www.hillingdon.gov.uk/transport

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Do you have lived experience of adult safeguarding support, either personally or while supporting a loved one?

Would you like to have an impact on the future of adult safeguarding in Hillingdon?

Hillingdon's Safeguarding Adults Board is looking for volunteers and representatives to influence safeguarding services in Hillingdon, and London more widely.

There are opportunities to be part of the Hillingdon Lived Experience Group, give a one-off feedback interview, or be part of the London Safeguarding Voices Group.

If you would like to find out more please email [@safeguardingpartnership@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:safeguardingpartnership@hillingdon.gov.uk) or call 01895 277855

Hillingdon safeguarding adults board
hillingdonsab.org.uk

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