What’s on in Elmbridge?

Sparkling performances this festive season

If you are looking for a pantomime, Christmas carols, musicals, plays, concerts, exhibitions or things to do locally this Christmas, check out the Elmbridge Arts Forum Facebook page or visit elmbridge.gov.uk/culture.

Get more active in 2020

If your goals for 2020 include losing weight, increasing your fitness and improving your health, there are lots of local schemes and classes you can join. What will you commit to do today? Find out more at elmbridge.gov.uk/leisure.

Dig into the borough’s past

An interactive trail about the ‘Diggers’, produced in partnership with Royal Holloway University as part of their Citizens 800 project, will launch in January 2020.

The new trail about the ‘Diggers’ movement, which started in Weybridge and Cobham in the 1649 Civil War to reinstate people’s right to ‘dig’ and farm common land, is based on the national curriculum and includes a map, videos, animations, information and activity packs. More information at elmbridgemuseum.org.uk.

Merry meanders in Elmbridge

Healthy walks are planned on Christmas and Boxing Day, New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day. Enjoy a cup of mulled wine and great company while you walk. More information at elmbridge.gov.uk/healthywalks.

The year in numbers

118 affordable homes delivered
1,350 children took part in the Junior Citizen programme
22,000 passenger journeys taken on dial-a-ride, hire-a-bus and the community cab scheme
44,700 meals on wheels delivered

(Based on 2018/19 data)
Welcome

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P4 Character and environment: Local Plan next steps, Heathrow update
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P6 Quality services: Protecting our property assets, help for EU citizens
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P8 Services over Christmas: Details of services over Christmas

Mayor’s message

Councillor Mrs Mary Sheldon

My year of office as Mayor is flying by rather quickly, and during the last few months I have enjoyed visiting many of our schools, sports clubs, community events, including celebrations for both Cobham and Walton Heritage Day, and met hundreds of amazingly generous and committed volunteers.

In September many of us enjoyed another successful Elmbridge Food Festival – attended by over 8,000 visitors at Painshill, and Elmbridge won again the Riparian Challenge Trophy in the Great River Race. I thank everyone who organised these and other events and also those who have helped to raise funds for my chosen charity, Elmbridge Mencap.

I was able to host many Surrey Mayors and Chairmen to my Civic Day, and this gave me an opportunity to show them many of Elmbridge’s excellent and valued assets.

Finally, my consort John and I look forward to celebrating the festive season with you and send you our warmest best wishes for a happy, healthy and peaceful 2020.

Supporting your health and wellbeing

It used to be the case that your council dealt with the rubbish collections and ran the leisure centre, while the health authority supplied you with a doctor and, in extreme cases, a hospital bed. We now appreciate that most of the things that make up a healthy life actually lie outside the hospital or direct medical care. Being fit and well is much more about exercise, healthy eating and social interaction. It is also about mind as well as body. So, councils now work with health authorities on what is termed “health and wellbeing” to ensure that you are offered better all-round services.

We know that we need open spaces for our wellbeing, that outdoor gyms encourage physical activity and leisure centres raise the heart rate and can also be great ways to meet others on the quest for a longer healthier life. No matter your age or current condition, there is an activity that Elmbridge Council offers to help improve your health - physical and mental.

Knowing all of this, we are here to support you by providing leisure centres and swimming pools, play areas, outdoor gyms, parks and commons, our centres for the community and some of the most beautiful woodlands in Surrey. The needs of our residents will always come first, and we try hard to make sure that we maintain and improve what we already have.

To help ensure you are aware of all that is on offer, look out for the ‘Today I will’ information campaign starting in January 2020. This campaign aims to showcase the huge variety of activities on offer from Elmbridge Council to help you fulfil your resolutions for 2020. Maybe you want to be more active, maybe you want to explore a new part of the borough, to volunteer or cycle more to help improve air pollution in Elmbridge. Whatever your goal, I am pretty sure we will have some inspiration for you.

You will see ‘Today I will’ suggestions on our website, social media channels, noticeboards, posters in libraries and through our partner organisations, and if you have any ideas or suggestions please feel free to share them with us.

As we approach the end of 2019, we wish you a very happy and peaceful Christmas and look forward to an Elmbridge New Year.

Robert Moran
Chief Executive,
Elmbridge Borough Council
News in brief

Funding for sports
Did you know local sports clubs are eligible to apply for grant aid up to a maximum of £750 and individuals up to £350? This year a total of £4,825 was granted to 33 young athletes competing at national or international level to cover some of their training, equipment, competition and travel costs.

The following local sports clubs were allocated a total of £5,175 which they invested as part of their development plan to cover for coach qualification, equipment, kit, pitch hire, uniforms and start-up costs.

- Heathside Hellcats
- 1st Molesey Scout Group
- Elmbridge Judo Club
- Stoke D’Abernon Cricket Club
- Weybridge Cricket Club
- Walton Casuals Junior FC
- Hollywater Judo Club
- Surbiton Hockey Club
- Lower Green Community Centre
- Ditton’s Paddle Boarding
- Thames Ditton Junior Netball Club
- Weybridge Weyfarers
- Thames Ditton Cricket Club
- Whiteley Village Cricket Club
- Island Barn Sailing Club
- Walton-on-Thames Cricket Club
- Weybridge Ladies Amateur Rowing Club
- Thames Ditton Cricket Club
- Whiteley Village Cricket Club
- Elmbridge Canoe Club
- Brooklands parkrun

If you think you or your club could benefit from the Sports Grant, please visit elmbridge.gov.uk/sport for further information.

Elmbridge Museum needs you!
Elmbridge Museum is currently working on a new World War II exhibition to commemorate the 75th anniversary of VE Day, which will be marked on 8 May 2020. The museum team is launching an appeal to residents to share their memories or their relatives’ recounts of the war experience. The team will be recording interviews or ‘sound-bites’ of WWII testimonies to put into the exhibition. If you would like to get involved, please contact the museum team on 01372 474 568 or email ebcmuseum@elmbridge.gov.uk.

Countryside regeneration works continue
This winter, we are proceeding with the thinning works we started on West End common last autumn.

The thirty per cent reduction in tree canopy has allowed more light in to enable the vegetation underneath to regrow. The thinning has also given the existing trees more space to develop fully. Saplings and interesting flora are now growing fast, and new habitats have been created for mammals and birds. After 12 months, this part of the common is more open and visitors can get a clear view of the trees and wildlife.

We intend to replicate the current works on other parts of the common to regenerate the woodland and encourage wildlife.

Literary Competition’s new world
If you could step into a brand-new world, what would it look like? Whether you want to write about your first day at school, the start of a new job or a strange landscape of the imagination, the Elmbridge Literary Competition is looking for short stories and poems that explore new worlds. The competition is open to all ages.

Entry for adults is £5 and free for under 18s. There will be cash prizes for adult winning entries and book tokens for children. Literary Competition partners, Sampson Low, will also publish the winning entries as a Chapbook. Closing date for entries is Friday 7 February. More information at RCSherifftrust.org.uk or elmbridge.gov.uk/culture.

Recycle your Christmas tree
Once the festivities are over, you can recycle your Christmas tree by taking it to Garsons Garden Centre, Winterdown Road, Esher KT10 8LS on Saturday 11 January. Alternatively, garden waste customers can recycle their Christmas tree in the brown-lidded garden waste bin. Just make sure it is cut up and the lid of the bin is closed.
Elmbridge Review

Hard to stay warm at home and meet those energy bills?

Action Surrey offers advice on staying warm and saving on energy use and bills. They can advise on:

• Loft insulation
• Boiler replacement
• Cavity wall insulation
• Grants eligibility to help you meet installation costs
• Trusted tradespeople to get the works done properly.

If you are living in a poorly heated home, receive benefits or you have certain health conditions made worse by the cold, you can speak to an advisor at Action Surrey on 0800 783 2503 or visit actionsurrey.org.

Heathrow update

We know the development of Heathrow is an important issue for Elmbridge which is why we are actively engaged with various groups and consultations connected with the expansion.

With full councillor support, we have made strong representations about the way the expansion consultations are organised and we have made it clear that Elmbridge will resist any proposals that impact on noise and air quality for our residents. This is clearly understood by Heathrow airport.

Updates and responses to the most recent Heathrow Expansion consultations are available at: elmbridge.gov.uk/news/heathrow-expansion-update/

Single use plastics (SUP)

Our 2019/20 Single Use Plastics (SUP) Action Plan looks at how we can help to eliminate SUP usage over the next year and has four objectives:

1. Getting our house in order
2. Working with suppliers and contractors
3. Supporting greater awareness and action in finding sustainable SUP replacements wherever appropriate and encouraging higher recycling rates across our estates
4. Raising awareness across Elmbridge

If you’d like to cut down on your use of SUP, here’s a few ideas to get started:

• Get a reusable bottle
  Avoid buying single use plastic water bottles and carry your own reusable bottle instead. You can refill your bottle at Refill stations across the borough – look out for the Refill sticker on your local high street or find out more at refill.org.uk.

• Stop using plastic straws
  Do you really need a straw in your drink? Could you say no to a straw before it gets put in your glass? If you do need to use a straw, reusable stainless steel or glass straws are alternatives.

• Carry a shopping bag
  You may already be in the habit of carrying your own shopping bags, but if you find you’re sometimes caught short, try carrying a small reusable shopping bag that fits into a pouch whenever you leave the house.

• Switch to a reusable coffee cup or flask
  Most disposable coffee cups are not recyclable, so ditch them in favour of your own reusable cup.

• Consider getting your milk delivered
  Milk delivered in glass bottles, which can be collected and reused, is a great way to cut down on plastic waste. There are lots of places in the UK where you can get your milk delivered. Find your nearest at: findmamilkman.net.

Local Plan next steps

We received over 6,500 responses to our Local Plan consultation and would like to thank everyone who responded and contributed as your feedback will help inform the approach to the Local Plan and site selection in the borough.

We have now reviewed the responses to the consultation and a feedback document has been published. This has been posted on our website, through social media and a notification sent via email to all of those signed up for alerts and notifications to planning consultations. The next Local Plan consultation is expected in early 2020. In the meantime, we encourage you to sign up for planning consultation alerts and notifications at consult.elmbridge.gov.uk.

Shaping Elmbridge

Heathrow update

Character and environment
Safer, happier, healthier

Bringing people together for the holidays

Our Centres for the Community are already buzzing with the festive spirit. Decorations have been hung and the kitchens are ready to serve over 1,200 Christmas lunches to our visitors across Elmbridge. There’s plenty of laughter and fun and maybe a visit from Santa too!

Meanwhile, our Relief Carers Scheme is busy arranging their annual panto outing as well as our Christmas Alz Café, a social evening for those affected by dementia or memory loss.

And for those who can’t get out and about during the holidays, our meals on wheels volunteers are delivering Christmas dinners and making sure everyone is able to feel some festive cheer this year.

For more information on any of these services:
Visit: elmbridge.gov.uk/css
Tel: 01372 474552
Email: commservices@elmbridge.gov.uk

Stay safe during the festive season

Christmas can be a chance to relax and have fun, but it can also be a busy and stressful time. You may be out and about more than usual, Christmas shopping or attending parties and events. To reduce the risk of experiencing crime during the festive season, here are our top five tips:

1. Watch out for pickpockets. Keep bags zipped up and ensure wallets and purses are not visible. Avoid hanging handbags on pushchairs or shopping trolleys.
2. Don’t leave your shopping in your car and make sure your car is locked and secure.
3. Agree a meeting point with your older children in case you get separated.
4. Watch your drinks and food to ensure that nothing is added to them.
5. Book your taxi in advance and arrange for them to pick you up right outside the venue.

For more information, please visit: crimestoppers-uk.org/keeping-safe.

Domestic abuse: how to get help

Outreach services are free and offer an independent, confidential listening service to anyone affected by domestic abuse. They can provide information on a wide range of issues including housing, benefits, safety planning and the needs of children affected by domestic abuse. They can also assist with accessing refuge accommodation if you need to leave your home to keep yourself safe. Surrey’s outreach services provide support to any victim of domestic abuse regardless of age, gender, sexuality or race.

Contact North Surrey Domestic Abuse Services to speak to someone trained to provide you with emotional and practical support. Phone 01932 260690 during office hours. Outside these hours you can call the Surrey-wide helpline, on 01483 776822, 9am-9pm, 7 days a week or visit nsdas.org.uk. Anyone under the age of 19 who feels unsafe in their relationship can contact Childline on 0800 1111 or childline.org.uk.

Step onto the housing ladder

Owning your own home is no longer just a dream with shared ownership homes available across the borough. PA Housing is able to offer a range of properties from one- and two-bedroom apartments to family houses, in sought-after sites in Molesey and Walton-on-Thames.

All creatively designed, the properties are built to a high specification and have access to a wide range of great services and facilities. Look out for extra touches like balconies, designated parking, high-spec décor and landscaped grounds. Prices start from £118,000 for a 40% share of a one-bed apartment valued at £295,000. Call 01932 235801 or email sales@pahousing.co.uk to find out more and take the first step.
We are determined to keep Elmbridge thriving and part of that responsibility is maintaining and improving our property assets – car parks, centres for the community, sports facilities and public toilets, for example. Our vision is for Elmbridge to have a fit for purpose operational estate allowing us to deliver much needed services for our residents.

We continually maintain and, where possible, improve our operational estate so that our residents have the facilities they need; whether these are car parks in our towns and villages which are vital to the economy or sports and play facilities to support physical and mental wellbeing. We also ensure our Centres for the Community are equipped to provide essential day-to-day services for our elderly residents.

All our operational properties are valuable assets which we take pride in protecting and optimising.

Our property assets also include the local properties we invest in both as part of our financial strategy and, more importantly, to help increase the levels of affordable housing in Elmbridge. Purchases in Thames Ditton and Weybridge, for example, have allowed us to provide a home for some of our residents most in need.

Please visit elmbridge.gov.uk for further information, including Elmbridge’s asset management plan 2019-2024 and Elmbridge’s sports facility strategy 2017-2035.

If you are over 70 or disabled and on a low income, we may be able to help you with making your home a safer and healthier place to live.

Care and Repair Elmbridge (CARE) is our home improvement agency that helps with adaptations and improvements to allow you to stay put and live independently, regardless of whether you rent or own your property.

Mr Smith* contacted CARE when he had to have a major operation. He knew that when he left hospital he wouldn’t be able to cope with his wheelchair in his home.

CARE referred Mr Smith to Social Services who recommended a wet room, a through-floor lift and ramp access. As Mr Smith was in receipt of a means-tested benefit, a £26,000 grant paid for all the work. CARE oversaw the work and Mr Smith kept his independence.

If you think CARE could help you, tel: 01372 474 645 or email: careandrepair@elmbridge.gov.uk. You can also find information online: elmbridge.gov.uk/careandrepair.

*Name changed to protect privacy

Help for EU citizens

If you or someone you know needs information, advice or help with applying to the government’s Settlement Scheme for EU citizens, or for help with other related issues caused by Brexit, you can contact Citizens Advice.

If you are in Walton, Weybridge or Hersham contact Citizens Advice Elmbridge (West), either by phoning 0300 330 1179 or by visiting the office at The Elmbridge Hub, 72 High Street, Walton-on-Thames. They are open Monday, Tuesday and Thursday between 9.30am and 3.30pm and between 9.30am and 12.30pm on Wednesday and Friday.

If you live in Esher, Cobham or Molesey, contact Citizens Advice Esher & District. The telephone number is 01372 464770 and their opening hours are from 10.30am to 3.30pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and between 5pm and 7.30pm on Wednesdays.

Further information is available at: citizensadvice.org.uk/immigration/staying-in-the-uk-after-brexit/staying-in-the-uk-after-brexit/

Difficulty with the stairs or using the bath?

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Could your good cause benefit?

Local charities and community groups can register their interest now.

Email lottery@elmbridge.gov.uk

Elmbridge Community Lottery launches in 2020

Tickets cost just £1 | Weekly draw | Jackpot - £25,000

60p in every pound goes to local good causes

Elmbridge Borough Council
Supporting our businesses

Celebrating our independent retailers

Residents have once again voted for their favourite independent retailers in our annual Independent Retail Awards, which seek to champion the outstanding independent businesses on our high streets.

Feedback from customers has highlighted the exceptional customer service and high-quality products and services they consistently receive from high street independents.

We are pleased to announce the overall winner, voted Best Independent Retailer in Elmbridge for 2019, was Evie Loves Toast in Cobham. Voters highlighted the shop’s welcoming service and imaginative range of products, making it a “gem on the high street”.

You can find out more about Evie Loves Toast online at evielovestoast.com or why not visit their shop on Oakdene Parade, Cobham, in the lead up to Christmas?

Elmbridge Food Festival 2019

We hope you enjoyed the Elmbridge Food Festival at Painshill as much as we did. The event over the weekend of 21-22 September saw thousands of residents and visitors attend, supporting local food and drink producers.

We were delighted to have stallholders from across the borough and the region providing a fantastic array of food and drink. Visitors were also able to enjoy demonstrations from a range of food businesses.

The fantastic entertainment from choirs and musicians added to the wonderful atmosphere and children enjoyed a variety of sports, arts and crafts activities.

Please continue to support the borough’s food and drink businesses in the run up to Christmas and beyond.

Grants to support our local businesses

Since 2009 the Elmbridge Civic Improvement Fund has provided grants to independent high street retailers to support projects that have made our town centres more attractive shopping destinations.

In addition to town-wide projects, the fund has awarded more than £800,000 to local businesses for specific projects such as shop front improvements. A further £40,000 has been awarded to help start-ups during their crucial first year of trading.

As changing technology and consumer trends affect independent retailers, we continue to back our local high streets by adapting our business grants. The new Elmbridge Digital High Street Fund will give businesses the tools to compete in the online market place.

This new fund, available to all independent retailers on our high streets, will complement their physical position on our high streets, which will help to support the ongoing vitality of our centres.

You can find out more about the Elmbridge Digital High Street Fund at: elmbridge.gov.uk/business.

Get connected

The Elmbridge Business Network continues to grow, with over 750 members now signed up to connect, network and share skills and services.

The network is free to join for anyone doing business across Elmbridge. Members can access business masterclasses, monthly newsletters and connect with businesses across the network’s LinkedIn forum. As a member, you can also attend and promote your business at the annual Elmbridge Business Leaders Conference, where you can meet new suppliers and customers – all for free!

Find out more and join the Elmbridge Business Network today at: elmbridge.gov.uk/business.
Services over Christmas

Meals on wheels service
The seven days a week hot meals on wheels service will continue to operate throughout the Christmas and New Year period with a special service provided on Christmas Day. Customers will be contacted to confirm their meal requirements.

Community alarm will be monitored and emergencies will be responded to throughout the Christmas period.

Community transport will operate as normal for Centres, except on Christmas Bank Holiday days. All other services will not run between Christmas and new year. Contact 01372 474 944 for more information.

Relief carers scheme will operate a limited service from 24 December until 1 January. A normal service will resume from 2 January. Contact the Relief Care team for more information: 01372 474 547.

Centres for the Community
All Centres are closed 25 and 26 December 2019 and 1 January 2020. Please note that opening hours may be affected during this period. Contact your local Centre for more details.

Claygate, Cobham, Hersham, Molesey and Weybridge – Centres will be closed on 25, 26, and 27 December, and 1 January.

Walton – Centre will be closed on 25 and 26 December and 1 January.

Thames Ditton – Normally only open on a Monday and Thursday. The Centre will be closed on Thursday 26 December, open as normal all other dates.

Housing options
From 4.45pm on 24 December to 8.45am on 30 December and from 4.45pm on 31 December to 8.45am on 2 January 2019, anyone who is made homeless and has nowhere to stay on those nights should use the following out of hours contact number 0300 123 7719.

Parks and recreation grounds
Tuesday 24 December: 7.30am – 4.30pm
Wednesday 25 December: Closed
Thursday 26 December: 7.30am – 4.30pm
Friday 27 December: 7.30am – 4.30pm
Saturday 28 December – Sunday 29 December: 9am – 4.30pm
Monday 30 December: 7.30am – 4.30pm
Tuesday 31 December: 7.30am – 4.30pm
Wednesday 1 January: 9am – 4.30pm

Community halls are available throughout and will be opened for bookings.

The Civic Centre will be closed Wednesday 25 - Friday 27 December and Wednesday 1 January 2020.

Christmas holiday bin collections
Please note the changes to bin collections over the Christmas period. Make sure your bin is out by 6.30am.

See below for further details:

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Adverse weather - should bad weather disrupt collections over the festive period please keep your refuse/recycling bins out. We will try to collect any missed bins as soon as we can. You can check our website and Twitter feed @elmbridgebc for up-to-date information.

Xcel Leisure Complex opening hours
Tuesday 24 December 9am - 3pm
Wednesday 25 December Closed
Thursday 26 December Closed
Friday 27 December 7am - 7pm
Saturday 28 December 6am - 8pm
Sunday 29 December 6am - 8pm
Monday 30 December 6am - 8pm
Tuesday 31 December 9am - 3pm
Wednesday 1 January Closed
Thursday 2 January Normal opening times

Hurst Pool opening hours
Tuesday 24 December 9am- 3pm
Wednesday 25 December Closed
Thursday 26 December Closed
Friday 27 December 7am- 3pm
Saturday 28 December 9am- 3pm
Sunday 29 December 9am- 3pm
Monday 30 December 7am- 3pm
Tuesday 31 December 7am- 3pm
Wednesday 1 January Closed
Thursday 2 January Normal opening times

Elmbridge cemeteries are open to visitors throughout the year between the hours of 9am and 8pm, or half an hour before sunset, whichever is the earlier. The cemeteries office, based at the Civic Centre, will be open for enquiries between 8.45am and 5pm up to and including Tuesday 24 December 2019 and will resume on Monday 30 December. The cemeteries office will also be open for enquiries on Tuesday 31 December from 8.45am to 4pm. It will be closed on Wednesday 1 January 2019 and will re-open on Thursday 2 January 2019.