

# HILLINGDON people

News from your council  
January/February 2021

[www.hillingdon.gov.uk](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk)

## Get active in 2021

Creating more  
school places

Working to keep  
Hillingdon safe

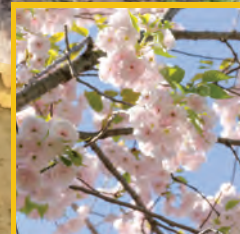
Developments to  
boost jobs



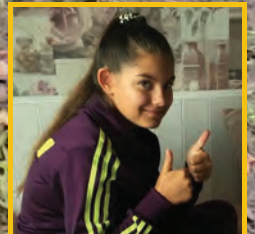
HILLINGDON  
LONDON



FREE ALARMS



NEW GARDEN



VOLUNTEER

# Could you give a child a loving home?

Find out about fostering



Join us online to find out about fostering:  
**Tuesday 9 February, 2pm to 3pm**  
**Tuesday 9 March, 2pm to 3pm**

The event will take place on Microsoft Teams and we will contact everyone who has registered before the session with the joining details.

**For more details**  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/betheone](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/betheone)  
 0800 783 1298



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

[www.hillingdon.gov.uk](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk)

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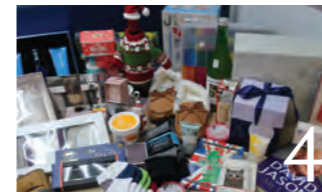
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COVER PHOTO: ANA ZOTTI AND ORLA IN WARRENDER PARK, RUISLIP



Advertising deadline for next edition: **Friday 5 February 2021**  
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**After reading, please recycle this magazine**

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# Welcome



In November, I announced my intention to formally stand down as Leader of the Council on Thursday 14 January. It has been both an honour and a privilege to serve as Leader of Hillingdon Council, which is now recognised as one of the best councils in the country.

As I write my last column and reflect on the past 20 years, I am proud of what the council has achieved from building financial resilience to putting people, the environment and heritage at the heart of all it does.

As usual, in this edition of *Hillingdon People*, you will be able to read the latest council news which encompasses all of these themes.

Our planned budget for 2021/22 highlights how we have, once again, been able to invest in services and facilities and keep the rise in council tax to a minimum. Despite a difficult year dealing with the unforeseen challenges of a global pandemic, we find ourselves in a more stable position in contrast to other local authorities, having been able to weather the storm thanks to strong financial management. We have also been able to continue delivering essential services throughout the pandemic and even created new ones, as well as transforming how some services run and investing in and improving existing facilities.

I would like to remind residents that the coronavirus is still present and remains deadly. Last year was a difficult year for us all, and I have been impressed by everyone coming together to help to keep Hillingdon safe. While the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccine is excellent news, it will take time for everyone to receive it. A return to some level of normality is in sight but I encourage residents to not let their guard down and act responsibly. By continuing to follow the latest advice and guidelines we can keep rates as low as possible and protect each other.

The council continues to create additional places at schools across the borough, provide free burglar alarms to over-65s, offer a range of leisure facilities to support your health and wellbeing, work with businesses to boost investment and generate additional and more diverse job opportunities, and celebrate the achievements of children in care at our annual Kids in Care Awards.

In this edition, you can also read how we are protecting the environment by planting trees and creating pollution screens, and even giving away free saplings that you can plant in your own gardens. We have acquired a new wood to protect, restored a pond to create a safe home for wildlife, our waste and recycling service has been recognised as waste team of the year for their work, and our innovative rain garden project in Eastcote has won a flood and water management excellence award.

Our heritage remains important, our libraries are offering virtual author events and a new exhibition is set to be launched this month to showcase the diverse history of the borough.

I would like to thank council staff, political colleagues and residents for their support during the past 20 years. Whoever my successor is, I have no doubt that they and the council will continue to put residents first.

Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE  
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

## Officer keeps Uxbridge safe

A police officer part-funded by the council has been credited with helping to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in Uxbridge town centre by nearly 40 per cent.

PC Liam Harmon, who patrols the town centre on a full-time basis, has been involved in more than 70 arrests since he started his job in March.

Although PC Harmon is a Metropolitan Police officer, his salary is solely paid for by the Uxbridge Business Improvement District (BID) - a non-profit organisation that represents more than 400 levy-paying members including the council, the police force, businesses and charities.

The BID's decision to employ its own police officer was one of its initial pledges at the time of its launch.

PC Harmon's first responsibility was to support essential retailers that stayed open during the initial coronavirus lockdown. He has remained a reassuring presence in the town centre, providing

advice to residents and businesses on COVID-19 restrictions and quickly stepping in to deal with incidents such as shoplifting, begging and anti-social behaviour when required.

Since June, the BID has also employed two security ambassadors to help reinforce social distancing and safe queuing in the town centre.

The high-visibility patrols and rapid response times have drawn praise from businesses, with many commenting on how much safer and more secure they feel.

**PC Harmon** said: "I wanted to work more closely with the local community, get to know the people of Uxbridge and make a real difference on a day-to-day basis. I wanted to go back to the traditional 'boots on the ground' way of policing, and work with retailers and the wider community to tackle issues that matter to local people."

For more information about the BID visit [www.loveuxbridge.co.uk](http://www.loveuxbridge.co.uk).

## Supporting those at risk

In the run-up to Christmas, the council supported Hillingdon families who have been affected by domestic abuse and older people who are isolated or have been victims of crime by holding a virtual party for families and by giving out gifts for Christmas.

The council received a range of donated items that were turned into presents for children and adults.

**Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Wellbeing**, said: "Last year was particularly hard for everyone, but it has been especially hard for families affected by domestic abuse or older residents who may not have been able to have had visitors because of the pandemic.

"The council is committed to ensuring that families affected by abuse receive the support they need and it's fantastic that residents have still been able to come together virtually and celebrate the festive season in a safe way."

If you know someone who has been affected by domestic abuse, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/abuse](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/abuse) for information, advice and support.

Each older resident was paid an individual socially-distanced visit



where they were given a hamper and gifts from the donated items.

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## Waste team wins award

The council's waste and recycling service won the Best Team of the Year Award at the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee awards on Monday 19 October.

The team was rewarded for their innovative work throughout the COVID-19 pandemic in keeping staff protected and maintaining weekly collections for residents.

With most people working from home or shielding, demand for the service significantly rose between March and June, and the borough saw an increase between 15

and 25 per cent across all collections.

The council was one of the only London boroughs to continue collections of all waste and recycling from households and flats during the peak of the COVID-19 crisis.

**Cllr Philip Corthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing and the Environment**, said: "I am proud that our waste and recycling team has been recognised as one of the best in the country.

"This award is a testament to the great work that was carried out by the team to



**REWARDED** Some of the team with Cllr Corthorne and Cllr Barnes

ensure that the council continued to deliver essential services throughout this extremely challenging period.

"While many councils had to suspend parts of

their collection services, we were able to carry on.

This was a result of a lot of hard work behind the scenes from a variety of services to ensure crews were protected."

## Mayor encourages creativity during lockdown

The Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Teji Barnes, encouraged Hillingdon children and young people to get creative during the summer holidays as part of a special art competition.

Residents aged between five and 16 were invited to design a piece of work inspired by life during lockdown.

The entries could be drawings, paintings, poems or stories.

The winning pieces, selected by Cllr Barnes,

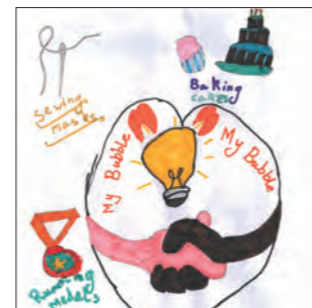


ranged from paintings and drawings to poetry, with the top three from each category receiving gift vouchers donated by Uxbridge BID.

Cllr Barnes said: "I was delighted to receive the

beautiful poems, stories and drawings from children. The details of their experiences during lockdown were highly creative. It was inspiring to read that many of the children had enjoyed the open spaces, had become accustomed to home schooling, and learnt new skills like riding a bike and baking."

View the winners and their entries at [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/mayor-art-competition](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/mayor-art-competition).



## A new chapter for libraries

Our £3 million library refurbishment programme, which will see 15 of the borough's libraries refurbished and two rebuilt, is continuing apace with four more sites receiving improvements.

Newly refurbished South Ruislip Library reopened in September and works to Manor Farm and Oak Farm will be finished in January. Refurbishments at Hayes End are due to be completed in February (COVID-19 dependent).

Improvements made include new-look open plan interiors with zones that highlight each area's different use, light stowaway seating in the children's areas, reupholstering to the libraries' existing seats, modified bookshelves to create more space, and additional tables and plug-in points for visitors to use their own devices, such as laptops.

For more information about Hillingdon's libraries, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/libraries).



**REVITALISED** The new-look South Ruislip Library

## Pond restoration complete



A total of £40,000 has been spent by the council on works to restore Ickenham Pond.

While lilies, yellow flags and several other wetland plants had thrived in the pond helping to support amphibians and water invertebrates, invasive species such as parrot's feather and swamp stonewort had started to take over. This threatened the pond's native species by taking the resources they need to survive.

In November, excavation works were undertaken to remove the dominating plants, roots and stems to create more space for water to drain

from the nearby road. Coir rolls and blankets were also installed around the pond's border to help prevent erosion and support its slopes.

The pond was replanted with native wetland plants and wildflower seeds such as purple loosestrife, yellow flags and corn marigolds.

**Leader of the Council, Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot**, said: "The pond, which is more than 100 years old, is a key landmark in Ickenham and provides a haven for plants and wildlife.

"It will take a few months for the new plants to become established and by spring they will start to bloom."

## New exhibition illustrates Hillingdon's varied history



**THIS IS ME** Some of the submitted exhibits

A new exhibition that highlights the diverse history of the borough was launched in January.

'This Is Me' will be available to view from Saturday 9 January on the council's website and

will feature a variety of photographs and objects offering an insight into the lives of residents from across Hillingdon.

The exhibition will also tour the borough's libraries throughout the year (COVID-19 dependent).

The council is keen to expand the exhibition as it tours to show a breadth of subjects. Residents are invited to continue submitting items or photograph five objects

that mean something to them and tell the story of who they are. Items could be anything from toys to memorabilia or even treasured clothes. Submissions could also include details about why the items were chosen and what makes them significant.

If you would like to be part of 'This Is Me' and to view the exhibition, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/this-is-me](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/this-is-me).

## Competition promotes the benefits of walking

In October, the council ran an art and poetry competition to mark International Walk to School Month.

'Happy Shoesday' was open to children across the borough aged between three and 11.

Young people were asked to create an eye-catching shoe design to show their personality or write a poem about walking to school, their favourite pair of shoes or even an imaginary pair of shoes.

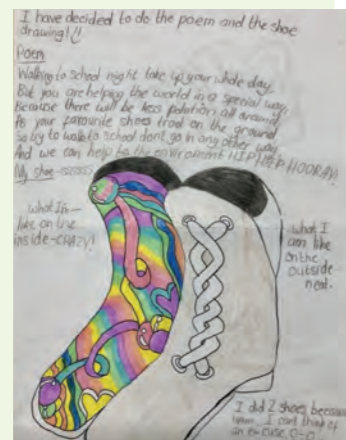
In total, 516 entries were received from 14 schools. The competition was judged by Cllr Keith Burrows, Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation, and the winning art entry was from Tej Aadarsh, aged seven from Sacred Heart Primary School (Ruislip),

and the winning poetry entry was from Farah Yusuf, aged nine from Cranford Park Academy (Hayes). Both received an Amazon Kindle.

**Cllr Burrows** said: "The council created this competition to shine a spotlight on the many benefits of walking to school.

"It is an opportunity for children to be physically active, interact with their parents and carers and develop their independence and road safety skills. It also helps to tackle air pollution and traffic."

View the winners and their entries at [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/shoesday](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/shoesday).



## Towpath improvements

The council, in partnership with the Canal & River Trust, has successfully transformed another section of towpath along the Grand Union Canal.

The stretch, between West Drayton Bridge and Trout Road in West Drayton, has been reconstructed, resurfaced and increased to two metres in width where possible.

The new towpath is smoother, safer and more accessible for pedestrians and cyclists than the old muddy path. In addition, buff resin has been used to protect the surface of the tarmac and prolong its life expectancy to more than 15 years. Vegetation along the canal has also been cut back.

Since the work was completed in October, the council and the Canal & River Trust have moved on to the next phase of improvements - between Cowley Mill Road Bridge and Culvert Lane in Uxbridge. The Canal & River Trust's work to improve the towpaths between Hayes and Stockley Park will also be finished in early 2021.



**TRANSFORMED** Stretch of towpath reconstructed

Once complete, more than two kilometres of canal between Hayes and Uxbridge will have been upgraded in the past three years.

**Cllr Keith Burrows, Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation**, said: "I have no doubt that these recent improvements will inspire more pedestrians and cyclists to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of walking or cycling alongside their local canal."

For more information about the project, visit [www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/bettertowpaths](http://www.canalrivertrust.org.uk/bettertowpaths).

## Protecting ancient woodland for the future

In October, the council invested £88,000 to acquire a further 30 acres of ancient semi-natural woodland in Ruislip Woods to manage and protect for future generations to enjoy.

The council worked with Ruislip Woods Trust to acquire the wood, which will become part of the council-owned Ruislip Woods National Nature Reserve (NNR). The nature reserve consists of 726 acres and constitutes 10 per cent of ancient, semi-natural woodland in Greater London.

Regular maintenance work will be carried out by the council's green spaces team to ensure that members of the public can enjoy the walking routes around the area.



**Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services**, said: "Ruislip Woods encompasses one of the most extensive oak and hornbeam coppice woods in south east England, and it is imperative that we continue to protect ancient woodlands in our borough.

"Copse Wood is a really important area with many species of trees, plants and flowers, and we're delighted that it will now become part of our nature reserve."

For more information on Ruislip Woods NNR, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leisure](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leisure).

To find out more about Ruislip Woods Trust, visit [www.ruislipwoodstrust.org.uk](http://www.ruislipwoodstrust.org.uk).

## Protecting consumers from unsafe products

Various council trading standards operations in September and October led to the seizure of thousands of potentially dangerous goods.

In a day of action on Tuesday 29 September, officers seized a total of 10,500 cigarettes, 5,470g of hand rolling tobacco and 6,627g of smokeless tobacco products from six premises. Officers also confiscated fake Viagra, Nitrous Oxide (laughing gas) and counterfeit 1st class stamps.

In October, officers took part in another operation, where five shops in Hayes were each found selling illegal cosmetics in two separate visits. Skin lightening products totalling 220kg which contained the ingredient hydroquinone were seized.

Cosmetics containing hydroquinone are illegal and can cause serious

and long-term health problems and side effects.

Residents are reminded to always check the ingredients on packages before purchasing cosmetic products. Anyone selling them without labelling or an ingredients list is breaking the law and risks being prosecuted. The offence can carry a sentence of up to a year in prison and a fine of up to £20,000.

In October, the team also uncovered a cargo of 200 unsafe teddy bears which did not meet toy safety regulations. The bears were found to be badly sewn and coming apart. The exposed stuffing (as pictured) could have been a choking



hazard, and the robe belt a strangulation danger for babies and young children.

Further investigations are taking place regarding all of the businesses involved.

**Cllr Douglas Mills, Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration**, said:

"Thanks to the swift actions of our trading standards officers, these illicit and potentially dangerous products have been removed from the borough's high streets and away from unsuspecting consumers.

"Anyone who operates illegally will face the law and that's exactly what we'll be doing with businesses that do not comply with product safety regulations.

"If you suspect a trader is operating illegally, you can report them by emailing [tradingstandards@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:tradingstandards@hillingdon.gov.uk) or anonymously by calling 0808 223 1133."

## Take part in Census 2021

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

The census is a once-in-a-decade survey which gives the government the most accurate estimate of all the people and households in England and Wales.

It will be the first census that is run predominantly online.

Census day takes place on Sunday 21 March, but households across the UK will receive letters with unique online access codes allowing them to take part from early March.

The information you provide will be used to help plan and fund public services, like transport, education and healthcare for residents.

The council is encouraging local people to take part to ensure the borough has a high return rate so that communities get the resources they need both now and in the future.

Residents without computer access and those who need additional support can visit one of the council's four Census Support Centres (based at three of our adult learning centres: Brookfield, Harlington and South Ruislip, and at the Civic Centre, Uxbridge).

Look out for updates on the council's website, social media channels and in the March edition of *Hillingdon People*.

For more information, visit [www.census.gov.uk](http://www.census.gov.uk).

## Libraries offer a range of exciting virtual author events

During the period of national restrictions in November, Hillingdon libraries introduced 'Lockdown Lunches' a new series of live virtual author events broadcast at lunchtime.

As the council's Culture Bite arts and literature events cannot be held in person because of the pandemic, residents are invited to take part in these interviews with popular authors on Facebook Live and YouTube.

November's authors included Catherine

Cooper (*The Chalet*), Tracy Mathias (*Silence Is Also A Lie*) and Polly Clark (*Tiger*); who discussed a range of topics, from Russian research expeditions to which celebrity they think should turn their hand to writing fiction.

During December, Jo Tomas and Milly Johnson chatted to residents about their Christmas-themed novels at a special evening event on Zoom.

The lunchtime sessions will continue in January with a line-up featuring Derek B. Miller (*Radio Life*) and

Georgie Codd (*We Swim To The Shark*), among others, who will be talking about their careers, works and taking your questions.

As part of an evening events programme, a thriller-themed writers panel will take place in February, where residents will be able to put their questions to authors including Sarah Pearce (*The Sanatorium*) and



Charlotte Duckworth (*The Perfect Father*). In March, there will be a debut authors event with Laura Kay, whose acclaimed comedy novel *The Split* goes on sale the same month.

For more information, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/libraries).

## Autism centre refurbished



groups for people with autism. The existing facilities were run down, with limited space within the building to deliver our services.

"We were delighted to

Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support Centre's (HACS) kitchen and communal areas have been refurbished thanks to the council's Chrysalis programme.

The scheme awards £1 million funding each year for improvements to council-owned facilities and encourages residents to make suggestions.

**Antoinette Mullally, Chief Executive of HACS**, applied for funding in March 2019 and was allocated £7,320 to carry out improvement works to the charity's resource centre in Hayes.

She said: "We applied for funding towards refurbishing the centre which provides a range of services to parents, young people and community

receive funding. Local families can now benefit from these improvements."

A range of works were carried out in the summer. In the kitchen, repairs were made to the existing units, a new hob and tap were installed and the centre received a fresh coat of paint. The carpet in the training room was also replaced with vinyl flooring.

The main office was redecorated, a new standing work area was installed, repairs were made to internal doors, and hot water units added to the toilets. The CCTV at the centre was also upgraded.

**Cllr Douglas Mills, Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration**, said: "We are pleased to see how these refurbishment works

will benefit HACS and the families they support.

"Our Chrysalis programme has delivered more than 250 improvements to facilities since it was created 10 years ago, with residents

requesting improvements up to £100,000 that will make a difference to their local communities.

"To propose an improvement, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/chrysalis](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/chrysalis)."

## Rain gardens win award

The council's Eastcote Rain Gardens project has won a national award for its work in reducing the risk of flooding.

On Thursday 26 November it was announced winner for Excellence in Flood and Water Management at the 2020 Landscape Institute Awards.

The gardens were installed in the summer of 2019 along Field End Road using carefully chosen plants and scrubs that help the natural flow of rainwater and prevent localised flooding.

Prior to their introduction, surface water would flood the carriageway and flow into local shops. Thanks to the installation of 15

rain gardens rainfall is now captured below the ground and the carriageway remains dry following a storm.

With the risk of flooding significantly improved, the works have been welcomed by local residents and businesses who now enjoy colourful new plants and shrubs, new paving, lighting, street furniture and an upgraded pedestrian crossing.



# Putting residents first despite COVID-19 challenges

A strong record of sound financial management has enabled the council to maintain investment in services for residents in 2021/22.

Despite the financial effects of the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic Hillingdon residents will continue to benefit from award-winning services and facilities in 2021/22.

The budget being presented to Council in February indicates that there will be no reduction in service delivery, no facility closures, continued free-to-use weekly refuse and recycling collections, award-winning parks and open spaces, investment in roads and pavement resurfacing and town centre improvements.

Council tax will again be set at 90 per cent of that charged by our neighbouring boroughs giving an anticipated rise of 1.8 per cent.

Due to the exceptional pressures on social care due to the pandemic the government has, for one year, allowed councils to levy up to 3 per cent (an increase of 1 per cent) as a Social Care Precept.

In practice this will mean a total rise of 4.8 per cent which equates to £1.09 a week for a Band D property.

For the first time in 14 years, due to the challenges of the pandemic, council tax will not be frozen for those aged over 65 as the older persons discount scheme will not be applied in 2021/22, however a safety net is in place for the most financially vulnerable residents through the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

For Hillingdon residents, fees and charges on services provided by the council, including parking charges, will remain at least 10 per cent lower than those charged by our neighbouring boroughs.

As part of the budget, an additional £10 million has been set aside as a contingency should government grants not be sufficient to deal with the funding pressures created by COVID-19.



**Leader of the Council, Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot**, said:

"As local authorities continue to face ongoing funding challenges, particularly as a result of the pandemic, residents can be reassured that here in Hillingdon, we will continue to put them first as we plan the budget for the coming year.

"Where other authorities may be in a more precarious position, thankfully our strong financial management has ensured that we can keep council tax rises to 90 per cent of what our neighbouring boroughs charge whilst we continue to invest in the services and facilities that we know our residents value."

Visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/budget-consultation](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/budget-consultation) before Sunday 24 January to have your say on the proposed budget



## Continuing to support older residents

The council's Leader's Initiative for Older People, core grant support for voluntary organisations, and activities to assist those living with dementia all help to keep residents safe, active and independent.

### Groups support residents in commemorating Armistice Day and celebrating Christmas

Bell Farm Christian Centre in West Drayton assists the local community by providing a number of services, including advice and information, activities, events and courses. The centre receives £18,000 towards its dining centre and a core grant of £50,000 from the council.

While the centre has been unable to hold its regular lunches, trips and social activities for older residents, the team has instead been working five days a week since the start of the coronavirus outbreak to provide food parcels and make befriending calls to their members.

Since the first lockdown last March, the centre has delivered more than 1,250 care packages and made more than 250 weekly calls to support the community and help to reduce isolation or loneliness. The centre could not have done this without the dedication of a core team of volunteers, as well as the ongoing support and generosity of many local people; some of whom have been giving their time to deliver parcels each week to residents.

**Angie Ford, from West Drayton, one of the centre's volunteers**, said: "Calling older people is very rewarding. I love chatting to them and listening to all the stories they have to tell. I can speak for all us volunteers here to say that we truly enjoy reaching out to our older residents and helping to make them feel safe, cared for and loved very much, especially through these uncertain times."

**Rani Qureshi, 77, from West Drayton, (pictured above)** started attending the centre's lunch club three years ago after her husband passed away. To mark her recent birthday, they surprised her with flowers and a birthday cake.

She said: "I was so happy for the socially-distanced visit on my birthday. I was greeted with lots of singing and a lovely cake and flowers. It was such



a wonderful surprise as otherwise I would not have seen anyone as my family live far away."

The centre has also been organising seasonal activities while adhering to social distancing guidelines.

To mark Armistice Day in November the team put together commemorative packs containing remembrance-themed arts and crafts and freshly-made cakes and treats. These were well-received and especially important to many as they were unable to come together to commemorate as they usually would.

**Destiny Atkins, 12, from West Drayton**, contributed to the remembrance pack, writing a poem and creating poppy-themed artwork. Many recipients were so enamoured by Destiny's work that they displayed the piece in their windows and wrote thank you letters.

She said: "I very much enjoyed doing the poster for the people in our community. I love reaching out to them as I care for them a lot, especially with many of them being in isolation since March."

With support from the council, the centre would usually organise a Christmas meal and festive entertainment at their dining centre - an event many diners regarded as a highlight in the year. While this was

not possible last year, throughout the Christmas period the team instead distributed seasonal parcels.

A specific £2,780 grant received from the council's Leader's Initiative for Older People enabled the team to bring entertainment to many older people with socially-distanced doorstep visits featuring Father Christmas and his elves.

**Donna Rall, Older Persons Manager, Bell Farm Christian Centre**, said: "Last year was a very challenging year for older people, and we heard about their feelings of isolation and loneliness."

"The team and I have been overwhelmed with the caring and loving support from the council, wider community and businesses."

Since the start of lockdown, the council has also ensured that social support has remained available to residents living with dementia.

Assistance has included weekly calls from the council's sport and physical activity team to people who usually attend the dementia coffee mornings in the borough's libraries, and those referred by Admiral Nurses, the Alzheimer's Society and the NHS Memory Service based at Hillingdon Hospital.

Weekly packs containing puzzles, word searches and articles have

### Free burglar alarms for over-65s

The council's free burglar alarm initiative, which is funded by the Leader's Initiative for Older People, offers residents aged 65 and over the opportunity to access devices free of charge to help to keep them safe and reassured in their homes.

The scheme, which has been in place for more than 11 years, provided more than 1,000 alarms to residents across the borough last year.

Among those was **Barry Dalrymple, 76, from Ickenham, (pictured)** who says he has greater peace of mind since his alarm was fitted last year, especially as his home was previously broken into.

He said: "A very pleasant gentleman came to my house and in no time, he had my burglar alarm up and running. I owe my gratitude and thanks to the council for this scheme that is helping to keep myself and many other local people safe."

The alarm systems are installed by an experienced specialist contractor, who will demonstrate how the alarm works and how to operate it.

Residents will also receive a crime prevention pack with information about personal and home security.

Each device has a solar-powered wireless siren alarm box fitted to the front of the property, a magnetic door sensor, a pet-friendly internal



movement sensor and a remote-control key fob to operate the alarm.

Alarms suitable for residents with hearing impairments are also available.

Visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/burglalarms](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/burglalarms) or call 01895 556000 to find out more and request an alarm.

### Age UK's Uxbridge advice shop closes

The Age UK Hillingdon, Harrow and Brent branch closed its information and advice shop in Uxbridge High Street in October.

The closure of the store, which served the local community for more than 20 years, was necessary to ensure residents' safety amidst the ongoing pandemic, as the size and layout of the facility meant it was unable to accommodate

the necessary COVID-19 secure social distancing requirements.

The charity, which receives council funding, is still providing a range of services and support via phone calls, and hopes to reopen a shop in the borough once they find a suitable location where residents can access face-to-face services while also being able to socially distance.



Contact the information and advice service by calling 020 8756 3040 (and selecting option 1) between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday

also been sent out to residents, either by email or delivered in person. Regular virtual meet-ups via Zoom and WhatsApp groups were set up and are also helping those with dementia and their carers to stay connected.

During the festive period, the team organised further activities via Zoom, including a Christmas tree decorating session, carol singing, seasonal readings, a Christmas decoration competition, a nativity-themed activity, and a virtual Christmas dinner celebration. For those not on Zoom, specially-produced videos were sent out featuring the aforementioned activities, plus performances by the Bus Pass to Broadway singing group.



To find out more about the Leader's Initiative for Older People and to apply for a grant to hold activities for older people, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leadersinitiative](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/leadersinitiative)



One of the refurbished art rooms

## Ruislip school receives new state-of-the-art teaching block

Our latest school expansion programme works have been completed at Ruislip High School.

Pupils can now learn in a brand new three storey building at the secondary school following the completion of an 18-month council improvement project.

The works commenced in May 2019 and were completed in December 2020, allowing the school to offer an additional 186 places to local children.

Ruislip High School now has seven forms of entry and the additional places will provide capacity for 1,302 pupils.

The secondary school boasts a range of teaching facilities, including a new hall, media laboratory, sixth form centre, seven classrooms and a special educational needs facility.

Adaptations were also carried out to the existing building to provide two new science laboratories with preparation rooms and chemical stores and two refurbished art rooms. The sports changing facilities and shower rooms were also expanded and additional cycle storage was created.

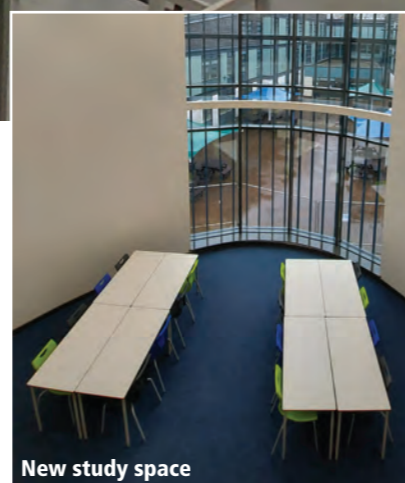
The council's £154 million school building and expansion programme, which is one of the largest in London, is helping to meet an increasing

demand for places while ensuring that children have access to high quality educational facilities and are given the best start in life.

**Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Youth Services,** said: "The council has been able to continue to invest in this programme thanks to sound financial management

which ensures Hillingdon schools can offer both high quality learning environments and more places in response to a growing population.

"It's fantastic to see the results of this development work, and I hope that



New study space

the school's pupils and teachers enjoy the range of new and expanded facilities that have been created."

**Gareth Davies, Headteacher,** said: "The school is delighted with the brand new state-of-the-art sixth form centre and the additional facilities that the expansion brings to the whole Ruislip High School community.

"We have always had high aspirations for our sixth form students and now we have a building that will provide high quality education facilities to support the outstanding education the school provides."



New hall

To find out more about the council's school expansion programme, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/sip](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/sip)



## Putting residents first for more than 20 years

The council's longest serving leader, Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE, announced last year that he will be standing down in the new year.



On Thursday 14 January a new leader of the council will be elected, following Cllr Puddifoot's decision to leave office and to not stand again for election in May 2022.

Cllr Puddifoot, who has lived in Hillingdon all his life, was elected as a councillor for Ickenham ward in 1998 before becoming Leader of the Council two years later. He is the council's longest serving leader and the longest serving council leader in London, having held the position for 20 years.

A chartered accountant by profession, Cllr Puddifoot has overseen the council building its financial stability while maintaining and investing in services and facilities for residents. Despite reductions in government funding, and an increasing demand for services, the council's financial management ensured that council tax could be frozen between 2008 and 2018 (10 years) for all residents and 14 years (between 2008 and 2020) for over-65s.

As Older People's Champion, Cllr Puddifoot has overseen the delivery of a variety of services for over-65s, including the Brown Badge parking scheme, free burglar alarms, free swimming and swimming lessons, tea dances and free TeleCareLine for over-75s.

Cllr Puddifoot's determination to ensure improvements in all services for residents has seen millions invested in the council's school expansion programme to provide a school place for every child. The council has also provided residents with access to state-of-the-art facilities, having rebuilt or refurbished all of the borough's 17 libraries, and recreational sites, such as leisure centres, outdoor gyms, bowling clubs and playgrounds, are regularly improved to benefit residents' health and wellbeing.

The council has defended residents from harmful developments, such as the proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport and HS2; introduced a range of environmental initiatives; routinely carried out road resurfacing to ensure highways are safe; and made improvements to the borough's town centres to boost the businesses within them.

Free weekly waste and recycling collections have also been maintained, while the borough has some of the best parks and green spaces in the country receiving more Green Flag awards than any other local authority for eight years running.

The council also organises hundreds of events each year, including occasions to commemorate the historic association Hillingdon has with the military.

During the past year, Cllr Puddifoot has overseen the borough's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and until recently he was also an Executive Member of London Councils with responsibility for Health and Care.

Cllr Puddifoot's work was recognised in 2012, when he was appointed MBE for services to the community, and then in 2019 Her Majesty was pleased to confer a Knighthood on him for services to Hillingdon.

**Cllr Puddifoot** said: "I have said at staff roadshows, on many occasions over the years, that the council I inherited in July 2000 was a basket case that was failing our residents in so many areas.

"The difference between then and now is frankly remarkable; with Hillingdon being financially stable, with some of the best local authority staff working for us we are recognised as one of the best councils in the country as regards the provision of services and facilities to our residents.

"As I step down, I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to my political colleagues, the staff of the council and our residents for all the help and support provided to achieve such an improvement."

### Residents and colleagues react to the news

- ★ "An enormous sense of gratitude for your service and how lucky Hillingdon people have been to have you at the helm for 20 years".
- ★ "You will be missed. Hopefully things will run the same with the new leader and Hillingdon continues to be one of the best boroughs to live in."
- ★ "Your leadership over the last 20 years has been outstanding and you have transformed Hillingdon Council into one of the most respected councils in the country."
- ★ "It has been an honour and a tremendous learning experience to work closely with Ray for over 22 years. His approach to leading Hillingdon is seen as a model for councils nationally. Since being elected as MP for a part of our borough, it is clear that residents appreciate his focus on putting them first and see the difference that his leadership has made in their lives".

# Working together to + KEEP HILLINGDON SAFE +

On Sunday 20 December, all London boroughs, including Hillingdon, moved to the Tier 4 alert level as a result of a rapid increase in coronavirus cases across the south east of the UK.

One in three people who have coronavirus have no symptoms and may be spreading the virus without realising.

The introduction of Tier 4 measures meant that residents were unable to leave home unless for work (that can't be done at home), education, essential shopping, medical reasons, to provide care, to exercise or for communal worship. Residents were unable to meet others (outside of their support bubble or household) indoors, including during the Christmas period. Residents could exercise or visit a public outdoor place by themselves, with the people they live with, with their support bubble, or one person from another household. Travel was restricted to local essential travel only. All non-essential businesses were ordered to close, including shops (unless operating click and collect), hospitality venues (unless selling food and drink via takeaway or delivery), leisure and sports facilities, and personal care facilities.

Various grants continue to be available to support businesses through the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Details are available at [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/support-for-businesses](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/support-for-businesses).

For information on the latest alert level restrictions, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/alert-level](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/alert-level).

## Need some support?

The council's Community Hub can signpost residents to a range of help, including financial advice and support, emotional wellbeing and befriending services, priority online shopping slots, and local food bank referrals for those who meet eligibility criteria. The hub is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Email [Covid19Hub@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:Covid19Hub@hillingdon.gov.uk) or call 020 3949 5786.

The council has introduced a range of initiatives and is continuing to work with partners, businesses and community groups to help to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).



## Please remember!

Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or sanitiser, wear face coverings when required and keep a safe distance (two metres apart) from others who aren't in your household.

Also remember that you must not socialise indoors with people unless

you live with them or have formed a support bubble with them.

If you have COVID-19 symptoms, (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, a change to or loss of smell or taste), self-isolate and get a test. Book an appointment for a test or order a home testing kit via the NHS COVID-19 app, the government's website [www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test](http://www.gov.uk/get-coronavirus-test) or by calling 119.

You are required to self-isolate by law if you test positive or are contacted by the NHS Test and Trace service. Those who fail to comply face a fine of £1,000. Fines go up to £10,000 for those who offend repeatedly.



## Contact tracing service and rapid flow testing programme launched

On Wednesday 11 November, the council launched a COVID-19 contact tracing service in support of the NHS.

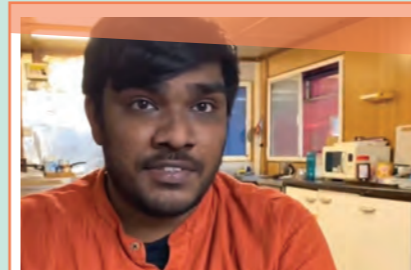
NHS Test and Trace will pass details to the council of residents who have tested positive but who they have not been able to contact. The council will then try to make contact either by text, phone, email or a socially-distanced visit to capture

information about the resident's activities in the days prior to their positive result.

Locally organised asymptomatic testing began in the borough on Monday 14 December to help to protect those most at risk and slow the spread of infection using rapid tests supplied by NHS Test and Trace.

The council is working in partnership with the Department of Health and Social Care to offer the tests initially to essential workers. The tests help to identify those who unknowingly have the virus and enable those who test positive and their contacts to self-isolate, which can help drive down the R rate locally and save lives.

The testing programme is set to be expanded and will be advertised in due course.



## Community engagement

The council has held a range of virtual engagement events with representatives from faith, voluntary sector, residents' and community groups.

By hosting regular calls, emailing groups and sharing resources, such as posters and leaflets, the council has been able to further increase awareness of the virus and the actions that need to be taken to prevent its spread.

Groups have welcomed the opportunity to get involved and help to keep their local communities safe by sharing information via social media, email, verbally and on noticeboards.

The council has also been working with health partners to share COVID-19 messaging.

If you are part of a local group and would like to support us by sharing messages with your community, email [fgibbs@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:fgibbs@hillingdon.gov.uk).



## Ensuring safety in public spaces and workplaces

COVID-19 marshals were introduced on Thursday 19 November by the council to remind residents and businesses what actions need to be taken to keep everyone safe.

The marshals have been visiting areas across the borough to raise awareness of restrictions, social distancing, face coverings and hand washing.

They have also been directing pedestrians through one-way systems and ensuring properly spaced queues.

The marshals are ensuring local businesses are operating safely and have been reporting issues back to the council's food health and safety team for further investigation.

Since June, council licensing and environmental health officers have carried out more than 2,500 visits to businesses across the borough to ensure they are COVID compliant, and 179 warnings have been issued for breaches of regulations.

The council has issued fines totalling £15,000 to nine businesses that were repeatedly caught flouting regulations. Should any fines go unpaid, businesses may be taken to court, and the council now has the power to close premises for serious COVID-19 failures.

If you have any concerns about a Hillingdon business not complying with COVID-19 secure regulations, email [Covid19Hub@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:Covid19Hub@hillingdon.gov.uk) or call 020 3949 5786.



## Keeping pupils and students safe

The council has been working with schools, colleges and universities to help them become COVID-19 secure, support them with any outbreaks, and ensure messages about the virus are shared as widely as possible among pupils/students, parents and staff.

To support children from low-income households who would usually be entitled to free school meals, the council set up a food assistance scheme during October half-term, which saw £15 supermarket vouchers distributed to more than 6,000 eligible children.

The government also provided the council with additional funding to continue to provide food assistance during the Christmas holidays.

The council also joined forces with Brunel University to set up a walk-in testing site in their Topping Lane car park, which is available seven days a week, from 8am to 8pm.

## Leader of the Council,

**Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot**, said: "I would like to thank everyone for their efforts in working together to keep Hillingdon safe.

"I urge residents to continue to act responsibly by following the latest coronavirus advice and guidelines so that we can lower infection rates and protect each other."

"Although the COVID-19 vaccination roll-out is welcome news, it will take time for everyone to receive it, so I encourage everyone not to let their guard down."

For the most up-to-date coronavirus guidance, localised infection data and information on council services and support, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/coronavirus)



# A destination for investment and business growth



CGI OF THE ARK DATA CENTRE

We are continuing to forge a reputation for attracting major schemes and developers to the borough. *Hillingdon People* takes a look at how the council is working with businesses to boost investment and helping to create additional and more diverse job opportunities for local people.

During the last three months, three major planning applications were given the go-ahead by the council, underlining its commitment to supporting business and investment.

The developments are set to bring a range of new employment opportunities to the borough, with more than 900 new jobs in the pipeline.

## The Ark Data Centre, North Hyde Gardens, Hayes

Data centres are essentially a climate-controlled space to enable the continuous operation of computer servers, supported by complex mechanical and electrical infrastructure. They allow multiple companies and organisations to locate their data functions in one secure environment.

As these operations are highly complex and need certain levels of security and maintenance, these

centres all require advanced operating systems and skilled and experienced data technicians to run them.

The Ark Data Centre development on land at the former Bulls Bridge Industrial Estate, which was approved by the council in October, is set to deliver a £500 million high-tech investment in the borough and up to 350 high-tech jobs in the Hayes area.

The centre, which will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, will be a key driver for boosting digital growth in Hayes and supporting the area's transformation.

The council will be working with Ark and key partners, including Brunel University and Uxbridge College, to ensure local people benefit from the job opportunities the centre will provide.

Roles will also include operational support staff, in areas such as cleaning, security and maintenance.

The development will additionally deliver general public

realm improvements, including footpath widening and a pedestrian crossing along North Hyde Gardens, a pedestrian and cycle ramp providing access from the Grand Union Canal to North Hyde Gardens, and enhancement works to be delivered via a financial contribution to the Canal & River Trust's Cycleways Programme.

## Achilles Therapeutics, Uxbridge Road, Hayes

Planning permission was granted in November for Achilles Therapeutics to adapt the current building to create a bespoke manufacturing facility on the Hayes 180 development site, an estate on the south side of the Uxbridge Road.

Achilles Therapeutics is a biopharmaceutical company, whose focus is on transformational cancer immunotherapies that are specific to the individual patient and have the potential to target every cancer cell

of the patient's tumour. This type of treatment utilises the body's immune system to fight cancer by using the patient's own immune cells which are activated to find and destroy cancer cells. Achilles' therapies are currently being tested in clinical trials in advanced skin and lung cancer.

Achilles is based in Hammersmith but wants to create its own manufacturing facility in Hayes due to its easy access to central London. It is anticipated that the new premises will create more than 300 jobs over time, many of which will be highly skilled. Jobs will include operations and scientific staff as well as senior management, business administration and facilities management roles.

The relocation of Achilles to Hillingdon also potentially presents an opportunity for collaboration with local universities.

## Prologis Stockley Park Phase Two, Yiewsley

Building on the successful delivery of the employment park's first phase, the second will create two new units.

The new Prologis employment park, which was approved by the council in December, is expected to create a minimum of 250 jobs.

Planning permission allows 24-hour, seven days a week activity, and the site could be used for last mile delivery to a customer's home or workplace, data centres, or warehousing distribution.



AERIAL PHOTO OF THE ACHILLES THERAPEUTICS SITE

Prologis Stockley Park Phase One was built on brownfield land. Originally earmarked for office development, the site was vacant for about 15 years before Prologis reclaimed and converted the site into a logistics hub. They also provided a new park (Hale Field Park) which was transferred to the council last year and recently awarded a Green Flag. Prologis also carried out significant landscaping along the neighbouring Grand Union Canal.

## Cllr Jonathan Bianco, Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services, said:

"These companies could have chosen to be located anywhere in the UK but have decided on Hillingdon, demonstrating their confidence in the borough as a location to do business.

"It shows we are a forward-thinking borough fully committed to working with existing and new businesses to boost investment in Hillingdon and the jobs that come with it.

"The Achilles and Ark developments will continue to offer Hayes a more diverse employment base and may also provide further opportunities for local students at our colleges and universities.

"These developments are an example of the high-tech, high-value investment the borough is attracting, and will play a critical role helping our economy to recover from the impact of COVID-19."



CGI OF PROLOGIS STOCKLEY PARK PHASE TWO



# Keeping fit and healthy

If you're looking to improve your fitness in 2021, Hillingdon has plenty of ways to help you embrace the new year and the new you!

Working out benefits mental wellbeing. Outdoor or home-based activities may also help you to adjust to a new schedule or support you if self-isolating at home.

## Better Health online resources and apps

For those looking to make a bigger change, such as quitting smoking, losing weight or getting back into exercise, Public Health England's Better Health free online resources and apps can help you achieve these goals with their nine to 12-week plans. By downloading the Smokefree app you can track your progress, see how much you're saving and receive

daily support, while the Weight Loss Plan app can assist you in setting weight loss goals, planning healthy meals and recording your activities and progress.

For more information and to download the apps, visit [www.nhs.uk/better-health](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health)

## Our Parks online sessions

Exercise experts Our Parks previously held fitness sessions in the borough's parks but are now hosting free online workouts with professional trainers for a range of levels. The sessions are streamed via Facebook Live and YouTube and can also be accessed on demand. In addition, they have recently launched three brand-new four and nine-week beginners' workout programmes. Couch to Fitness, Couch to Family Fit and Couch to Bhangra each offer something different and so far have proven to be very popular with residents.

To find out more and join a class visit, [www.ourparks.org.uk](http://www.ourparks.org.uk)

## Make the most of our parks and open spaces

Hillingdon is one of the greenest London boroughs, with 200 parks spread over 1,800 acres of green space - five times the size of Hyde Park. Last year, the borough was also awarded five more Green Flag awards, bringing its tally to 60 - the most held for parks and open spaces nationally and internationally. With so much green space on your doorstep, exercising outdoors couldn't be more convenient.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, these spaces remain open, as they provide opportunities for physical activity and help mental wellbeing - particularly for those without a garden.

Outdoor activities are permitted as often as you wish, and you are also able to sit and rest outside.

Residents are encouraged to adhere to the latest government coronavirus guidance. This includes keeping a two-metre distance from those not in your household or support bubble, staying at home and self-isolating if

you or a member of your household has COVID-19 symptoms, and using sanitiser or washing your hands before and after activities.

Signage is in place at facilities, such as playgrounds, outdoor gyms and tennis courts, to instruct users how to keep themselves and others safe.

For more information about Hillingdon's parks and open spaces, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/greenspaces](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/greenspaces)

## Walk, jog or cycle while taking in the scenery

There are many routes and trails in Hillingdon to enjoy on foot or bicycle.

Downloadable self-guided walking tours and easy-to-follow directions are available for a range of locations, including Ruislip Woods, the Hillingdon Trail and the London LOOP; enabling you to enjoy the borough's vast and diverse countryside and waterways while improving your fitness. To help you stay motivated, Better Health's Active 10 app can record your steps, send tips and allow the user to set goals.

The Mayor of Hillingdon, Cllr Teji Barnes, took part in walks along the Hillingdon Trail before Tier 4 restrictions were introduced. She said: "I started the walk with limited enthusiasm as I am not a natural walker however, I was converted instantly. The vast open spaces, beautiful views and the abundance of flowers, plants and trees were a delight to be around. If you have the chance, please go and take a walk no matter how brief, as I am sure you will not be disappointed."



Cllr Tony Eginton, Cllr Philip Corthorne, Stuart Hunt, (Green Spaces Service Manager) and Cllr Teji Barnes



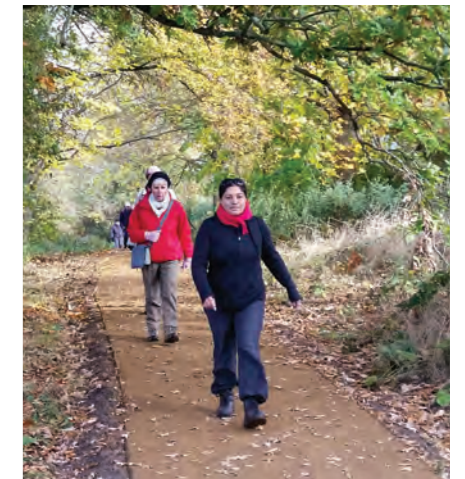
If you're interested in changing your pace or gradually building up your speed, you could try one of Run England's 321 routes which vary between one, two and three kilometre distances. There are three loops in Hillingdon which you can run, jog or walk along.

Better Health's popular Couch to 5K app is a beginners' running programme that has helped more than four million people start running. The app could help you to get started if running is new to you, as it allows people to build up to the five kilometres gradually and at your own pace while tracking your progress. You can also synchronise the app with your music player and connect with other runners and trainers to help support and motivate you.

For further information, and to download the guides and directions visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/walking](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/walking) and [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/jogging](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/jogging). Access the Active 10 and Couch to 5K apps by visiting [www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active](http://www.nhs.uk/better-health/get-active)

Some cycling routes, plotted out using Google maps, are available via the council's website. These routes try to use quieter roads to travel to and from Uxbridge town centre and have starting points from Eastcote, Northwood Hills and South Ruislip.

View these cycling routes in the borough at [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/cycling-routes](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/cycling-routes). Alternative routes can be mapped using either Google Maps or the Transport for London Cycle Mapping website at [www.tfl.gov.uk/maps/cycle](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/maps/cycle)



## Cllr Jane Palmer, Cabinet Member for Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, said:

"Exercise is a great way to reduce stress and anxiety, and Hillingdon has some of the best parks and open spaces in London.

"Please do not visit a park or open space if you or any member of your household have any symptoms of COVID-19 and remember to maintain social distancing at all times."

For more information on activities that can be enjoyed inside or outside, visit [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/keeping-healthy](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/keeping-healthy)

# Creating a cleaner and greener Hillingdon for everyone

A variety of trees are being planted across the borough this winter, a new memorial garden is being created in Hayes, and green screens are being installed at primary schools to reduce pollution.

## Giveaway boosts the borough's tree planting

In November, to celebrate National Tree Week (Saturday 28 November to Sunday 6 December), the council gave away 1,000 saplings from the Rural Activities Garden Centre (RAGC) in Yiewsley.

Residents, schools and community groups were able to collect up to a maximum of five saplings per person to plant in their gardens, and varieties included whitebeam, hawthorn, rowan, crab apple, hazel, cherry and downy birch.

## Tayiba Qureshi, 41, from Ickenham, said:

"I think this is a great scheme as it encourages residents to think about the environment and how we all have a shared responsibility to protect it.

"We are going to plant the trees in our garden and our children will be able to watch them grow as they grow."

## Ann Coughlan, Senior Nursery Practitioner at South Ruislip Early Years and Children's Centre, said:

"It's a really good initiative as there are currently no trees in the early years garden.

"The staff here are really looking forward to planting the trees with the children and watching the trees grow."

The council plants new trees across the borough every year, with more than 2,500 planted over the past five years.

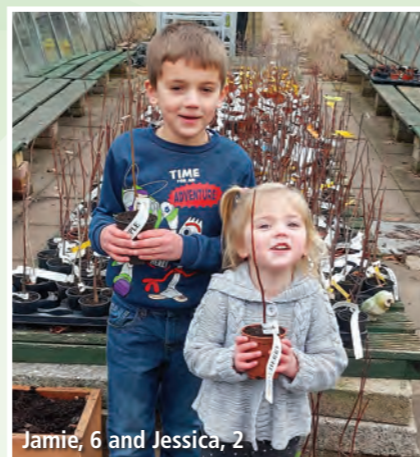
## Cllr Philip Corthorne, Cabinet Member for Housing and the Environment, said:

"This is the second year that we have run this popular initiative, which gives residents the opportunity to play their part in fighting climate change.

"Planting a tree is a great way for residents to enhance their gardens and play their part in protecting the environment for future generations."



Tayiba Qureshi (second right) and her family



Jamie, 6 and Jessica, 2



## Trees planted to recognise efforts of key workers

The council is once again working in partnership with Trees for Cities and, for the first time, search engine, Ecosia, to plant more trees in Hillingdon.

Earlier this year an initiative began, where members of the public were encouraged to show

their appreciation for NHS key workers by planting trees in and around the UK's hospitals. The trees are being dedicated to hospitals as a long-term living memorial for key workers and their response

to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The project hopes to also support the wellbeing of the borough's frontline NHS workers, who have been working tirelessly throughout the crisis, by ensuring that they have a place to come and enjoy the physical and mental health benefits of being outdoors.

In November, more than 500 trees were planted in Colham Green Open Space close to Hillingdon Hospital by residents and children from Colham Manor Primary School.

To date, 2,000 trees have been planted on the site and a further 1,500 are due to be planted before the end of March.

The work will also connect two areas of Colham Green - the recreation area and the existing wooded area. New woodland will be created in the recreation area which will also extend the existing wooded area. Public access to the woodlands will be improved and better use will be made of the spaces.

A small orchard will also be planted to provide the local community with opportunities to grow and harvest food.

## New memorial garden pays tribute to local hero

A new memorial garden is being created at Pole Hill Open Space, Hillingdon to pay tribute to a local hero whose pet sanctuary brought joy to the borough's residents for decades.

Stan Atkins ran an animal sanctuary in the park before he passed away in March 2018.

Known fondly as Pets Corner, the sanctuary was home to animals whose owners could no longer care for them.

Following Stan's death, the council helped to rehome the animals and the sanctuary's dilapidated outbuildings were demolished and the ground was flattened and cleared.

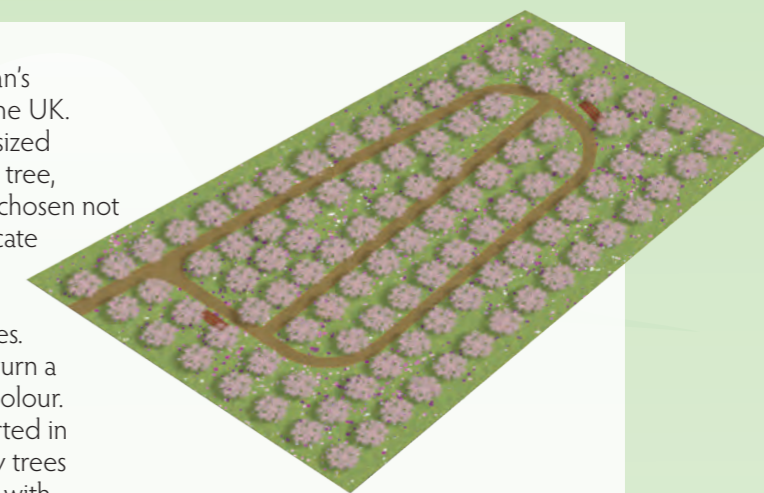
Following consultation with local ward councillors and residents, the council is now creating a landscaped open space with cherry trees on the site and will name the area Atkins Memorial Gardens.

The council has been gifted 100 cherry trees from Japan as part of The Sakura Cherry Tree Project, which involves the planting of trees across

the UK to celebrate Japan's special friendship with the UK.

The popular medium-sized Japanese cherry blossom tree, prunus 'ichiyo', has been chosen not only for its beautiful delicate pink blossom but also its resilience to disease and temperature extremes. In the autumn, its leaves turn a spectacular orange-red colour.

Landscaping works started in December and 50 cherry trees will be planted in March, with the remainder going into the ground in October. Planting will follow a traditional linear orchard layout maximising the number of cherry trees in the space (see diagram above).



The pattern will create a spectacular effect in the spring and visitors to the garden will feel as if they are in the middle of a sea of cherry blossom.

Cherry blossoms are important in Japanese culture not only for their beauty but what they symbolise. Japanese culture recognises the short-lived life span of the flower as a reminder that life can be short and that we must make the most of it.

In addition, a network of footpaths have also been introduced and two seating areas at either end of the garden will provide an opportunity for rest and quiet reflection. A variety of seasonal flowering bulbs will also be planted in the spring to help promote biodiversity.



## Pollution reducing measures installed at 16 schools

New pollution reducing measures have recently been installed at 16 primary schools, as part of an ongoing £200,000 programme by the council to improve air quality within school grounds.

In October and November, 700 hedge shrubs were planted, 140 metres of fencing erected and 250 metres of screening installed at the schools' boundaries.

Schools involved were Cherry Lane Primary School (West Drayton), Newnham Infant School (Ruislip), Newnham Nursery School (Ruislip), Minet Infant School (Hayes), Minet Junior School (Hayes), Holy Trinity Church of England Primary School (Northwood), Yeading Infant School, Yeading Junior School, Colham Manor Primary School (Uxbridge), Whitehall Nursery School (Uxbridge),

Whitehall Infant School (Uxbridge), Harlyn Primary School (Northwood Hills) and St Swithun Wells' Catholic Primary School (South Ruislip), Glebe Primary School (Ickenham), Hedgewood School (Hayes) and St Catherine Catholic Primary School (West Drayton).

The next phase involves the planting of approximately 800 more hedge plants, 35 trees and the installation of 300 metres of privacy screening. By the end of February, the council will have installed more than 1,800 hedge plants, 100 trees and more than 800 metres of privacy screening across 24 of the borough's primary schools.

Although Hillingdon schools don't exceed the recognised pollution limit, the introduction of green screens at schools, where the playing areas are open to the road, will provide a form of protection from exposure to pollution at the school site and create a healthier environment for children.



# Celebrating the accomplishments of children in care

The council's annual Kids in Care Awards recognise young people in care who have overcome difficult circumstances to make an outstanding achievement in their lives. *Hillingdon People* spoke to Charmaine and Simon to learn more about their experiences growing up in care and why the awards mean so much to them.



The council received 344 nominations for last year's Kids in Care Awards (KICA), which happened virtually on Monday 30 November to celebrate the incredible accomplishments of children and young people in care in Hillingdon.

The awards aim to highlight the academic and recreational achievements of care leavers and children in care with categories including 'inspirational role model' and 'positive change and enthusiasm'.

**Charmaine Harris, aged 13 from Hayes (pictured right),** was nominated for four awards including 'personal development'. When asked about growing up in care, she said: "When I went into care I was quite upset because I had been moved from my home but my foster family made me feel welcomed. They understood how I was feeling and they made me feel like part of the family."

"It was quite difficult moving away from my biological family but now I understand that I can't be with them, so I have settled in very well. I got bullied at school, they used to call me 'no parent kid' or 'rich foster kid'.



My challenge was trying to ignore them, and I've now moved past it."

**Hannah Turner, an art therapist from the council's Multi Agency Psychology Service,** nominated Charmaine for an award. Hannah said: "Charmaine is one of the most determined, bright young women I have had the pleasure of working with. She has engaged in art therapy for more than 18 months and shown great resilience and reflective thinking throughout some recent difficult times."

So how does it feel to be nominated for so many awards?

Charmaine concluded: "I feel honoured because there are many people out there that could have had this chance, but I was picked. My biggest accomplishment is improving my art because I've always wanted to be an artist, so being better at my art class makes me happy."

"I want to say thank you to all the people who helped me to get over my sadness, because I used to be sad always. Thank you to all my social workers who have helped me, and Hannah my therapist who has made me feel better about myself."

**Simon Gibson, aged 16 from Ruislip (pictured right),** was nominated for four awards including 'exceptional achievement in education'. He said: "Growing up in care, I got to meet a lot of lovely people who care about how I am and what I do. I live with my brother and another young person in a foster placement. My foster carers look after me and I feel very comfortable here, we consider each other as family."

"I feel extremely grateful and happy to have been nominated for so many awards at KICA. During my GCSEs, I struggled when studying English Language and was provided

with extra tuition in school which helped improve my confidence. My foster family provided me with any materials and books I needed, and I became very disciplined with independent studying because I wanted to get good grades."

Simon excelled in his exams and has more aspirations for the future. He said: "I achieved higher grades than I was predicted which makes me proud. I hope to achieve good grades during my A-levels so I can study at university. My ambition is to study Law and I hope to become a barrister one day."

All KICA entrants received a certificate, prize and were able to watch a celebratory video featuring The Mayor of Hillingdon and the council's Chief Executive, Fran Beasley.

**Cllr Susan O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services,** said: "It is always an honour to celebrate the wonderful achievements of our young people in care, many of whom have experienced a challenging start in life."

"Growing up in care is never easy and we are so incredibly proud of all our children. The Kids in Care Awards recognise a wide range of achievements including top exam results, community contributions and sporting excellence, and it's important that we continue to congratulate young people on their accomplishments."

## What happens to a child in care?

The council is responsible for looking after a child or young person if their birth parents are unable to care for them.

A child may be in the council's care if their parents are unwell, or if they have arrived in the UK without a parent as an unaccompanied asylum seeker.

Sometimes, a child is removed from their family due to a significant risk of harm.

A child in care will be placed with a foster family, in a children's home or in semi-independent housing, and the council will provide them with ongoing support until they are 25 years old.



If you think you could care for a child or young person in need, like Charmaine or Simon, you can find out more about fostering at [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fostering)



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# Considering buying a pet? Remember to do your research

The council is encouraging residents to carry out checks on breeders before buying pets.

Last year, the government launched a campaign recommending that people ask a series of questions to protect themselves against unscrupulous sellers who pretend that the puppy or kitten they are selling comes from a happy home, when in reality, the animal may have been bred in appalling conditions.

The campaign has adopted the phrase 'Petfished' to describe people taking on false identities and histories for the pets they sell - much like 'Catfished', when someone is lured into a relationship by a fictional online persona.

The council is currently investigating several cases involving the unlicensed breeding/sale of dogs in the borough and is working with the City of London (the body responsible for ensuring that illegally imported animals are quarantined as soon as possible) to ensure animals brought into Hillingdon from Europe have the necessary pet passports and vaccinations.

Residents who breed dogs at any premises and sell them, must obtain a licence from the council.

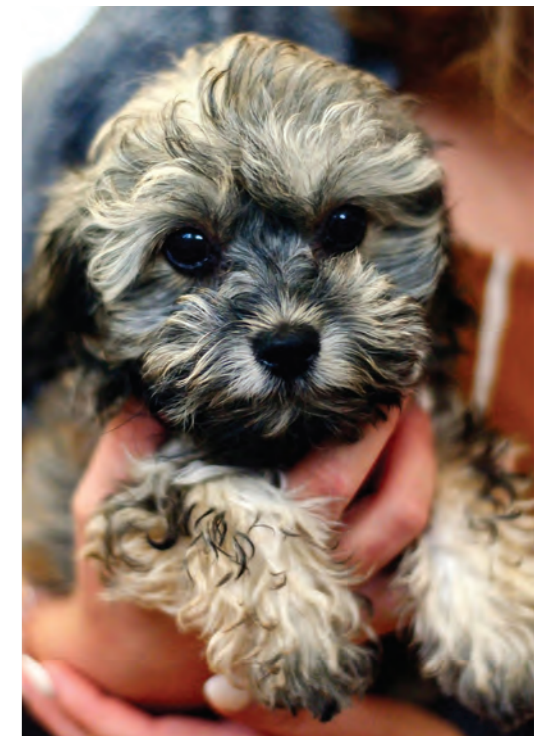
On 6 April 2020, the ban on commercial third-party puppy and kitten sales – known as 'Lucy's Law' – came into force in England.

The ban will help to crack down on puppy farms by disrupting the supply chain of low-welfare breeders which rely on third-party sales.

'Lucy's Law' means that anyone wanting to get a new puppy or kitten in England must now buy directly from a breeder or consider adopting from a rescue centre instead.

Licensed dog breeders are required to show puppies interacting with their mothers in their place of birth. If a business sells puppies or kittens without a licence, they could receive an unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up to six months.

The law is named after Lucy, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel who was rescued from a puppy farm where she was subjected to terrible conditions.



**Cllr Richard Lewis, Cabinet Member for Central Services, Culture and Heritage,** said:

"Many of us have been spending more time at home and there's never been a higher demand for puppies and kittens.

"While many sellers are legitimate, there are unscrupulous individuals in operation capitalising on this demand and trying to make a quick profit at the expense of animal welfare.

"I encourage residents thinking about purchasing a pet to do their research and buy from a licensed seller as it helps to support higher standards of animal welfare.

"Purchasing a pet from the wrong seller could lead to a lot of emotional heartache and a great deal of financial pain so it pays to do your research."

### Tips to avoid being 'Petfished'

When researching sellers, spot the vital red flags with the help of the acronym S.P.O.T:

**Seller**

Put the seller's name and phone number into a search engine – avoid those with multiple adverts.

**Parent**

Make sure you see puppies and kittens in their home with their mother.

**Old enough**

Check puppies and kittens are at least eight weeks old before you take them home.

**Treatment**

Ask to see the animal's health records and avoid sellers who can't provide them.

Find out more by visiting [www.hillingdon.gov.uk/animal-licences](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/animal-licences).  
 Get tips and advice on the Petfished campaign's website at [getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk](http://getyourpetsafely.campaign.gov.uk)

## Harrow Mencap keeps communities connected

The COVID-19 pandemic has left people across the UK feeling alone and isolated, and social interaction has been limited for some, causing depression, anxiety, and poor mental health.

One initiative, however, has been a lifeline for many local people. Connecting Communities supports people from Hillingdon, Harrow, and Brent, and is part of the west London charity, Harrow Mencap.

The scheme aims to reduce loneliness by offering events, social activities and volunteering opportunities. Many participants have built new friendships, relationships and even found jobs since joining the programme.

Activities are open to the whole community and they bring together those who are experiencing severe social isolation. This includes people with learning disabilities, physically disabled people, those with additional mental health needs, and older people.

Since last March, the scheme has helped people keep in touch safely.

Connecting Communities is determined to continue operating essential services and has prioritised various socially-distanced outdoor events and healthy walks closely following government COVID-19 guidelines.

The team launched their annual summer festival on Friday 26 June in Eastcote House Gardens with a scenic walk along the River Pinn and a picnic. "For a small contribution, people enjoyed a healthy walk, a fun outside activity and a delicious homemade individually ordered and sealed-up packed lunch," the programme's manager Jeremy Child explained.

"How lovely it was to be out with friends after such a long period of isolation," said James, a regular participant of Connecting Communities' activities.

This was the first of many local walks and the group also visited



Northwood Hills, Ruislip Woods, Ruislip Lido, and the green areas around Northwood.

The charity has worked closely with the council, and Northwood councillor, Cllr Carol Melvin took part in the festival by giving a talk on local history at Harrow Mencap's Pinner Green Day Opportunities Hub.

Residents who have been unable to join in person have still enjoyed other activities, such as group phone-ins and video calls. These included discussions with Leader of the Council, Cllr Sir Ray Puddifoot, and fellow Ickenham councillor and MP for Ruislip, Northwood and Pinner, Cllr David Simmonds.

## COVID-19 vaccination roll-out underway in Hillingdon

In December, the NHS in north-west London started to vaccinate Hillingdon residents most at risk from coronavirus. The vaccine is initially being given to:

- people aged 80
- people who live or work in care homes
- health care workers at high risk.

The majority of vaccinations for these high-risk groups will be given between January and April 2021.

The first Hillingdon resident to be vaccinated was **Catherine Coleshill, 98, from Uxbridge**. She said: "It was an excellent service, I received a very in-depth assessment and didn't feel a thing. I would like to say thank you to everyone."

**The GP Confederation Chair, Dr Ritu Prasad**, said: "It's been a memorable day for our entire team and a privilege to have vaccinated our first 98-year-old patient."

### When will I be contacted?

When it's the right time residents will receive an invitation from the NHS to come forward. For most people this will be a letter, either from their GP or the national NHS. Some older residents will be contacted by phone. Either way, residents will be provided information about where to go to receive the vaccination.

**The NHS will let you know when it's your turn to have the vaccine. It's important not to contact the NHS for a vaccination before then.**

### How is the COVID-19 vaccine given?

The COVID-19 vaccine is given as an injection into your upper arm.

It's given as two doses, at least 21 days apart.

### How safe is the COVID-19 vaccine?

The vaccine approved for use in the UK was developed by Pfizer/BioNTech.

It has met strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness set out by the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency.



Uxbridge resident Catherine Coleshill, 98, with Dr Ritu Prasad.

Any coronavirus vaccine that is approved must go through all the clinical trials and safety checks all other licensed medicines go through. The UK has some of the highest safety standards in the world.

Other vaccines are being developed. They will only be available on the NHS once they have been thoroughly tested to make sure they are safe and effective.

### How effective is the COVID-19 vaccine?

After having both doses of the vaccine most people will be protected against coronavirus.

It takes a few weeks after getting the second dose for it to work.

**The coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccine is safe and effective. It gives you the best protection against coronavirus.**

### While you are waiting for the vaccine what can you do?

In the meantime, it is vitally important that we all continue to follow the national public health guidance.

This means you must continue to:

- continue to follow social distancing guidelines and try to stay at least two metres (three steps) away from anyone you do not live with (or anyone not in your support bubble)
- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- if you can, wear something that covers your nose and mouth in places where it's hard to stay away from other people and indoors.

COVID-19 is still very prevalent and highly infectious: the risk of catching it is the same as ever for people who have not been vaccinated.



Find out more about the roll-out by visiting [www.nhs.uk/CovidVaccine](http://www.nhs.uk/CovidVaccine)

## Update from the West Area Chief Inspector

Happy New Year! And thanks for bearing with us and coping with the ups and downs of 2020, I really hope 2021 is substantially different.

As I write, I have just come back from a period of self-isolation as unfortunately a colleague tested positive for COVID-19. I joined the police as I'm a people person and having to stay at home for two weeks was sheer torture, but there was no way I was going to risk infecting others. I never thought I'd be pleased to catch the 5am train again, but I was over the moon.

Knife crime is one of our key battles at the moment, and an important figure is knife violence in youths under 25. At the time of writing, as we leave the second lockdown, I'm pleased to say that the number of knife violence offences across West Area is down by 41 per cent. Every police officer in the borough has played a part in this, and I am especially proud of the work done by my Safer Neighbourhood teams and the council's community safety team, working closely

together to target local hotspots, not just by policing but carrying out warrants, trading standards visits, education, and supporting vulnerable youths. It's no exaggeration to say that thanks to their efforts more children are coming home safely each night.

Causing less immediate harm, but nevertheless very prevalent, is the recent rise in cyber-crime. This can take many forms but there are easy ways you can protect yourself. If you get an email from an unknown sender, do not open any of the links; if there are any misspellings delete it immediately. If the email states that there is a limited time offer and you must respond immediately, delete it. If your bank emails you to transfer funds, contact your bank in person or by telephone before doing anything. If you have children, ensure that parental controls are installed on their devices and check their internet search history regularly. Children are very trusting and sadly talk to strangers online when they would

never do so in real life. Finally, if you receive an unrequested password reset email, go to the main website without using the link contained in the email and avoid giving your details away.

In other news, I would like to welcome two new sergeants to Hillingdon, and specifically Hayes; they are Crystal Govers and Aaron O'Mahoney and both will have started by the time you read this, finally covering our shortfall in supervisors. I would also like to congratulate PC Liam Harmon, the Uxbridge town centre officer who has passed his sergeants' process.

Rest assured we are doing everything we can to keep you safe and if we can help please don't hesitate to contact us.



Chief Inspector Richard Watkinson

# Supporting carers throughout the pandemic and beyond



*Hillingdon People* finds out about the valuable work of the Carers Trust Hillingdon during the pandemic and how residents can receive support or volunteer.

Carers Trust Hillingdon is the lead organisation for the Hillingdon Carers Partnership, which is a group of charities working closely together to support the borough's carers.

The partnership, which receives council funding, offers a variety of free services to residents with caring responsibilities.



There are around 30,000 carers in Hillingdon who provide unpaid care and support to a family member, friend or neighbour; without which that person may find it difficult to manage their daily lives. Additionally, there are an estimated 2,500 young carers, some as young as five years old, supporting their families.

Many carers do not recognise that they are carers, often believing they are just being a good partner, child, sibling, parent or friend. But caring can bring with it a set of challenges, that many may not even recognise they are facing as a result of their duties.

For adult carers, these can be financial issues, worsening health, loneliness and social isolation or low-level mental health issues, such as sleeplessness, anxiety or depression. For younger people caring from their early years, it may disadvantage them educationally, psychologically and physically.

If this sounds like you, or someone you know, help is available through the Uxbridge-based organisation which tailors its support to meet the individual needs of the person. They aim



to enable carers, whatever their age or background, to maintain a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside of caring.

The charity also strives to ensure that carers are recognised and valued for the care and support they provide and are acknowledged as expert partners in care; as well as respected as an integral and critical part of the health and social care workforce in Hillingdon.



Carers Trust Hillingdon's services range from information and advice, assistance with claiming carer-related entitlements, health and wellbeing courses and counselling, to training to help carers better manage their caring roles, promote their self-confidence, personal development and to learn new skills.

They also provide breaks from caring, either through replacement care at home, or by facilitating time away from the person's caring role so they can attend social groups, activities and peer support sessions.

Additionally, they offer specialist support for families living with dementia or acute mental health conditions, and to the borough's young carers through their young carer clubs, school holiday activity programmes, and as they transition from school into further education, employment or training.

At the start of the pandemic, the charity's immediate response ensured that carers in the community had essential supplies of food, medication and any specialist equipment they might need to help them to care.

The team also adapted their services to offer the majority



of them online. Adult sessions included chair-based exercise, yoga, sewing and art classes; social groups and book clubs; language courses, and wellbeing and pamper sessions. The young carers also enjoyed get-togethers via the Houseparty platform, online quizzes and escape room activities, baking lessons and art classes.



Additionally, the charity has been able to apply for funding to be able to give carers access to hardship grants that have paid for essential household items, and laptops for young carers to study at home.

**Kiki, aged 13 from Hillingdon, (pictured above)** has continued to receive support throughout the pandemic. She said: "I care for my mum and lockdown has been really hard for both of us being stuck at home together all of the time. Carers Trust Hillingdon has helped me so much. They bought me a laptop so that I could do my schoolwork, keep in touch with my friends and join in with a virtual pamper session. They also helped

my mum with shopping, medical appointments and prescriptions, and phoned us every week to make sure we were doing okay."

For those not online, the trust has also worked hard to make sure that residents were not excluded, assisting people to get online if they weren't sure how to do it and via telephone support, such as regular check-ins and social groups. In addition, the team post packs to people containing activities such as sketching guides, baking boxes, toys, games and more to help keep shielding carers entertained and engaged.



If you, a family member or someone you know could benefit from the charity's services, contact Hillingdon Carers Partnership on 01895 811206 or visit [carerstrusthillingdon.org](http://carerstrusthillingdon.org)



## Would you like to volunteer?

Volunteers play an important role in nearly all areas of the charity. They provide office support and advice centre cover, and help to run the young carers clubs, carer cafés, art groups, peer support groups and some counselling and alternative therapy sessions. The trust also has a volunteer advisor who supports the team with welfare benefits claims, and volunteer trustees who are

responsible for the governance and efficient running of the organisation.

Additionally, they work in close partnership with Harlington Care, Harlington Hospice, Hillingdon Mind and the Alzheimer's Society, offering volunteer roles more broadly, as well as their established joint venture, H4All.

This means that there are a great range of roles available to any resident wanting to volunteer.

All volunteer roles are advertised through H4All. If you would like to get involved visit the H4All Volunteer Hub at [www.h4all.org.uk/volunteer-hub](http://www.h4all.org.uk/volunteer-hub)



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HD Carers Support Group  
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Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support (HACS)  
020 8606 6780

Hillingdon Brain Tumour and Injury Group  
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Hillingdon Carers  
01895 811206

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[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/counciltax)  
0300 123 1384

Families' Information Service  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fis](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/fis)  
01895 556489

Fraud Hotline  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/reportfraud](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/reportfraud)  
0800 389 8313

Hillingdon First Card  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/hillingdonfirst](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/hillingdonfirst)  
01895 556677

Hillingdon Social Care Direct (adults and children) ▶ Blue Badges ▶ Freedom Passes ▶ Meals Service ▶ TeleCareLine  
01895 556633

Housing Services  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/housing)  
01895 556666

Substance Use and Misuse or Sexual Health  
01895 250721

Trading Standards  
[www.hillingdon.gov.uk/tradingstandards](http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/tradingstandards)  
01895 250164

**All other council enquiries (not listed above)**  
01895 250111

Hillingdon Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (HIDVA)  
020 8246 1745

Hillingdon Mind  
01895 271559

Hillingdon Parent Carers Forum  
[www.hillingdonpcf.com](http://www.hillingdonpcf.com)

Hillingdon U3A  
07532 268002

Hillingdon Women's Centre  
01895 259578

Home-Start Hillingdon  
01895 252804

P3 Navigator Advice Centre  
01895 436114

Samaritans  
116 123 (freephone)

Victim Support  
08 08 16 89 111 (freephone)

**Hospitals**

Harefield Hospital  
01895 823737

Hillingdon Hospital  
01895 238282

Mount Vernon Hospital  
01923 826111

Northwick Park Hospital  
020 8864 3232

Watford General Hospital  
01923 244366

NHS  
111

**Police and Fire**

Metropolitan Police  
Non-emergency 101  
Textphone 18001 101

Hillingdon Neighbourhood Watch  
[all@hillingdonnhw.co.uk](mailto:all@hillingdonnhw.co.uk)

Hillingdon Fire Station  
020 8555 1200



# APPLY NOW!



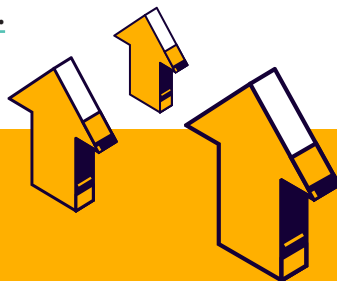
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