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**March 2023 - Final Anniversary Bonus Edition**

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## **Celebrating King's Coronation 6<sup>th</sup> May 2023**

The Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III will take place on Saturday 6 May, 2023. The Coronation Ceremony will be at Westminster Abbey, London.

Across the Coronation Weekend, there will be further opportunities for people to come together in celebration of the historic occasion. On Sunday, 7 May 2023, a special Coronation Concert will be staged and broadcast live at Windsor Castle.

The Coronation Big Lunch, at which neighbours and communities are invited to share food and fun together, will take place across the country on the same date. On Monday, 8 May 2023, members of the public will be invited to take part in The Big Help Out, which will encourage people to try volunteering for themselves and join the work being undertaken to support their local areas.

### **In Spelthorne, the following Community events will be held:**

**Sunday 7 May - Where:** St Mary's Village Park, Stanwell

**When:** 2-5pm **Details:** The Local Conversation in Stanwell will be hosting a Party in the Park in St Mary's Village Park, in Stanwell. Entry and entertainment is all free to everyone of all ages.

Visit [www.lcstanwell.org](http://www.lcstanwell.org) or find them on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/groups/163127137688269](https://www.facebook.com/groups/163127137688269)) for more information.

**Monday 8 May Where:** Long Lane Recreation Ground

**When:** 11am start **Details:** Stanwell Events will be hosting a Royal Picnic. About: Learn more about Stanwell Events here:

[www.stanwellevents.org.uk/](http://www.stanwellevents.org.uk/)

**Where:** Elmsleigh Centre **When:** All day **Details:** An artist will be working in the town centre to create a community art piece where visitors can stop and add a paint stroke to a canvas. The finished piece will be displayed somewhere in the town as a lasting memento of the Coronation.

The artist will create a template based around a Union Jack flag and the Kings crown and will enhance the canvas before delivering it to us post-event. About: For more information about Visit Staines, visit: [www.visitstaines.co.uk/](http://www.visitstaines.co.uk/)

### **Street parties**

If you're thinking of organising a Street Party or an event you will need to submit an application - the deadline to apply is Friday 17 March. Visit our dedicated web page [www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/17061/Street-parties-and-outdoor-public-events](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/article/17061/Street-parties-and-outdoor-public-events) which provides all the guidance and advice you will need.

### **Are you holding a community event?**

There are going to be celebrations galore going on throughout the Borough and nationwide for all ages, and all communities

organised by many different organisations.

If you would like add details of your event to this webpage, please email the details to [news@spelthorne.gov.uk](mailto:news@spelthorne.gov.uk)



## **My Daughter Thought My Walking Stick Was Embarrassing** <https://Metro.Co.Uk/2023/01/19/My-Daughter-Thinks-My-Walking-Stick-Is-Embarrassing-I-Blame-Society-18117236/>

Moving toward the school gates, I leant on my new rainbow coloured cane for comfort and support. ‘I’m embarrassed,’ my six-year-old daughter Millie suddenly shared. When I asked what was causing it, she replied with brutal honesty, as children that age do. ‘Your walking stick. It makes you look old.’ At the time, I was just 36.

‘They allow people to walk. Anything that helps Mummy is wonderful and nothing to feel embarrassed about,’ I told her. Millie seemed quite convinced by my explanation and told her teacher proudly about my new bit of kit and how it ‘helps Mummy walk.’

I waved Millie off and hobbled back to my car. A few of the other parents patted my arm as I made my way past them and asked if I was OK. However, as I drove away, I couldn’t stop thinking about what Millie had said.

Where had her ableist thought that mobility aids are for the elderly or an embarrassment come from? It certainly hadn’t been learnt in our home. I’ve been chronically ill, disabled and increasingly immobile for the whole of Millie’s life and neither my husband nor our families had ever spoken in ableist terms about me or anyone else. We’d always made the effort to explain things with honesty, science and using ideas and language she could understand. And most importantly, with kindness.

I racked my brains to understand where the idea that Millie’s thinking might have come from. Millie doesn’t have an internet browser on her tablet and the programmes she watches are closely monitored.

Was it some negative stereotype subliminally gleaned from Disney films, where only the baddies or evil, malignant characters have canes and walking sticks?

However, in stark comparison, just 24 hours after her walking stick comment, Millie was thrilled to find a pair of green Disney glasses in a shop, a replica of the specs worn by Mirabel, the main character in the hit children’s film Encanto.

It’s our job now to break generational cycles and trauma, and teach our kids disabled people don’t need pity or cruelty and that they’re not a form of entertainment or the butt of jokes – that their

mobility aids are not embarrassing or shameful, but joyful things helping make our days easier.

I hold hope for the future of the world and if my kid is anything to go by, it's going to end up in safer hands than ever before.



## **Lonely Disabled 80-Year-Old Fined For Taking Too Long Doing Her Shopping** <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-11697129/Lonely-disabled-80-year-old-fined-100-Morrisons-took-long-shopping.html>

Ann Tawe-Jones parked up at the store to do her shop - while also taking time to chat and enjoy the company of other shoppers. Her car was parked outside the supermarket for two hours and six minutes - breaking the 90-minute maximum stay rules in Swansea, South Wales.

Mrs Jones, who is disabled and uses a walking stick, says she then received a £100 fine for overstaying in Morfa Shopping Park. Ann said: 'I'm very upset because I live on my own and I'm 80 years old. It's a lonely life and I need the politeness and respect of people without them being rude to me. 'When you're shopping and spending a lot of money in the shop you want some courtesy.'

Mrs Jones, of Swansea, added: 'When I'm in the shop, I have to lean on the trolley, because I'm in so much pain.' The fine was issued on January 19 by Euro Car Parks - which manages the parking at the site.

It is the second fine Mrs Jones has been issued in the past two years after she was also charged by Euro Car Parks at Neath Morrisons car park. Mrs Jones said she only became aware of the rules after she complained to the supermarket's customer service desk about her recent parking ticket.

She said she was 'very upset' by the way she was treated and is now trying to find a solution to move around the supermarket faster. Mrs Jones added the mobility scooters were hard to manoeuvre and get out of to reach for the items she needed.

A spokesperson for Morrisons said: 'We appreciate Mrs Jones's situation and we have been in touch with her directly to resolve it. 'All of our car parks have signage that clearly highlight the allotted time allowed for customers to park.' Mail Online have contacted Euro Car Parks for a comment.



## **TV Presenter and Disability Advocate Sophie Morgan Slams BA For Damaging Her Powered Wheelchair** <https://www.standard.co.uk/showbiz/loose-women-sophie-morgan-airport-staff-for-destroying-her-wheelchair-b1056952.html> Sophie Morgan has blasted airport staff for damaging her wheelchair and

leaving her “unsafe”. The 37-year-old presenter and disability advocate who is paralysed said she "landed at Heathrow with a bang" after finding her chair had been "damaged".

Ms Morgan was 18 when she was involved in a car crash that left her paralysed from the chest down in 2003.

Ms Morgan, who had flown in from Los Angeles to London’s Heathrow, took to Instagram to share a video of her experience. In the clip, which showed the damaged chair, she said:

"Someone - no one took responsibility - decided to attach my wheelchair and my batec (battery-powered attachment) whilst in transit (they were checked in separately, in two parts, unattached) and they have done so a) without permission and b) COMPLETELY WRONG!!!

She continued: "It took over half an hour to ‘break’ them apart. All that time I had to sit on an aisle chair which was NOT safe and I didn’t know if I would be able to get back into my chair."

Ms Morgan was eventually able to get back into her chair after the batec was broken apart, but said it was not safe, adding she’d found further damage.

She added: "And what was I told to do by British Airways? Send an email via the website. This has GOT TO STOP. Thousands of chairs are damaged by airlines every year.

A British Airways spokesperson said “We’re extremely sorry for Sophie’s experience and we’re investigating what happened as a matter of urgency. We’ve been in contact with Sophie to sincerely apologise and to resolve the matter with her directly.

“We carry hundreds of thousands of customers who require additional assistance each year and we work hard to provide help and support them throughout the whole journey. It’s extremely disheartening when things go wrong, and we don’t underestimate the impact this has.

“We’re committed to ensuring we deliver a consistently good service, and we’ll be working closely with Sophie and our dedicated accessibility teams to discuss how we can continue to make improvements to ensure a great flying experience for everyone.”



## **Kew Gardens Walking Tours for People Living with Dementia, Sight or Hearing Loss (incl. BSL) and Community Well Being.**

Kew have started their walks around the beautiful setting of Kew Gardens that are designed to be accessible for people living with dementia, sight or hearing loss and for Community Well Being.

All walks start from Victoria Gate and last around 60 minutes. The walks are led by their volunteer walk leaders. Support workers, friends or family are very welcome and will also receive free entry to the Gardens. Please Check with Kew for any changes to the schedules

### **Forthcoming BSL Tour Dates**

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/monthly-british-sign-language-tours>

Sunday 12 March 2023, 11am-12pm

Sunday 16 April 2023 11am-12pm

Sunday 14 May 2023 11am-12pm

### **Forthcoming Community Well Being Tours**

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/community-wellbeing-walks>

Wednesday 1 March 2023, 11am to 12pm

Wednesday 5 April 2023 11am to 12pm

Wednesday 3 May 2023 11am to 12pm

### **Forthcoming Dementia Friendly Tour Dates**

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/health-walks-for-people-living-with-dementia>

Wednesday 8 March 2023, 11am to 12pm

Wednesday 12 April 2023 11am to 12pm

Wednesday 10 May 2023 11am to 12pm

### **Forthcoming Sensory Tour Dates**

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/sensory-guided-walking-tours-for-visitors-with-sight-loss-and-their-carers>

Sunday 12 March 2023, 2pm to 3pm

Sunday 16 April 2023 2pm to 3pm

Sunday 14 May 2023 2pm to 3pm

Walking tours have a limit to the number people who can participate for any of their Events and Walking Tours so it is essential that you register in advance for ALL walks and events at Kew. Email [discovery@kew.org](mailto:discovery@kew.org) or Telephone 07341 114533.



**How Do You Learn The Trapeze If You're Blind?** *Edited from transcript of BBC Ouch podcast from 2018*

[www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/disability-44251621/how-do-you-learn-trapeze-if-you-re-blind](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/disability-44251621/how-do-you-learn-trapeze-if-you-re-blind)

What Am I Worth by Extraordinary Bodies was a show featuring disabled performers, aerialists and musicians as well as some unique equipment. One of the performers Amelia Cavallo is a registered blind musician, performer and also an academic.

Extraordinary Bodies is an offshoot of a couple of different companies, Cirque Bijou and Diverse City, and this is a company that the whole ethos of it is to have an integrated cast that puts

deaf and disabled people at the forefront of the work.

*Amelia said 'It's got a lovely cast of deaf and disabled people, aerialists, myself and two of the other performers make up a band of live music and it integrates a lot of different types of performance styles really because it's very much circus, but it's also very much theatre, it's also got a lot of different layers to it that are really exciting.*

*We have two performers, who don't have a disability, one of whom is also on the directorial team and is one of the choreographers, she works with Cirque Bijou a lot and within Waiting as well. And then we have another performer who is an amazing rope artist. Then the rest of us are all deaf and disabled performers.*

*In terms of actually performing it's really easy for me because I can't see the ground. I can live in ignorance about how high up in the air I am. I'm not particularly scared of heights anyway, but I can be very self-centred when I perform and just be aware of my body, which is really nice.*

*In terms of learning I was very lucky to get a lot of one-on-one tuition or two-on-one when I started, and I worked with some amazing teachers who were just very good at describing. And once you get the lingo down and you understand what the main climbs are and the main body positions are a lot of things can become translatable very easily as soon as you know what you're doing.*



## **Deaf Girl Finds Out She's Also Going Blind After Eye Test** <https://www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/deaf-girl-finds-out-shes-26146004>

Paige Barnes was born deaf but unexpectedly diagnosed as deafblind at age 17. Paige, now 22 from Chessington, was diagnosed with the rarest form of deafblindness, Usher Syndrome Type 3 which is present from birth but is usually diagnosed in older children or teenagers, as symptoms can take years to appear.

As well as being profoundly deaf, she has no peripheral vision and minimal vision at night time, and is likely to deteriorate further over time. Paige was just about to start to learn to drive, but the diagnosis meant she would never be able to get behind the wheel. She was shocked by this news, as she thought her sight was on the same level as those around her.

Paige said: "I discovered I was blind while studying at a deaf school. I was looking at the whiteboard and noticed a blur on the screen. I told my mum, and she thought I might need a prescription for glasses. Next thing you know, I'm in the hospital, and it was a bit of a rollercoaster from there. It was a bit of a shock, I just thought everyone else saw the same as me."

Paige is currently studying hairdressing and experiences frustration when she is unable to hear clients when hairdryers are blowing, but she does not let this get in the way. She said: “Sometimes it gets very tiring, and sometimes I go home upset. I have to work a little bit harder, but it doesn’t mean I can’t do anything. I can do whatever I want in my life.”

Paige's boyfriend, Sam, asked her lots of questions about her condition when they first met, and Paige thinks others should not feel scared of doing the same. But it took Paige a few weeks to tell him that she is deafblind, explaining: “It’s a big deal for me to tell people I’m deafblind because there are so many misconceptions about what that means. People assume you can’t see or hear anything and that you might not be able to communicate.

“In reality, deafblind is a spectrum, and everyone who has it will have different amounts they can see and hear. Paige’s boyfriend was very supportive and asked questions to understand her condition better. After the pair became official, he even started to learn British Sign Language and sent her a video of himself signing ‘good morning’ as Paige cannot hear very well when she wakes up.

Paige would encourage anyone with a disability to put themselves out there, saying: “Deafblind people need to know they should always be themselves; don’t ever be ashamed or stop yourself from dating. “Life’s too short, so get out there. There will be someone out there who wants to be with you, who’ll be proud of you for your deafblindness and want to go on the journey with you.”



## **Dame Judi Dench: It Has Become Impossible To Read My Scripts**

<https://www.womanandhome.com/life/news-entertainment/dame-judi-dench-shares-heartbreaking-health-update-with-fans-acting-has-become-impossible/>

From James Bond to William Shakespeare, the British icon has appeared in some of the biggest franchises in history, earning an Academy Award, a Tony Award, two Golden Globe Awards, four British Academy Television Awards, six British Academy Film Awards and seven Olivier Awards along the way.

But we might be seeing less of her in the near future, as she revealed acting has become “impossible” due to health complications. The Victoria & Abdul actress has been dealing with age-related macular degeneration for over a decade, and the Oscar-winning actress recently spoke about how her age-related degenerative eye condition is affecting her ability to remember lines, saying "It has become impossible and because I have a photographic memory, I need to find a machine that not only teaches me my lines but also tells me where they appear on the



page. I used to find it very easy to learn lines and remember them.”

Showing that enduring spirit, however, she cheekily added that she still has a lot of material memorized, jokingly boasting that she still remembers many of her prestigious Shakespeare roles by heart. “I could do the whole of Twelfth Night right now.”

Judi has been battling macular degeneration for over a decade and has previously spoken about dealing with the issue in support of the Vision Foundation, a sight loss charity. "You find a way of just getting about and getting over the things that you find very difficult," she said. I've had to find another way of learning lines and things, which is having great friends of mine repeat them to me over and over and over again... I was doing The Winter's Tale with Kenneth Branagh a couple of years ago, playing Paulina, and after we had been running for three weeks or so at the Garrick, he said to me — I have a long speech at the end — he said: 'Judi, if you were to say that speech about eight feet to your right, you'd be saying it to me and not to the [proscenium].'" I rely on people to tell me!"

You can't keep a good Dame down, though. Despite the adversities she's faced, Dame Judi picked up an Academy Award nomination in 2022 for her supporting role in Belfast and was nominated for most of the major awards throughout the season. She can next be seen starring in Richard Eyre's drama Allelujah, based on Alan Bennett's play of the same name. The movie is set within a hospital ward in the United Kingdom, and also stars Absolutely Fabulous' Jennifer Saunders and Derek Jacobi.



### **Spelthorne Para Sports Club**

Aimed at young people aged 5-25 and their siblings, Spelthorne Para Sports Club provides opportunities to play a wide range of sports as well as offering sport specific coaching for those interested in developing skills.

All sessions are overseen by enthusiastic volunteers although parents/guardians are encouraged to stay on side during the sessions. No need to book - come and try - first session free!

**Where** - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines,

**Cost** - £3 a session (£2 for siblings) payable on the day.

**When** - 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month 10:15-11:45am (term time)

For more information please visit the council's web site

[www.spelthorne.gov.uk/parasportsclub](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/parasportsclub)

## Spelthorne Boccia Club

Boccia is a disability sport that is similar to bowls and petanque.

The aim of the game is to propel leather balls, coloured red or blue, close to a white target ball (the jack).

It is played from a seated position and the ball can be moved with players' hands, feet or an assistive device eg a head or hand pointer.

Our club is aimed at people aged 16+ with disabilities (young people aged 14+ may join with an adult carer present)

**Where** - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines

**When** - Every Thursday 6pm - 6.55pm

**Cost** - £3 per week (no need to book, just turn up and join in)

For more information please visit the council's web site

[www.spelthorne.gov.uk/boccia](http://www.spelthorne.gov.uk/boccia)



## Staines Shopmobility

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Mustard Mill Road,  
STAINES, TW18 4BL.**

**Telephone 01784 459416**

*The service will be available Tuesday to Saturday from 9.30am until 4.15pm, with the last equipment hire time of 3pm.*

*All equipment is to be returned by 4.15pm.*

[stainesshopmo@gmail.com](mailto:stainesshopmo@gmail.com)

[www.stainesshopmobility.com](http://www.stainesshopmobility.com)

[www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility](https://www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility)

### **Membership Charges**

*Membership is available on a daily or annual basis. Please contact manager for details*

### **Holiday Hire**

*Wheelchair- Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 6 weeks.*

**A Cash Deposit Of £50 Is Required.**

*Scooter - Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 4 weeks.*

**A Cash Deposit Of £100 Is Required.**



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## **Paralympic Champion Has Passionate New Mission As "People Used To Stare At Me"**

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/other-sports/ayaz-bhuta-paralympic-games-rugby-29247327>

If anyone knows the power of a Paralympic gold medal, then it's Ayaz Bhuta. The 33-year-old wheelchair rugby player, who was part of the history-making British team that won gold at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, has recently announced his retirement. As is only natural when you reach that point in your life, reflection kicks in and Bhuta's achievements are finally hitting home.

But it has been a rollercoaster life and career. Bhuta was born with Roberts Syndrome, a condition so rare it only affects 150 people with most sufferers dying at birth. The rare genetic disorder is characterised by limb and facial abnormalities and those affected by the condition grow slowly before and after birth. As a result Bhuta's growth has been restricted to just 3ft 7in and he has been forced to constantly prove people wrong.

But that inner drive helped make him into the sportsman he is today as he became one of the finest wheelchair rugby players in the country, amassing 158 caps. And, with that gold medal in his hand wielding its power to inspire, he is on a mission to better the next generation now that he has left elite competition behind.

"When I officially made the announcement on my own social media that's when it truly hit me what a career it was. All the messages start coming in about what impact you had from certain people.

"All my life I've been told I can't do things," he said. "Say for example in school, I went to a mainstream school and I was the only person with a disability in that school. I found my way just to join in a PE lesson or play football with my mates."

That determination to prove people wrong through his earlier years helped develop that inner drive that ultimately led him, and his team, to seal that Paralympic gold.

But the more Bhuta, who was awarded an MBE for services to wheelchair rugby, talks the more it's clear how much he feels there is a sense of responsibility to change things for the better.

"Throughout life, people treat disability with perceptions, try to patronise you and they don't give you the respect you deserve as a person," he said. "I've always had to try and prove people wrong that way and this was another thing in my life where somebody was telling me we're not good enough. So let's try and change that and I was lucky to do that with 11 other team-mates who were driven to the same purpose."

"I started playing wheelchair basketball when I was 18 or 19 years old and just doing that at club level every Saturday, training for two hours, that was the best thing I was looking forward to all

week.”

Now that his career in elite sport is at an end, Bhuta is now committed to the next part of his life - giving back. As well as coaching he regularly shares his story in school visits and talks as well as encouraging more people with disabilities within his South Asian community to believe they can achieve their dreams.

“I’m hoping to be that gateway for people with disabilities to try and achieve what they want. Even if it’s not like the top level, it’s more the power of sport and how it helped me as a person with a disability.”



## **Blind Man 'Humiliated' After Being Kicked Out Of Restaurant And Told His Guide Dog 'Was Dirty**

<https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1730452/blind-man-kicked-out-restaurant-guide-dog>

Businessman Graham Drew had only had his guide dog Ricky for a couple of weeks when he decided to enjoy a meal at a nearby restaurant. Graham, has a degenerative condition and lost his vision in his 30s, said he was shown "no remorse" at Turkish eatery Sultan Sofrasi. "The owner was aggressive from the start and he was quick to say no when I explained that Ricky was a guide dog and I need him to get around. It was clear he didn't care to hear my explanations and he just wanted to get rid of us. His voice was raised and he was throwing his arms around.

Even after I explained the law, he said that Ricky was dirty and then went on to say that I 'didn't look blind' anyway. The owner accused me of trespassing and threatened to call the police on me. In fact, I called the police on them and they got a good talking to."

The father of one added: "It completely knocked my confidence and it has left me anxious about eating out. I get the same sense of dread I experienced that day whenever I walk into a restaurant now." Graham said it is a familiar story as he is refused entry to a business or service, including shops, taxis and hotels, at least once a week.

Ibrahim Ibrahim, the restaurant's owner, said: "I remember this incident, I am very sorry for that day, I was not in the restaurant when it happened but as soon as I found out I took the necessary measures, my worker did not know that people with special needs have dogs for special assistance.

The next day I spoke with Graham Drew and I apologised. I also told him that he can always come with the dog to the restaurant. "I am sincerely sorry for that incident and I also help and support any people with special needs. Thanks a lot for giving me the opportunity to answer, also I say again sorry for Graham Drew."

Graham added: "It isn't always a case of point-blank refusal, but this does still happen. It takes a big argument and a lot of humiliation to convince them that Ricky and I are legally allowed in. No one ever takes the blame. I want to see the system work better and more collaboratively with disabled people."

Access refusals, where someone is denied entry to a shop, restaurant, taxi or other business or premises because they have an assistance dog with them, are sadly all too common. These incidents, which are almost always illegal, can have a devastating impact on the dog owners, restricting them from going out with confidence and limiting their independence.

A Guide Dogs survey found that 81 per cent of guide dog owners have been turned away from public buildings - a five per cent increase on 2019. Under the Equality Act 2010, it is illegal for a person with a disability to be treated unfavourably because of a factor connected with their disability, such as a guide dog.

In England, Scotland and Wales the Equality Act means owners with assistance dogs have a right to enter most services, premises and taxis. In Northern Ireland, the Disability Discrimination Act gives the same rights.

Last year, Guide Dogs launched their Open Doors campaign to help end these refusals. They have created an app to make it easier for guide dog owners to report incidents.



## **Disabled Woman 'Refused' Help At Clapham Junction**

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/02/14/disabled-woman-refused-assistance-at-londons-clapham-junction-station-18278923/>

Sam Jennings, who is a power-chair user, says she was attempting to board a train at the south-west London station to get to Norbury when she was refused assistance at Clapham Junction Station after being told the 'full time assistant' was on his break. She claims no one else was able to help and she missed her train.

Sharing her frustrations on twitter, the florist said: 'I've just been refused assistance at Clapham Junction by @southernrailuk because the full time dedicated assistance team guy ... is on his break. 'So it's not really a full time assistance team is it.

In a separate tweet, Ms Jennings says a worker, named Ricky, on the platform wanted to help her but 'asked his supervisor if he could do it and they said no.'

When contacted for comment, Stephen MacCallaugh, Southern's Head of Stations, told Metro.co.uk: 'We're working hard to improve the level of assistance we give our customers and we're sorry when things don't go as well as we would expect. 'We did give Ms Jennings assistance but we're investigating why this was not onto the first available train.'

The power-chair user added that 'several' passengers who arrived on the platform after her managed to get on the train she'd hoped to travel on as they weren't wheelchair users. Speaking to Metro.co.uk, she said the issues she faced are 'constant', adding: 'I felt humiliated and frustrated because the only reason I was unable to get on that train was their assistance refusal. 'My power-chair gave me the freedom back to go about my daily business and now I'm constantly disabled by inaccessibility. The DDA (Disability Discrimination Act) came in in 1995 which is almost 30 years ago, the Equality Act was 2010 – 13 years ago.'

Metro.co.uk understands that Clapham Junction does operate with a dedicated assistance team due to the station being so busy, however all staff are able to provide assistance if required. In this instance, the assistance team wanted to make prior contact with Ms Jennings' destination station, Norbury, to ensure she would be met by staff there to help her. As they had not been able to call ahead, they chose not to help her onto the first available train. This decision is being investigated.

Southern previously had to award Ms Jennings £17,000 in compensation after 'being stranded on trains and station platforms more than 30 times'.

She often uses her social media to highlight failings on the transport network, using the hashtag #DisabledByTheRailway.



### **Judges Stunned by 13 Year old Blind Pianist -**

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-11757845/Claudia-Winkleman-Piano-leaves-people-tears-blind-girl-gives-beautiful-performance.html>

The mother of a blind 13-year-old pianist who left people in tears with her stunning piano playing has recalled the moment her talented daughter first took to the piano while in hospital as a little girl.

Candice, whose daughter Lucy appears on an episode of Channel 4's The Piano, said she and her family were left in a 'cancer bubble' when the pianist was born, after she was diagnosed with cancerous tumours in her eyes, which caused her to lose her sight.

Lucy sent Twitter into a meltdown when a clip of her playing Chopin's Opus 9 Number 1 was posted on the social media site to promote the new Channel 4 series fronted by Claudia Winkleman.

Lucy, who is also severely autistic, stunned an audience at Birmingham New Street station and left the show's judges, popstar Mika and concert pianist Lang Lang, speechless. Candice revealed her daughter struggles to communicate and cannot hold a conversation, and added she is completely blind. However, she added that when her daughter was 'very little', she bought her a

keyboard, on which she very quickly learnt to play Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star perfectly.

Lucy's piano teacher, Daniel Bath, who has been coaching her through the Amber Trust, which works with blind musicians. He explained how he first taught Lucy how to play the piano in their earliest lessons. 'I started using a method of where I would play the piano and she would put her hands on top of my hand so she could feel which fingers would do what. I've never met anybody in my career who has the same depth of understanding of music,' he said.

A crowd forms around the piano, with many people recording her on their phones. Meanwhile Mika and Lang Lang, who are watching the clip in a separate room, look visibly moved and watch the performance with open mouths.

At one point, Mika holds his hand up to his mouth and appears to fight back tears. Lang says: 'It's unbelievable that she can play this piece. How - how does she study? I mean, it's incredible.' As Lucy finishes the piece and the crowd applauds her, Lang can be heard saying: 'Oh my God. Oh my God this is - this is impossible.' He adds: 'I'm speechless, I don't know what to say.' Mika, with tears in his eyes, laughs and replies: 'There's nothing to say.'



**Introducing Amber** <https://ambertrust.org/introduction/>

At **The Amber Trust**, we believe that visual impairment and other disabilities should not prevent children and young people accessing appropriate musical opportunities.

The Amber Trust was founded in 1995 with the aim to provide blind and partially sighted children, including those with additional disabilities, the best possible chance to meet their musical needs and aspirations.

We have grown to become the only national charity dedicated to supporting visually impaired children with their musical development and education. We aim to enhance the lives of as many of the 25,000 visually impaired children in the UK as possible through music, and to promote high quality music provision.

For some children, learning to play an instrument or to sing can add immeasurably to their lives. With the right encouragement, these children can develop their talents to remarkable ends, breaking down barriers, promoting social inclusion and helping to fulfil their potential as individuals and musicians.

The Amber Trust provides grants to children for:

- Music lessons
- Instruments

- Specialised equipment
- Concert tickets
- Accommodation and travel for music related activities

Amber also runs direct music services for families with a visually impaired child aged 0-5 (Little Amber) and aged 5-18 with complex needs (AmberPlus). These services aim to help families and professionals gain the confidence and resources to engage with their blind child through music.

We work with other charities to raise awareness of the value of music for these visually impaired children. We fund research into the impact of music and develop materials to help support the musical development of children. Through research, we know that music has the power to influence change in so many aspects of a child's life: change that can last a lifetime.



## **Disability Campaigners Say 'Invisible Minority' Is Being 'Forced Off Railways'**

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/02/20/disability-group-says-invisible-minority-being-forced-off-railways-18309420/>

More than 150 groups want the government to rethink the changes which they say will make access virtually impossible and compromise safety. As they presented petitions at Downing Street, a blind rail user said that she had not used the network in two years, with a lack of guards to provide ramps and touch-screen machines among the obstacles.

Alison from Rochdale in Greater Manchester, told Metro.co.uk disabled people are becoming an 'invisible minority' on the network. Alison, 57, said: 'If guards are taken off trains permanently, I won't be able to use the rail network again. 'My local station in Mills Hill is already unmanned and I don't feel comfortable getting on trains by myself because I need a guard to use the ramp and I need to book assistance in advance, which is becoming harder and harder to do. 'Then there are the tickets, I can't use touch-screen machines because of my Bardet-Biedl Syndrome, and I have to rely on a guard being on the train where stations are unmanned. 'As it is, I need someone to get me to the train in the first place and the guard to get me on.

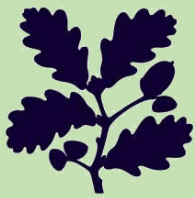
Alison's husband Kevin, a member of the National Federation of the Blind of the UK (NFBUK), is among those who have travelled to London to hand in their petitions at No10.

'Disabled people have been the invisible minority for years and it doesn't matter who you vote for, nothing ever changes. The government hasn't given any thought to our needs. We are here, but they act like they don't want us to be here.'

The campaigners, who are going into No10 in groups, want to send



the message that safety and accessibility on trains is 'non-negotiable'. They are calling for all ticket offices to remain open and for staffing levels at stations and on trains to be maintained and increased. The push is in response to proposals which opponents say will remove guards from services and shut counters nationally.



**The National Trust** is for everyone, and we want to make it easy for disabled visitors to enjoy the places we care for. We're continually looking to **create solutions for accessibility which are creative** and sensitive to our surroundings.

## National Trust

We also have an ongoing process of improving accessibility information for our places. This information can be found under the 'Facilities and Access' section of their individual web pages. If you'd like to visit a specific place, but can't find the information online, please contact the property directly.

The National Trust's 2019 Access Guide gives helpful information about the accessibility of our places. Focusing on key topics we are asked about regularly, the 224-page guide is designed to help make planning your visits easier.

It lists information about our places that offer changing facilities, lifts, powered mobility vehicles, mountain trikes and audio support. For Further information about the guide

<https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/who-we-are/about-us/access-for-everyone>

## Other Resources Available

Our access information is available in alternative formats. Please call us on [0344 800 1895](tel:03448001895).

The National Trust Magazine is available on CD for members from the RNIB. You can order a copy by contacting the RNIB with your membership number. Call: [01733 375 370](tel:01733375370)

Email: [businesslink@RNIB.org.uk](mailto:businesslink@RNIB.org.uk)



**Action for Carers  
Surrey**

**North West Surrey Drop-In Hubs**  
**Addlestone** – 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday  
of each Month

**KnapHill** – Every Monday

**Shepperton** – 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday

of each Month

## Surrey Downs Hubs

**Epsom** - 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each Month

**Hersham** - 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of each Month

**Leatherhead** – Every Friday

To contact Action for Carers Surrey, Telephone 0303 040 1234

Email [CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk](mailto:CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk) Text 07723 486730

Web site [www.actionforcarers.org.uk](http://www.actionforcarers.org.uk)



## **Disability Empowerment Network – North Surrey & Surrey Wide**

Administration and management of the Disability Empowerment Network (DEN) meetings is arranged by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (SCDP)

**All Empowerment Meetings Continue To Be Held Via Zoom unless otherwise noted**

**North Surrey Meeting Dates 2023 (TBC)** -covers the areas of Runnymede, Spelthorne, Woking & Surrey Heath. **Monday 6th March 2023, 1pm-2.30pm,**

**Surrey Wide Meeting dates for 2023 (TBC)**  
**Monday 13th March 2023, 6pm**

**For more information, please contact:**

[Involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:Involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk) or Tel/SMS 07492 249 513 for details of how to participate in meetings remotely.



## **Disability Rights UK (DRUK)**



### **Disability Rights UK Helplines**

Our helplines are operating as normal:

### **Personal Budgets Helpline**

Opening hours: 9.30am-1.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0330 995 0404

[personalbudgets@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:personalbudgets@disabilityrightsuk.org)

### **Disabled Students Helpline**

Opening hours: 11am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0330 995 0414 [students@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:students@disabilityrightsuk.org)

### **Welfare Rights Helpline for Member Organisations**

Opening hours: 10.30am-12.30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays

Telephone: 0203 687 0779 [ken.butler@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:ken.butler@disabilityrightsuk.org)

**PLEASE NOTE** – *The news Bulletins received from **Disability Rights (DRUK)** and the **Surrey Adult Social Care Information & Engagement Team** are now being distributed as enclosures with each monthly SCAN Newsletter.*

*Please email me if you require more copies – See contact below*

## SCAN and Spelthorne Physical, Sensory & Cognitive Disabilities Forum (SPSCDF)



The meetings bring together service providers and users to influence the solutions to any problems or access issues

encountered by people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities. We receive reports from a number of local groups and service providers.

Send your news or reports to [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on our website pages at [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/)

Our next meeting will be on **26<sup>th</sup> April 2023** starting at 12 noon and be Hybrid - held in person at the Goddard Room, Council Offices Knowle Green and via zoom – Further details for Spelthorne's Physical, Sensory and Cognitive Disability forum are on SCAN's web site at

[www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spsc-d-forum/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spsc-d-forum/)



We're registered with **EASYFUNDRAISING**, which means you can help us for FREE. Over 7,000 brands will donate to **Spelthorne Committee**

**for Access Now** if you visit the easyfundraising to find your preferred website to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! All you need to do is sign up and remember to use easyfundraising whenever you shop online.

It's easy and completely FREE! These donations really mount up, so please sign up to support us at

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/)?



### Note from the Editor:

When work started in February 2022, researching stories from the archived copies of the newsletters to mark the 30th Anniversary it proved to be the start of a 'magical mystery tour'. Former members and supporters, Darren, Wyn and John, were traced and came to our AGM in October 2022.

Other highlights included meeting the widow of local film producer Jimmy Wright OBE and visiting the East Grinstead museum where a section is dedicated to the work of pioneering plastic surgeon, Sir Archibald McIndoe, who was able to transform the lives of many severely injured wartime airmen like Jimmy.

There is still plenty of information to be 'mined' from the archives and relevant historical news will be included in future newsletters. Please let me have your comments about what has been covered so far - see contact details below.

After the successful trial of the new booklet format in 2018, the next trial was originally planned for 2020-2021 and funding was applied for. However, because of the pandemic restrictions, we were unable to accept this funding when it was confirmed, as the local public hubs, that were the bulk of our distribution list, closed during the pandemic. The trial finally got underway in our anniversary year of 2022-23.

In the interim period the pandemic had changed the way that the newsletters were being read by the visitors to the public properties that they were distributed to. The post pandemic demand exceeded previous expectations. We have secured funding for the second year of printing the new format issues of the newsletters, from April 2023 for one year.

The future of the project will be dependent on new sponsorship as costs remain difficult to assess due to constantly evolving demand for copies.

Membership subscription packages are available to any individual or organisation interested in supporting SCAN and the newsletter project – please use the contact options below for information about making donations.

Please send your news for inclusion in any newsletters, to be reported at the quarterly meetings or if you require further information about SCAN should send their details in an email to [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on SCAN's web page [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/)



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