

**S**pelthorne

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**N**ow



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1992 – 2023



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**2023 – 2024 – October 2023**

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## Community Train Cafe Carriage Arrives At School

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c4nlm5dz7dmo>

A train carriage that will become a community cafe at a school for pupils with special educational needs has arrived on site. The cafe will be at Five Acre Wood school at its campus in Loose near Maidstone, Kent.

Pupils will staff the cafe, which will be called the FAWrient Express. Head teacher Tim Williams said the train cafe would be a "hospitality training academy". "The idea is that it's going to give our pupils industry-ready tools, skills and know-how to get into the world of work," he added.

Sarah, whose son Joel attends the school, said the cafe train would be a door to other opportunities. "I think it's absolutely amazing," she said, adding that Joel would be able to use skills in the workplace that he developed at the cafe. "There aren't any other schools where you've got a cafe in a train on site," Sarah added.

Stanely, 10, a pupil, said he was thrilled when he saw the train arrive. "Me and my grandad have been loving trains for years," he said. "I can't believe that it's finally here." The school, which has 807 pupils, caters for those with profound, severe and complex learning difficulties and autism.

Giant cranes were used to lower the carriage into place. Natalie Knight from Ainscough Crane Hire had the task of getting the carriage to the school through narrow roads, which she described as "a bit of a logistical nightmare". "We feel we're putting back into the community," she said. "We're really, really pleased to be part of this excellent project."



## Council Took Too Long To Adapt Home

<https://www.getsurrey.co.uk/news/surrey-news/surrey-dad-waited-long-council-27497982>

A dad who waited so long for a council to adapt his home for his son with cerebral palsy, got so fed up with Waverley Borough Council and the delays, that after 18 months of waiting he made changes to the home to make it comfortable for his son's needs.

The council has now been fined nearly £13,000, with more than £11,000 of that to reimburse him for the cost of the works to the 1950s semi-detached home. A report released by the housing watchdog revealed he first approached the council, his landlord, in 2020.

The pandemic made the task difficult for the council but even after the world reopened it still took the borough five months to confirm specialist contractors should be brought in - and a further six months to get quotes. Additional delays came when it was

discovered the work would be over budget and therefore the council needed to assess alternative options. The situation was made worse as the council didn't assess the house for two months - and then another two months lapsed to place an order for the adaptations. The hold-up, now more than 18 months, resulted in the resident telling the council he would do the job himself.

The housing watchdog report said “the adaptations that are the subject of this dispute are important to the dignity and quality of life of the resident’s son and family” and that “as such, this matter has been a particular source of concern and importance for the resident”.

### **How the council will learn and improve in future**

"As part of this review, we are conducting interviews with residents to gather feedback on our policy and we will be reporting our final recommendations to Waverley’s Landlord Services Board in September 2023. As a result of this review, we will be taking the following actions: "We will be putting in place a clear and robust communications plan to ensure that our tenants are kept regularly updated on the progress of their application for aids and adaptations. We will make sure that all relevant staff have a thorough knowledge and understanding of our Aids and Adaptations policy and procedure.

"We will create a user-friendly tracker for monitoring live cases. We will keep our resource needs under continuous review so that we can deliver a high standard of service. We firmly believe that these actions will help to drive service improvements which will benefit our residents and we would like to thank the Housing Ombudsman for highlighting this matter to us."



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

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 8 October 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 11 October 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 8 October 2023 2-3pm

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.



### **Para-Cyclist Champion Given Wristwatch As Prize**

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/08/17/ricardo-ten-argiles-cyclist-watch-prize-19351278/>

A cyclist who had both arms amputated at the elbows has been praised for his response after he won a pair of wristwatches at the UCI World Championships in Glasgow.

Images of Ricardo Ten Argilés receiving the timepieces for his victories in the C1 scratch and omnium events went viral this week, with some describing it as the worst prize possible. But the 48-year-old Spaniard refused to be cynical about the way his triumph was recognised. In reply to one of many tweets ridiculing the people who gave him the prize, he posted on social media: 'Thank you @TISSOT for believing in this super world of inclusion.'

Ricardo attached a video of himself wearing the watch from the Swiss brand on his left arm and a gold medal around his neck. The person filming asks: 'Ricardo, what time is it?' Holding his watch up to the camera, he responds: 'The world champion time!'

In another tweet, he wrote that he appreciated the fact Tissot gave the same watches to cyclists and para-cyclists.

The Valencia-born athlete, who has also won three Paralympic gold medals as a swimmer, took home a gold medal in the road time trial too.

Both of Ricardo's arms and his left leg were amputated after he touched high-voltage power lines when he was eight years old. He began swimming at the age of 18 and won seven Paralympic medals between Atlanta 1996 and London 2012, but decided to make the switch to cycling at the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro.

He told Reuters: 'I changed to cycling because it was a goal again that kept my motivation very high because I keep progressing every season. 'Not like in swimming where every year I was stuck and struggling to keep my best marks. 'The truth is, the style of training is very similar. You need to use different muscles but it didn't take much effort to swap from swimming pool to the bike.'

The event was held as part of the inaugural UCI Cycling World

Championships, which brought together many disciplines for both cyclists and para-cyclists.



## **Man With Polio Born in Mumbai Now Flourishing In UK**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/polio-virus-disease-india-childhood-b2392534.html>

Jignesh (Jig) Vaidya, 52, who was born in Mumbai, India, but now lives in Leicester, contracted polio aged two as he was not “vaccinated at the right time” because his family could not afford it. This resulted in him being paralysed from the waist down, and he was hospitalised for at least six months at the age of four, with his legs in plaster to keep them straight. His family could not afford a wheelchair or further treatment, and his access to education was limited due to his disability, he remained at home for several years, with his mother Nirmala, now 83, “doing everything for him” – washing, feeding, changing and carrying him.

Defying his difficult beginnings, Jignesh has spent his life moving across the world, becoming a professional wheelchair basketball player and enjoying a successful career, currently working as a project assistant at Maximus UK and broadcast assistant at the BBC.

He has not forgotten where his life began, however, and Jignesh said his mother believed in Indian medication and thought the blood flow may help to cure his polio – a serious infection caused by a virus – but Jignesh described it as “hell”. She (my mother) dug a hole outside our house in the sun and put my whole body in it for six hours every day, neck down, in 30-degree heat. “She put really heavy bangles on both my legs and asked me to sit on the wall for three, four hours a day, dangling them, as she thought, ‘Jignesh will walk one day’.”

He moved to Dubai for two years when he was 16 as his [late] father was working there, but his family could not afford to send him to school and he had given up his wheelchair to help another child with polio.

After his father earned enough money from those two years in Dubai, he and his family moved to the UK in 1988, when he was 18, and this is when everything changed. He received a new wheelchair in March 1989, aged 19, and started full-time education in September 1990, aged 20, where he learned English, maths, and how to use computers – and given he had impressive upper body strength and speed, he started playing sports as well, including wheelchair hockey and basketball. I was treated like everyone else,” he said. “I just thought, ‘Wow, I’m a part of society, I’m not being treated like a dog, like I was in Mumbai’, and if an opportunity comes in, I will take it, as there’s no going back. “When I started playing sports, I knew there and then that this is it,

this is my life, this is my path.”

Jignesh has since gone on to compete as a professional wheelchair basketball player internationally in places such as France, play for teams including MK Aces Wheelchair Basketball Club and Leicester Cobras, coach at the Coventry Crusaders club, skydive, and father Jesse with his partner Julie, 40, a teacher – confounding doctors.

Jignesh said: “You should never give up in this life, and don’t be afraid to open up and ask for help. “Do what you’re best at and, if you work at something every day, whatever your goal is in life, you will get there. “It may take some time, maybe even years – it took me until the age of 20 to learn how to write my name in English – but I didn’t give up and look at me now.”

“Sometimes, when I’m driving, I think, ‘This could be a movie; I’m going to wake up and be back in Mumbai’, so every day now, I pray and say, ‘Thank you’.”



## **Blue Badge Applications Delay by ‘Work from Home’ Councils** <https://www.gbnews.com/lifestyle/car-news-disabled-drivers-blue-badges-council-work-from-home>

Residents in East Sussex, Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole, Sheffield and Tower Hamlets council areas have reported waiting for up to three months for parking permits.

Many local authorities have decided to retain pandemic-era working arrangements. The arrangements have enabled 95 per cent of councils to favour powers to bring back virtual and hybrid meetings, the Local Government Association has said.

East Sussex resident Laurie Kuhrt, 81, applied for his blue badge in early May. Kuhrt said: “My wife is increasingly incapacitated with Alzheimer’s disease... She’s not able to walk unaided and the application went on May 12 and on July 31 I got the first response from them.” The pensioner was told one of the documents he supplied was incorrect and others needed to be sent via post as opposed to email following a two month delay.

East Sussex County Council denied that remote working was causing delays for blue badges. An East Sussex County Council spokesman said: “In line with the rest of the country, East Sussex has seen a large increase in the number of blue badge applications in recent years... There is currently a 12-week time frame for completed applications due to the high volume being received, coupled with delays caused when supporting documents required are not initially supplied.”

However, Sheffield City Council warned “staffing issues” were behind 12 week delays. The Steel City took 28 days on average to

process applications over the last three months. But Tower Hamlets Council blamed a “large number of applications being submitted” on the delays.

Andy Martin, an independent member of Liberal Democrat-led Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole (BCP) Council, stressed the Dorset authority was working to reduce wait times to eight weeks.

Caroline Abrahams, charity director at Age UK, said: “For some older people, having a blue badge makes all the difference between being able to get out and live a full life, and being stuck at home... That’s why it is so disappointing to hear of such long waits to get a blue badge, especially as older people do not usually have time on their side. “We know that local authorities are under huge pressure and that the resources given to them by the Government are no match for soaring demands for many of their services, but we hope they will do everything they can to speed up their application processes. “As things are, we worry that by the time some older people receive their blue badge they will have lost the confidence and capability to make best use of it.”



## Shaun The Sheep Models Are Being Smashed

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/08/20/shaun-the-sheep-models-raising-money-for-hospices-are-being-smashed-weekly-19365857/>



45 decorated fibreglass Shaun the Sheep sculptures were placed around Newcastle last month – and they’ll go on sale in October to raise money for St Oswald’s Hospice. But the charity says the amount of damage, with one sculpture ‘seriously damaged’ each week since they were put on display, is having a huge

‘emotional impact’ on their volunteers.

One was wrenched from its plinth less than a week after being unveiled – and it’s now been targeted again, having been kicked and smashed, the BBC reports. Six statues have been seriously damaged, while a number of others have received minor scratches which could have been accidental.

Nikki McGuire, from the hospice, said the attacks were becoming ‘more severe’ with a sheep ‘seriously damaged’ each week. ‘Every time somebody damages one of these sculptures, it takes resources away from a local hospice,’ she said. ‘It’s just such a shame, that level of disrespect for something that’s just meant to be a nice, free, accessible fun thing to do over the summer.’ She added that those who are doing the damage ‘may need to use our services themselves one day’.

But the group is not based locally so the app allowing people to track and ‘collect’ the sheep has to be regularly updated when

sheep are out of action. Nikki added: 'It's just the amount of time wasted when everybody should be working on other things for the hospice. 'And also the emotional impact – it's just really, really upsetting, disheartening.'

Some of the sheep attacks have been captured on CCTV – and some of the damage is 'so severe it could only have been done by adults or larger young people, forcibly'. She said: 'They're cracked right the way through the fibreglass, right through the bodies, through the ears and, in some instances, they've been forced off their plinth which has damaged their feet as well.'

Charity sculpture trails are fairly common, with a number in place across the country. This year's trails include the Herd of Hope elephant charity appeal in Old Spitalfields Market, beloved children's character Elmers Art Parade at Petworth House and Park in West Sussex, and the HeART Trail supporting St Barnabas Hospice in Lincolnshire.



## **Advertising Boards In The Street Are A Huge Hazard**

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/north-london-news/im-blind-advertising-boards-street-27578168?>

Red Szell, the first blind person to scale the 449ft sea stack the Old Man of Hoy in Orkney, has called on Camden Council to clamp down on A-boards. The Hampstead resident said they can be a hazard for visually impaired people and others with disabilities as well as people with prams and pushchairs. They come in varying heights and weights and advertise everything from coffee to spectacles, and even legal services, in Hampstead.

Mr Szell uses a white stick and said it is hard to navigate round the boards and he often hurts his hand on them and has even taken a tumble over one. Some of the A-boards have metal clasps or chains to hold them open. "You catch your hand on them and it takes a week to heal," he said. "I never wear shorts walking around Hampstead for the same reason."

The Local Democracy Reporting Service joined him in Hampstead town centre to find out about the problem and counted 31 A-boards on Hampstead High Street alone. The area is popular with tourists and there are several pavement cafes offering al fresco drinks and meals. Mr Szell said: "I do not go out on Fridays, because it is busy and people are not aware of anyone around them." As he navigated round A-boards, he explained how they can cause a hazard. "It's a problem that is getting worse. It's a rare visit to my local shops where I do not end up incurring some kind of flesh wound to my hands, arms, knees or shins.

He carried an A-board into another business to explain why it caused him difficulties. The business owner has moved it and said



he wanted to ensure that people can get round but pointed out companies need to promote themselves, especially after the pandemic.

Mr Szell questioned why businesses needed A-boards as well as other signs, such as overhead pub signs or shop windows and names. He pointed out a tall advertising board for The Horseshoe pub and said the A-board is like a “huge, massive barrier, three quarters of the size of my arm, with this metal hook sticking out.”

He visited the pub where staff moved the board and asked what would be more helpful. The pub has changed where it puts the board since he visited. Josh Drake, operations coordinator for The Horseshoe's owner Urban Pubs and Bars said: “We always encourage our teams to be thoughtful in their placement of their A-boards, and to allow people to pass unobstructed. If the placement of our A-board has caused any problems for Mr Szell, then we would like to apologise.”

Mr Szell, who is an author and hosts podcast My Life in Books with Red Szell, took his campaign to Camden Council recently. He urged Camden to make the borough easier to get around for “thousands of visually impaired people using its pavements.”

He told councillors “I am a keen rock climber, so I’m used to a bit of jeopardy, but as a blind person I can honestly say I feel more intimidated and at greater risk of injury on my local pavements than I’ve felt on any rockface.”

The RNIB’s Official Pavement Code urges businesses: “Please don’t leave A-boards in the middle of the pavement. They cause obstructions to people with sight loss.”



## **I've Been Rejected From Cabs, Pubs And Hotels - All Because Of My Companion**

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/08/22/ive-been-rejected-from-cabs-pubs-and-hotels-all-because-of-my-companion-19315219/> I had come out of a dentist appointment and was waiting for a taxi I had booked to take me and my guide dog Marty home.

*All of a sudden, I got a call from the driver. After approaching us, he decided he didn’t want to collect me and Marty, a black Labrador cross Golden Retriever. Despite explaining that I am blind, and my dog is not a pet dog but a guide dog, he abruptly ended the call and drove off, leaving me stranded. I was crushed. I felt humiliated and dejected.*

*Unable to get home another way, I called the taxi company back and asked them to send another car, hoping the same thing wouldn’t happen again.*

*I have relied on an assistance dog from the charity Guide Dogs for*

*over 20 years. In these two decades, I have seen so much of the world and been able to live the life I want – all because of these intelligent animals. However, in this time I have also been refused access to pubs, restaurants, taxis, and shops more times than I can count – again, all down to my guide dogs.*

*The Government recently launched its consultation on its Disability Action Plan, which sets out the proposed actions the Government intends to take to improve the lives of disabled people, including reducing access refusals. I will be feeding into this consultation and am hopeful that things will change under these new plans, otherwise I will have to seriously reconsider whether a guide dog is right for me.*

*That, of course, isn't an easy decision to make. Not having a guide dog will dramatically change my life. It'll be another challenge to overcome on my sight loss journey, which hasn't always been an easy one. I had limited vision from birth due to cataracts and then I lost all my sight when I was 16. Five years later, almost to the date, I was partnered with my first guide dog, Liza, a beautiful yellow Labrador. The moment I met her, I knew she was special. Until then, I had relied heavily on the assistance of friends and family for everyday tasks, which often left me feeling isolated and dependent. With Liza by my side, I could proudly step out into the world alone.*

*However, I soon realised that living my life on my own terms wouldn't be so straightforward. The first time I experienced an access refusal, I felt so embarrassed. It was soul-destroying and frustrating to encounter barriers when all I wanted to do was go about my daily tasks that I had so looked forward to doing by myself.*

Guide dogs have been a part of British society for over 90 years, and it's the law. In England, Scotland and Wales, the Equality Act means guide dog and other assistance dog owners have the right to enter most services, premises, and vehicles with their guide dog. Yet, research from Guide Dogs shows that 81% of guide dog owners have experienced an access refusal.

*Guide Dogs has long called for better staff training and for the government to strengthen the law to help end access refusals. All I desire is to live life on my own terms, receiving equal treatment and opportunities like anyone else. Hopefully, if enough people take action, I won't have to give up my guide dog and my freedom.*

For more information, visit [www.guidedogs.org.uk/opendoors](http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/opendoors)





## Current Scams

<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

### Scam Emails

Scammers are becoming smarter at sending us emails that claim to come from a real company. A well known retail name, or a company whose name is new to us.

In essence all emails out of the blue to us, to offer great bargains, and should be treated as suspicious. Something we didn't ask for; a surprise to us. It's a real pain of course to do detective work on received emails, but if we want to be sure and safe and not have our banking details nicked .....

A scam email will tempt us to click on a link and that will lead us to a fake web site. Then we'll be asked for our banking details .

A scam pointer. Emails that do not address us by our name are suspect. That doesn't mean that if they do know our name that the approach is genuine though. Words in an email that say this is official is also a likely pointer to a scam.

If the claimed name company is well known to all of us then we simply go direct to their website and look. NOT via a link in an email. If we hover our cursor over the sender's name we can see the email address behind it too.

There's a domain info checker called [who.is](#) and that tells us when a web site was created. If it was last Tuesday then a pointer again to something likely dodgy. Also, if we are told that we must urgently take some action then that is a sure scam hint.

Buying slow is better than quick and major name companies will be giving warnings about false claims to be them and what to look out for.

For buyers in the age range of say 18-35 the vast majority of approaches will be via mobile phones. But the same rules of detective work still applies. Even more so.

Let's just remember that anything out of the blue could be out of the RED. Something that has us thinking hang on a minute. Our gut feel is an important warning facility that we should exploit and certainly not ignore.



### 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)

## Staines Shopmobility

making staines accessible



**Two Rivers (West Car park),  
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.*

**The service will be closed on Tuesday 3rd October and Tuesday 10th October.**

[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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## **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)



## **North Surrey Sports Association for Disabled People (NSSADP)**

has been established by local volunteers to facilitate the provision of sports for disabled people within North Surrey and adjacent areas. The association will initially focus on Boccia, with coaching for disabled people, training for coaches and arranging some competition.

It is intended that the association will extend this principle to other sports, both paralympic or mainstream, facilitating the creation of other clubs aimed at providing sport for disabled people.

Membership is open to both individuals and organisations interested in furthering the association's work. For more information please contact [nssadp@gmail.com](mailto:nssadp@gmail.com)



## **Man Raising Money To Continue Playing A Sport That Has Changed His Life**

<https://www.yorkshirepost.co.uk/news/people/4264713>

When he was a child, Kai Gill, 28, from Hull, struggled with his balance so often it prompted his parents to take him to the hospital where they originally diagnosed him with a mild form of cerebral palsy.

Between the ages of 12 and 13, he underwent a blood test, muscle and nerve reaction test that revealed that he had a muscle-related condition. After undergoing a muscle biopsy, he was diagnosed with Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy Type 2D, a genetic condition causing weakness and wasting of the muscles in the arms and legs.

He struggled with daily tasks of walking and lifting and has had to use lung function machines to clear his lungs from any infections, as a cold or illness could kill him.

“From a young age to just before I was diagnosed properly I’d fall over a lot, my legs would collapse from under me and it would take

a long time for me to get back up compared to how quick other children would,” Mr Gill told The Yorkshire Post.

“Currently, at 28, I can no longer walk, no longer lift or move my arms, need help from others for everything plus need to use two lung function machines to keep my lungs clear from any colds or infections. “I don’t let it stop me from living my life. Without [my parents, brother and sister] I’d be so lost I’m forever grateful for their help and raising me to the man I am today.”

Mr Gill has played for Hull and East Yorkshire Powerchair Football Club for 10 years regionally and eight years nationally, but his interest in sport started from a young age. He has been using his current Strikeforce wheelchair since 2017, but it is no longer fit for purpose and has been causing him pain and a lack of support.

He set up a Just Giving fundraising page to raise money for a new Strikeforce wheelchair that costs between £10,000 to £11,000. Currently he has raised £6,391.

“I used to do karate until I found it too difficult and I kept my muscles active by playing table tennis. “I got into powerchair football just shortly after the London 2012 Paralympic Games; my social worker at the time knew I wanted to find something that I could do.

“Whenever I play or train I don't think about my condition as I know I'm not being judged on my condition I'm only being judged on my skill if that makes sense. It enables me to create valuable memories.”

“Powerchair football isn’t a career for me but it’s much more than a hobby,” he said. “I've never let my condition stop me from achieving my dreams.” “Because of my age, I have discovered there is a lack of funding or grants for disabled adults for a hobby or sport,” Mr Gill said. “The reaction has been very overwhelming; I’m incredibly grateful for all the support that I’ve received since starting fundraising.”



### ***City Hall Votes Down ULEZ Blue Badge Exemption***

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/ulez-exemption-disabled-drivers-city-hall-b965726.html>

The London Assembly has voted down a motion calling on Sadiq Khan to introduce an exemption for Blue Badge holders driving through the Ultra-Low Emission Zone. Currently, owners of vehicles which do not meet minimum emissions standards are only temporarily exempt from the £12.50 daily charge until 2025 if their vehicle is tax classified as “disabled” or a “disabled passenger vehicle”. But thousands of disabled drivers are still liable to pay the charge if they drive an older vehicle that does not have the correct tax classification.

At a meeting of the London Assembly on Thursday, Conservative Assembly Member Nicholas Rogers proposed a motion that called on Sadiq Khan to exempt all Blue Badge holders from having to pay the charge for driving in the zone. Mr Rogers said: “This motion is simple; it’s about protecting some of London’s most vulnerable residents. Disabled Londoners are often more reliant on their vehicles to move about the city, and they frequently face up against a public transport network that is simply often inaccessible to them.

“While some Londoners on the highest levels of disability benefits are exempt from ULEZ, the rules are complicated and exclude the vast majority of disabled people in London. It would be fairer and simpler to exempt all Blue Badge holders from the ULEZ just as they are from the Congestion Charge.” He added that “we need to clean up London’s air, but we can’t do it on the backs of disabled people”.

The motion was voted down, however, with Labour and the Liberal Democrats voting against it while the Conservative and Green Party groups voted in favour. Labour’s Dr Onkar Sahota accused the Conservatives of tabling a “wrecking motion”, adding that “it wrecks the Mayor’s initiative to improve the air quality in London”.

Dr Sahota said: “Disabled people, more than able-[bodied] people, need good quality air and this motion is too course an instrument to give any targeted relief to them.”

Liberal Democrat AM Caroline Pidgeon, whose group also voted against the motion, said that “this motion does raise a serious issue” but that “actually, this is a really complex area and the motion does not address that”. She said: “Back in 2019 TfL did a study that showed disabled Londoners are less likely to have household access to a car than non-disabled Londoners.

Drivers of vehicles registered under the disabled tax class or disabled passenger tax class will not have to pay the ULEZ charge until October 2025. There’s a scrappage scheme – admittedly it could go further – but there is a scrappage scheme that some disabled people are eligible for. “I want to see disabled people excluded from paying the ULEZ by ensuring their vehicles are compliant and supporting them in that way, not by granting permanent exclusions to a large number of polluting vehicles.”

Even if the motion had passed, the London Assembly has no binding power of the Mayor of London and therefore could have only recommended he introduce an exemption.



## **People With Down Syndrome Can Be Superheroes’**

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/08/21/tommy-jessop-down-syndrome-bbc-documentary-hollywood-19372149/>

Tommy Jessop has delved into all sorts of fascinating stories in his career, from playing Terry Boyle in BBC's Line of Duty to breaking ground by becoming the first professional actor with Down syndrome to go on tour as Shakespearean anti-hero Hamlet.

The performer is now embarking on one of his most exciting projects yet, heading all the way to Hollywood to achieve his aspiration of playing a superhero on the big screen.

In his new BBC documentary Tommy Jessop Goes To Hollywood (*screened on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> August on BBC One and BBC iPlayer*), the 38-year-old and his brother, filmmaker Will Jessop, set the wheels in motion as they strive to make the actor's dream of making his movie Roger the Superhero a reality.

The brothers spoke to Metro.co.uk about their journey – which included meeting a stunt team, producers and Game of Thrones star Kit Harington – as well as their hopes for the beneficial influence that the programme could have for other people with Down syndrome.

When asked about his hopes for the impact of the documentary, Tommy answered: 'I think it might have a big impact on people living with Down syndrome, hoping one day they might be superheroes as well. 'Or if not superheroes, you can also be whoever you want to be in life.'

Will added that they're hoping that they'll 'inspire' people, stating: 'Obviously not everyone is going to be able to be in a superhero movie, but we do think it's important that people have dreams and aspirations and we hope that this film will inspire people to follow their own dreams.'

As for the impact that the film could have for people Down syndrome in wider society, Tommy referenced the activism that he does in his daily life, using the platform that he has as a well-known actor to give others a voice.

'I do speak up for people living with Down syndrome, to have a voice,' he shared. 'It's about time to get rid of any labels or typecasting.' In addition to his role in Line of Duty, Tommy has also starred in productions including the feature-length drama Coming Down The Mountain with Nicholas Hoult, Casualty and Doctors.

Tommy's extensive work on stage has included appearing in A Midsummer Night's Dream and A Christmas Carol, while he is the founder of Blue Apple Theatre, a company that provides performing opportunities for people with learning disabilities.

He and his brother Will have worked together on documentaries before, including a film called Tommy's Story, while the actor appeared in the BBC's Panorama investigation Will the NHS Care for Me? last year. The multi-talented actor has also published a



memoir titled ***A Life Worth Living: Acting, Activism and Everything Else***, which came out this summer.



## 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 Rights UK (DRUK) 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** is now being distributed as enclosures with each monthly SCAN Newsletter. Please contact me if you wish to receive these enclosures by sending a text message (with your name and postal address) to 07859 639025.*

*If your preference is for an electronic copy then please email me on [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or use the 'Contact SCAN' form on [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.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

Monday 6<sup>th</sup> November at 1pm

### Surrey Wide Meeting dates for 2023

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> November at 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.



## 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/)

At our AGM on **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023** we welcome the Worshipful Mayor of Spelthorne Councillor, Denise Saliagopoulos and we have a guest speaker who is a **SCAM Champion** from Trading Standards.

After a short break for a buffet lunch, there will be an abridged meeting of **Spelthorne's Physical, Sensory and Cognitive Disability** forum.

These meetings will be held in the Goddard Room in the council offices, Knowle Green starting at 12 noon for those who are able to attend in person.

If anyone wishes to use ZOOM to attend please let me know as soon as possible. Further details for this forum are available on SCAN's web site at [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spscd-forum/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spscd-forum/)



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This means you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying.

If you haven't signed up to support us yet, it's easy and completely FREE.

These donations really help us, so it would be great if you could take a moment to get started!

You can find our easyfundraising page here:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/>?



## Donations for SCAN's Newsletters

This project will require new sponsorship from April 2024 as demand for paper booklets continues to evolve after the pandemic. It had been intended to increase distribution in 2020 and funding was applied for and approved, but the pandemic meant we couldn't use the award and the demographic also changed.

Sponsorship and membership subscription packages are available to any individuals, councillors or organisations interested in supporting SCAN's newsletter project – please use the contact options below for information about making donations.

If you have news that you would like included in the newsletter or on our web site, or to be reported at the quarterly meetings, please send an email to [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on SCAN's web page where you will also find more details about SCAN's work [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/)



## From A Former Contributor to SCAN's Newsletters

Richard sustained a severe brain injury in a motorcycle accident in 1983 and he felt that although people tried to relate to his situation, they often couldn't understand.

He put his thoughts and experiences together as a collection of poems and articles about his life after his injury to help others in a similar situation to realise that they're not alone, and to try to give 'able-bodied' people a small insight into the world of disability.

Richard died in 2014, and his son shared his father's book with

Headway who provided a link to the book from their website  
<https://www.headway.org.uk/>.

Richard's personality and wit shines through the book.

Some of the poems and the, often very poignant, drawings that went with them will be difficult to publish as the local artist who drew them for Richard's book. Electronic versions of Richard's book can be viewed on the Headway website

## **BITTERNESS**

*Bitterness is such a destructive force,  
a disease floating in on the tide.  
Its ebb brings a blessed relief,  
when it flows there's nowhere to hide.*

*Those vulnerable times when alone,  
the devil whispers in your ear.  
Urging you to indulge that weakness,  
to screw you full of fear.*

*It gnaws at your very soul,  
a belligerent growth in the mind.  
Humiliation and helplessness,  
frustration and anger, grind.*

*Happiness comes on those good days  
when the monster has gone to sleep.  
You relish each joyous moment,  
coping without gritted teeth.*

*I'm learning to sing gentle lullabies,  
to pacify that emotional knife.  
Keep it quietly under control,  
whilst I get on with my life.*



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