

Claygate Courier

ISSUE 57 / OCTOBER 2025

SEARCH IS ON FOR BIDDERS TO RUN CENTRE

Many more volunteers will be needed to help run Claygate Centre in Elm Road once its operation has been handed over to a new management community group after Elmbridge Borough Council ceases direct management next year.

Elmbridge will be choosing a new organisation to run the Centre in mid-December following a rapid search for a management group. So far, there are three potential bidders to take on a lease of the Centre, one of which involves a group of Claygate residents.

The need to find new management follows extensive consultation work undertaken on behalf of Elmbridge Borough Council this year. One key recommendation was for a "Connected Communities" strategy under which Elmbridge would cease directly managing all of its community centres and seek community groups to take them over and run them for the benefit of the

Continued on Page 6



An air ambulance was called to an emergency in Claygate and caused great excitement by landing on the Recreation Ground. See Page 16

IN THIS ISSUE - AND DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tenuto Opera
October 17-19, Page 29

Village Litter Pick
October 18, Page 15

Jim Cregan / Hoaxwind
October 24, 25, Page 30

Natasha Kaplinsky
November 13, Page 31

String Quartet concert
November 15, Page 30

Village Association AGM
November 19, Page 10



Postbox topper takes
refuge in the pub
Page 19

Pantomime
November 20-22, Page 31

Choral Society concert
November 22, Page 29

Ripieno Choir concert
November 23, Page 29

Christmas Lights
November 29, Page 10

Grace Dear Trust event
December 13, Pages 12-13

Street Market in The Parade
December 14, Page 18

Green Belt/Grey Belt
Page 3

Local government shake-up
Pages 4-5

Tributes to Mark Sugden
Page 7

*The Courier is published by
Claygate Parish Council and is
available online at: www.claygateparishcouncil.gov.uk*

*Please also visit our page on
[Facebook](#) for latest news*

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Donna Holt, who chairs Claygate Parish Council, highlights the issues that will affect everyone in the village



I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for your ongoing support of the Claygate Parish Council. It is truly a privilege to serve this wonderful village and your enthusiasm and assistance in our various initiatives inspire us every day. I am also pleased to welcome two Parish Councillors: John Burns, an expert in highways and transportation, and Stephen Ellis, who brings experience in planning. Both were co-opted in August from a field of six applicants and will serve until May 2027, when local elections take place.

Their contributions will strengthen our Environment, Highways and Transport and Planning Committees. Both committees have seen recent successes, including the defeat of the Raleigh Drive planning application and providing advice to Surrey County Council regarding options for transport at Hook Park. More details will be shared by the Committee Chairs in their articles.

I have been engaged in the Local Government Review by drafting the Parish Council's response to the consultation. Additionally, as chair of the only Parish Council in Elmbridge, I have had the honour of representing our Parish on the pilot East Elmbridge Neighbourhood Area Committee planned by Surrey County Council. These area committees are expected to be the link between new Unitary Councils and the local communities they serve. Councillor Michael Collon provides further insights in his article on Pages 4-5.

For those concerned about the Community Centre, particularly in light of the recent planning approval for housing at the Winning Horse site, I encourage you to read the update from John Bamford of the Friends of the Claygate Centre (Page 1). The Parish Council is committed to supporting any community members interested in bidding for the management of the Centre.

During a recent update with Elmbridge Borough Council, we learned about the consultation regarding Torrington Lodge car park. Architects are exploring four development scenarios: a gym and residential; shops and residential; health centre and residential; housing only. We look forward to collaborating with Elmbridge on this consultation. The Claygate Vision and Action Plan consultation statement, conducted this year, has faced delays but is expected to be presented to the Elmbridge Cabinet and published by the end of the year.

Parents of children at Claygate Primary School may be aware that Hinchley Wood School's admissions policy

was reviewed earlier this year. I met Ben Bartlett, former head of the school, and chair of the school's Trust, to advocate for Claygate's interests, as the policy had been disadvantageous to our applicants. Thanks to the efforts of the public, Claygate Primary School, the Parish Council, Elmbridge Councillors, and local MP Monica Harding, we successfully lobbied for the existing admissions policy to remain unchanged.

I also spent a morning with residents and carers from Wingham Court, walking through the village to understand better the transport and accessibility challenges

they encounter. This experience highlighted several areas for improvement. I compiled my findings and shared them with Surrey County Councillor Mark Sugden for further action. Tragically, Mark passed away before he could address these issues. I recently connected with our new Surrey representative, Councillor Andy Burton, and we had a productive discussion on advancing some of these initiatives.

A discussion surrounding a proposed 20mph speed limit continues. The Parish Council debated this topic in August and September and proposes a comprehensive consultation by Surrey County Council. We believe previous surveys have not adequately gauged community support for the 20mph limit. While we acknowledge that a lower speed limit can enhance safety, we also recognise that other measures can also contribute to this goal. In the meantime, some residents are campaigning for 20mph restrictions on part of Hare Lane. We share concerns regarding safety on Hare Lane, where average speeds are 23-24 mph. However, many issues stem from hazardous junctions and the width of the road rather than excessive speeding.

We have already collaborated with Surrey to widen pathways for pedestrians on Hare Lane and now the Parish Council is exploring ways to improve sight lines at the intersection of Loseberry Road and Hare Lane, where a recent accident occurred. Additionally, we have commissioned a report from the Transport and Parking Group to provide recommendations. We have also asked the County Council about Claygate's position in the Local Street Improvement Plan consultation to ensure a thorough assessment.

And it's important to highlight some of our smaller yet very meaningful projects – such as the WI's displaced postbox tower, for which a new home is being created. Nick, landlord of the Hare and Hounds, has generously agreed to sponsor this idea, and we hope for a new "monument" on The Green soon. Other initiatives include the a bench in The Parade and our litter picks. We also participate in events such as "Get Involved Day", the Flower Show, and helping with marshalling at the Christmas Lights switch-on. And so we thank you for your support and engagement in making Claygate a vibrant and welcoming community.

Lastly, I would like to thank Peter Whitehead for all his hard work in producing this edition of the Courier.

WHEN IS GREEN BELT NOT GREEN?



The creation of a new land category, called Grey Belt, is presenting councillors on planning committees with a complex maze of new concepts to navigate. Grey Belt land is defined as “land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land” that does “not strongly contribute” to any of a set of specific purposes.

The revised National Planning Policy Framework, which brings into force the concept of Grey Belt, lists five purposes of the Green Belt, which protects Claygate from becoming consumed by urban sprawl. They are: to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging recycling of derelict and other urban land.

But Green Belt land that only safeguards the countryside from encroachment or could be used to encourage the recycling of derelict land is now classed as Grey Belt and could be built on. Other categories of specially protected land, plus areas subject to flooding or coastal changes, are also safeguarded, while not being designated as Grey Belt.

This begs the question as to what “not strongly contributing” to Green Belt purposes means. For this, there is the Green Belt Guidance issued by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This advises planning authorities that areas performing strongly in preventing the sprawl of large built up areas (such as Greater London) are “likely to be free of existing development, and lack physical feature(s) in reasonable proximity that could restrict and contain development”. They are also likely to be adjacent to or near a large built-up area; and, if developed, would create an incongruous pattern of development, such as an extended “finger” of development into the Green Belt.

Amid all this complexity, the Parish Council remains “opposed to any reduction in the designated Green Belt and to any proposed development that detracts from its amenity value”.

The concept of Grey Belt is clearly designed to justify the release of some areas of Green Belt for development. This is a prospect likely to be faced by most planning authorities outside London, dealing with massive

increases in their housing targets. Government policy on housing seems demand-driven, with little consideration given to the supply side, such as availability of land and skilled tradesmen to build houses.

- Unsurprisingly, the application to build 60 houses on Green Belt land north of Raleigh Drive, which had been rejected in 2023-4, reappeared for determination under the new National Planning Policy Framework. Elmbridge Borough Council’s full Planning Committee recently voted to refuse the new application, but decided to consider it again at a subsequent meeting. Planning officers have recommended that the application should be granted.

- The Planning Committee has continued its work of reviewing all planning applications for Claygate, most of which are from householders seeking home extensions. Several applications have been refused recently by Elmbridge on grounds of “bulk” or “mass” – in some cases where the Parish Council had no objection. This is an area of professional judgment by planning officers, whose views may sometimes differ from the Parish Council’s.

- Two applications have recently come before Elmbridge’s East Area Planning Sub-Committee. One, for development of part of the front garden of 31 Stevens Lane, to which the Parish Council had objected, was refused on the same grounds that an almost identical application for the same site had been refused by a planning inspector.



But Borough Councillors felt unable to refuse an application to convert the former Winning Horse pub (pictured left) into a pair of semi-detached houses with a detached house behind, although the Winning Horse building is listed as an Asset of Community Value. This is disappointing, especially for the Claygate Community Benefit Society, which had hoped to buy the pub and make it a community facility.

- The Committee is also keeping a close eye on proposals for a major residential development, known as “Hook Park”, on admittedly degraded Green Belt land just across the A3 in Hook in the Borough of Kingston. We have serious concerns about how traffic would access the site and about its density, involving eight-storey blocks next to the A3. At this stage, it seems as though even an outline planning application is several months away.

Anthony Sheppard, Chair of Planning Committee

HUGE SHAKE-UP IN SERVICE PROVISION

How local services will be provided to Claygate residents is changing in the biggest shake-up of local government in decades. Responding to Government policy, Surrey County Council proposes to replace itself with two unitary authorities – East Surrey and West Surrey – with the abolition of itself and the existing 11 district councils.

Its plan to divide Surrey into two would see Elmbridge Borough become part of a new authority covering the eastern half of the county, with Epsom and Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate and Banstead, and Tandridge.

Surrey's proposals involve retaining the existing county council electoral divisions in the new unitary authorities, which would give East Surrey 36 electoral divisions. Across Surrey, there are currently 81 county councillors and 453 district and borough councillors. Dividing the county into two would reduce this to 162 in total with, on average, 5,542 electors per councillor.

But these radical reforms are complex – and controversial. On these pages, Parish Councillor Michael Collon considers the implications for democracy, devolution and delivery of services.

When we talk about “the Government” we usually mean central government in Westminster – but a lot of governing is actually done locally. In some parts, particularly large metropolitan areas, there is one level of local government dealing with matters devolved from national government, such as social services, running schools, and managing highways.



But in much of the country there are two tiers of local government: county councils (in our case Surrey), responsible for matters such as education, fire, highways, transport, and social care, and below that district councils (in our case Elmbridge Borough Council) whose responsibilities include environmental health, housing and planning.

But this creates anomalies: Elmbridge is responsible for waste collection, but Surrey for waste disposal; Surrey for libraries but Elmbridge for leisure.

The Government wants to merge them and so is combining the functions of Surrey County Council and its 11 district councils and replacing them with two, or possibly even three, new councils.

The solution preferred by Surrey and Elmbridge is to have two – East Surrey and West Surrey unitary authorities. Some district councils would like to see three unitary authorities, with Elmbridge joining Spelthorne and Runnymede as North Surrey. The Government will decide – and by May 2027 Elmbridge will be history: Claygate will (most probably) be governed by the unitary authority of East Surrey, which will have all the responsibilities now divided between Surrey and Elmbridge.

BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES

The Government believes this reorganisation will be beneficial, as does Surrey County Council, which says it will save money and offer better value for tax payers, with

stable finances protecting vital services. Surrey also believes it will simplify services, delivering what residents need to a high quality, with fewer points of contact and reduced confusion about which council does what.

Well, maybe. Every local government reorganisation since the major one in 1972 was going to save money, but none has. The simplification of services certainly helps those who provide them, and sometimes those who need them, but “fewer points of contact” means dealing with people you don't know, who don't know you.

The Parish Council currently has excellent relations with the officers of Elmbridge: we know who does what, we know them and they know us, they are close to Claygate and understand our problems even if they can't always solve them. Will that continue with the new East Surrey?

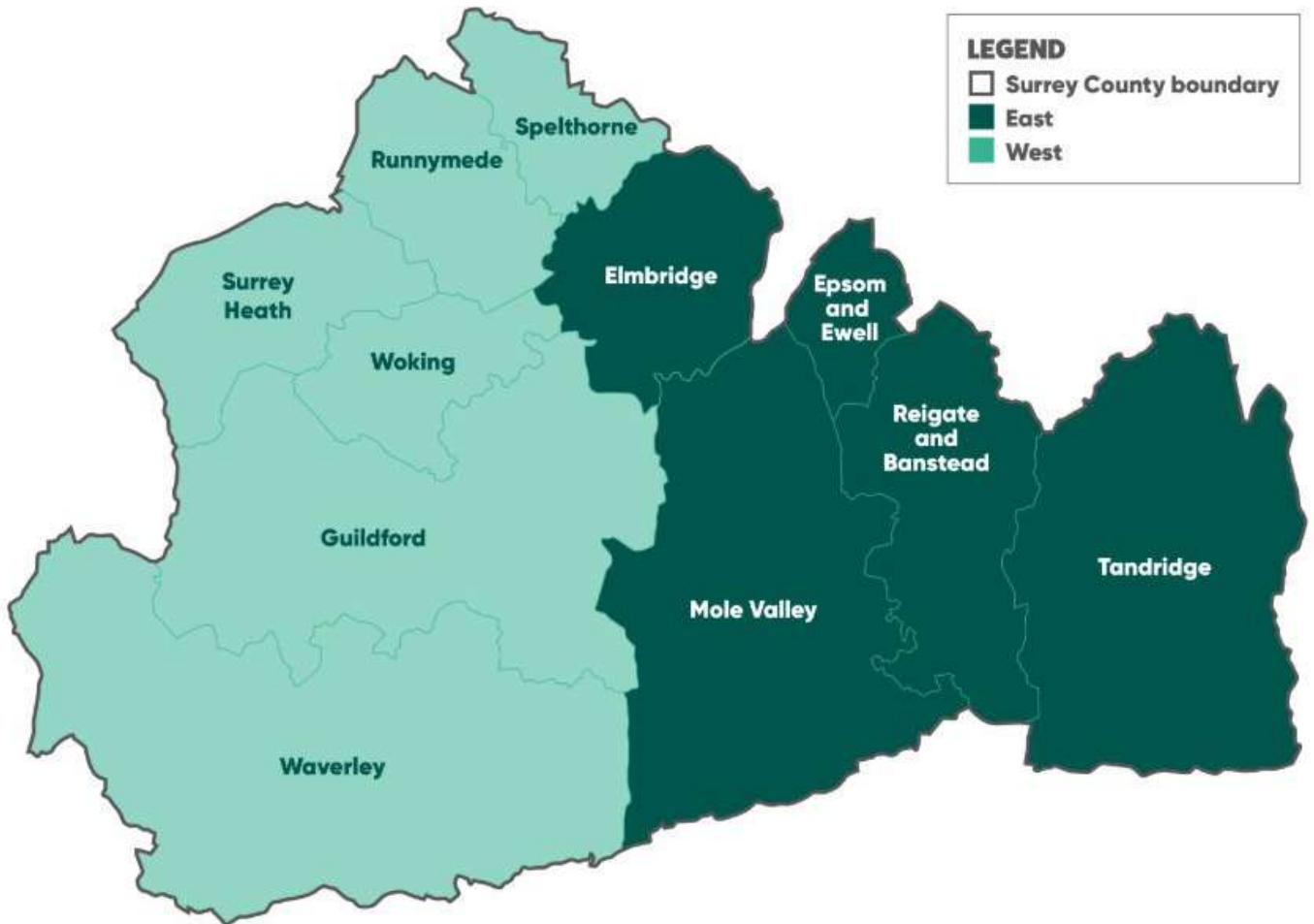
The Government believes in devolution – transferring more powers from central to local government. This may happen when the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill becomes law, but it is not happening through this reorganisation.

On the contrary, moving from 12 councils to two means fewer councillors with bigger wards and looser links to the communities they represent. In the past, larger constituencies have invariably led to lower turnout at local elections, more councillors from the larger parties and fewer from the small parties, or from residents' associations, or independents. This makes it more likely that the political complexion of the unitary authority will match that of central Government, making it easier for ministers to have their policies implemented at grass roots level. This is not devolution.

CLAYGATE PARISH COUNCIL

Parish councils do not govern, and are therefore not part of the reorganisation. But this does not mean that we will not change. We will be working with different people in a different structure, and this is bound to affect what we do and how we do it. What you can be sure of is that we will continue to work for the people of Claygate to achieve what is best for them.

Continued on Next Page



From Previous Page

The Surrey County Council website says that the reorganisation “will strengthen our local communities by connecting people through Neighbourhood Area Committees in towns and villages”. Nobody yet knows much about these committees.

Officers are now working on a pilot for East Elmbridge. They aim to form committees each covering about 50,000 people, so that Claygate (population 7,263) would be in the same “neighbourhood” as Cobham, Esher and further north. Each committee is likely to have 21 members, drawn from different backgrounds, and appointed by the unitary authority.

We do know from the Surrey website that “NACs are not constituted so they do not have direct decision-making powers. They will act as advisory bodies sharing local intelligence and insight with decision making organisations.” If they are not constituted they cannot have financial powers, so it is not clear who will provide even the basic infrastructure and running costs.

Of course your Parish Council can do all this already. But our members are not appointed: they are elected by you, they are financed by you, they have decision-making powers, and they know the community well. In Elmbridge, there is only one Parish Council – in Claygate – but in Surrey as a whole there are almost 90. It remains to be seen what a Neighbourhood Area Committee can add to the “devolution” story.



ANDY BURTON ELECTED TO SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

Andy Burton has been elected as Surrey County Councillor for Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott, succeeding Councillor Mark Sugden, who passed away in May after a long battle with cancer (see Tributes, Page 7). Turnout was low, at 34 per cent, but Claygate did local democracy proud with a higher turnout than both Hinchley Wood and Oxshott.

“That speaks wonders for the Claygate community,” said Andy, adding that Mark

had left a strong legacy of service to Claygate: “Mark is well-remembered for having been apolitical, the supporter of every Claygate resident’s interests and my approach will be the same.”

Andy has lived with his family in Esher for 20 years, just a few yards from The Swan; all his children attended local schools. He is a keen cyclist and singer and has joined Claygate Choral Society; he is a rugby fan and Harlequins season ticket holder.

Residents wishing to contact Andy about Surrey County Council matters can do so at andy.burton@surreycc.gov.uk.

COUNCIL GRANTS PAVE THE WAY FOR VILLAGE PROJECTS

The Parish Council continues to offer strong support to numerous projects in Claygate, including four grants under the Community Infrastructure Levy this year, two of which, totalling £16,564, went towards the Holy Trinity Church Way Maker project to reinvent the churchyard as a place of quiet reflection and enjoyment for the community, as well as providing an attractive pathway through to the Recreation Ground (see Page 21).

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge that can be imposed by Elmbridge Borough Council on specific new building developments, with part of the money being made available to the Parish Council to be spent on projects that could not otherwise be supported from the Parish Precept or other funds.

Other CIL projects have included £16,100 towards drainage for the playing field at Claygate Primary School, providing a much-needed opportunity for the school to enhance extracurricular activities and draw many new people into the school to utilise this facility. And the Parish Council granted £6,000 of CIL funding to the Claygate Youth and Community Hub for a safe break-out room for the young people attending.

A sum of £50,000, originally put aside to assist the Winning Horse pub project, should it have been successful



Holy Trinity Church's project was helped

in raising all other funds, remains in the CIL fund available for other projects now it is clear that the Community Ownership Fund had been suspended by the Government.

The Parish Precept is an annual levy raised on all council taxpayers and based, like council tax, on the value of their property. It is separate from the council tax, which goes to Surrey County Council and Elmbridge Borough Council, and separate from the levy raised by Surrey Police.

All the money collected for the Parish Precept is spent in Claygate, for Claygate residents. Through its grants, the Parish Council supported the Claygate Village Association with hire of the Village Hall for the Get Involved Day and a grant towards the CVA's forthcoming Christmas Lights event and its Christmas Tree on The Green (see Page 10).

The Council is able to continue supporting local causes thanks to the increase in the annual Parish Precept in line with inflation, which for eight years from 2016 through to 2024 remained unchanged so that its value was eroded. This made it difficult to provide many services and to support projects. The levy was therefore increased by 12 per cent for the 2024-25 year, and by 2.5 per cent, in line with inflation, in 2025-26, meaning a Band D equivalent property pays £16.25 for the year to the end of March 2026.

Any local group or organisation planning a project to benefit the community might be eligible for a Parish Council grant or Community Infrastructure Levy support.

Please visit the council's website claygateparishcouncil.gov.uk or contact the Parish Clerk at clerk@claygateparishcouncil.gov.uk to find out more.

SEARCH FOR BIDDERS

From Page 1

community under a lease arrangement with Elmbridge. The idea is that this would free up funds to assist a wider section of the community who need support, as well as potentially saving £1m. This policy has been approved by Elmbridge Borough Council.

There have been meetings to clarify the timescale for submitting a bid to take over a community centre lease, as well as to establish Elmbridge's requirements and expectations of a bidder.

There are three potential bidders for Claygate Centre and the Parish Council is keen to support bidders and anyone interested in providing services and activities at the Centre or hiring the venue. The final date for formal submission of a bid is November 14. The tight and challenging deadline is largely a consequence of the forthcoming transition of Surrey into unitary authorities (see Pages 4-5). Elmbridge expects to decide on the winning bidder for the lease in mid-December.

But whoever takes over will need more volunteers than ever. The successful bidder for the lease will inevitably seek to make greater use of the building for a wider section of the community and be dependent on volunteers to help make things happen. The Parish Council will provide updates and announcements on notice boards and social media. Help, thoughts and ideas from all Claygate residents are needed.

In the meantime Claygate Centre remains open for business for members of the public as well as Centre members. The tea bar provides tea, coffee, sandwiches, toasties and cakes at affordable prices. Activities for Centre members, such as chair-based exercises and yoga, and services such as hairdressing and podiatry, remain available. Lunch is still available daily for Centre members with entertainment on Thursday afternoon.

The recent visit of pet therapy animals also proved to be very popular. And the annual Christmas Fayre will take place at the Centre on Thursday November 20 from 10am to noon; everyone is welcome.

John Bamford, Trustee, Friends of Claygate Centre

'HE MADE OUR COMMUNITY A BETTER PLACE'

Tributes to Mark Sugden, a "passionate and determined campaigner for Claygate" and the village's representative on Surrey County Council, have come from many sources following his death in May after a period of illness.

Mark had served as a Claygate Parish Councillor for nine consecutive years and spent some of that time producing the Claygate Courier. He was first elected in 2013 and spent five years as Parish Council Chair, before being elected as Surrey County Councillor for Hinchley Wood, Claygate and Oxshott in 2021.

Mark served with distinction at county level on the Children, Families, Lifelong Learning and Culture Select Committee, as well as being Vice Chair of the Communities, Environment and Highways Select Committee. He has been praised for his tireless work for the community and will be missed by many.

Originally from West Yorkshire, Mark moved to Claygate in 2007 after his career had taken him abroad. He dedicated much of his time to public service and among his many activities was involved with Claygate Village Association, the Friends of Capelfield Surgery, the Hub and supporting many more causes and organisations. Donna Holt, Parish Council Chair, refers to Mark's death as "tragic" in her column on Page 2. Here's what others had to say:

CLAYGATE VILLAGE ASSOCIATION: "All of us at the CVA are saddened by the passing of Mark Sugden. Mark was a Trustee of the CVA and in his very being captured the essence of the purpose of our charity: to bring together the people of our village and promote happiness.

"His focus on working for the common good, reaching out to all sectors of our community without prejudice, with warmth and compassion and humour, was an inspiration to us all. We will always remember Mark and commit to doing all we can to live up to the standards and values he set. His legacy is immense."

CLAYGATE YOUTH AND COMMUNITY HUB: "Mark was the Hub's biggest champion right from the start. There would be no Hub without his guidance and advice. He championed, fought and supported us from day one. He was a force for good, striving to better this community at every turn, including through his illness.

"Some of our favourite memories of him include trying to teach him social media, a summer tea party for volunteers, the opening of the Hub kitchen and just his general happy nature. He will be deeply missed by us all."

CLAYGATE GARDENING SOCIETY: "Mark was a Gardening Society committee member for many years. His input and advice were always helpful, insightful and often amusing. He was a keen gardener, his roses frequently winning prizes in the village Flower Show, and an active and enthusiastic member of our Society."



HARE AND HOUNDS: "We have lost a great friend, customer, supporter, confidante, helper and the kindest man you could ever meet. In 15 years we never saw Mark Sugden stop thinking or talking about how he could help our community, the wider community, even the world. He was involved voluntarily in so many virtuous ventures and gave 110 per cent to them all."

LINDA WELLS, chair of Friends of Capelfield Surgery: "We were fortunate in having Mark in our community, a stalwart supporter of all local organisations who tirelessly worked for the benefit of Claygate in every way. He was a wonderful Chairman of Friends of Capelfield Surgery for all too short a time; a great listener who valued everyone equally and made our community a better place. He will be truly missed."

PAUL DEACH, Deputy Cabinet Member to the Leader of Surrey County Council: "Despite his valiant and prolonged battle with illness, Mark remained an unwavering presence in our council, a testament to his deep commitment to his electorate. Whether attending meetings in person or joining us online when his health made physical presence impossible, his dedication never wavered.

"For many of us at Surrey County Council, Mark was more than just a colleague; he was an inspiration. His tireless work on behalf of his constituents, even in the face of significant personal challenges, set a standard for us all."

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL: "Mark was a staunch defender of the local green belt, working to ensure its preservation for future generations. His passing leaves an irreplaceable gap and is a tremendous loss to all who knew him."



Resurfacing of Hare Lane involved all-night working – minimising disruption, but keeping some residents awake

CALL TO MAKE JUNCTIONS SAFER

Following a car and motorcycle accident at the junction of Hare Lane and Loseberry Road in August, the Environment, Highways and Transport Committee discussed the sight lines available to motorists and felt they are inadequate and dangerous. We therefore raised a FixMyStreet report with Surrey County Council, asking it to investigate and, if it agrees, to seek improvements.

And ways to improve safety at the “green triangle” junction of Stevens Lane, Red Lane and Woodstock Lane are being considered. The Committee is talking to Andy Burton, Claygate’s new Surrey County Councillor, to consider the possibilities. The committee extends a warm welcome to Andy who, only days after securing his election, attended its meeting in August. The members look forward to working with him.

Improvements to Highway Safety. We have expressed our support for Surrey’s proposals to paint double yellow lines around the junctions of Glenavon Close, Common Road, The Causeway and Hurstbourne and to extend the no-waiting times in The Avenue. Residents can find more about this at surreycc.gov.uk/roads-and-transport/parking/reviews/elmbridge/2024

Brash Pile on the Hare Lane Verge (pictured right). The committee has been pleased to support this initiative led by volunteer, Bill Raspin. Dead wood provides a valuable resource for fungi and wildlife, including stag beetles, solitary bees and other insects. It’s also a very secure nesting site for small birds and hedgehogs. Frogs and newts may also use it as an overwintering site.



Elmbridge Borough Council’s Citizens’ Climate Change Panel. Councillor Jenny French

was invited to join the Steering Group of this initiative. The Citizens’ Panel will meet for five sessions and has been asked to come up with recommendations to Elmbridge Council on the steps that can be taken locally to address climate change and protect the environment. The final meeting of the Panel is taking place on October 18. There is information about the sessions on the Elmbridge website.

The Blue Heart Initiative. The Committee has also been pleased to support Bill Raspin’s work in creating a number of Blue Heart sites in Claygate, two of which are maintained by our own highways contractor. The Blue Heart initiative aims to improve insect diversity and allow native plants to thrive on grass verges. These will not now be mown from March to September. (See Page 21)

UPDATES ON PREVIOUSLY REPORTED ISSUES

High kerb – south-west corner of The Parade. The Committee continues to press South Western Railway on the raised section of pavement near the station. The updates the Committee has received convince it that the matter is being taken seriously. However, residents should not expect to see any work taking place until at least the 2026-27 financial year, as SWR has no money available in this year’s budget.

Community Garden – BT Exchange, Hare Lane. Unfortunately, despite a number of approaches, BT is unwilling to entertain the idea of a community garden at its Hare Lane site.

New bench on The Parade. To date, Surrey County Council officers have not been able to

Continued on Next Page

HELP TACKLE ANTISOCIAL DRIVING

The Speedwatch scheme in Claygate aims to educate and inform drivers about antisocial driving and the impact and consequences of their actions. Sessions to monitor traffic speed through the village are carried out weekly, with details of speeding vehicles passed to Surrey Police on a dedicated computer system.

It is run by volunteers in Claygate and the group is always looking out for new recruits. The current pressing need is for volunteers in the Stevens Lane area, where there is a gap in coverage.

The Speedwatch scheme operates across the home counties and has achieved considerable positive results in changing behaviour of motorists, reducing risk to life from antisocial behaviour and improving the quality of life of the affected communities.

Volunteers select times when they want to undertake a "Watch", which involves monitoring vehicles at the



selected site for one hour. To become a speed watcher is easy: after online training by Surrey Constabulary, new members are ready to join the team. A roster is published three months in advance and can be altered to fit individual requirements. To join, contact Mark Zaremba-Tymieniecki on 01372 461104 or email mark.tymieniecki@btinternet.com with Speedwatch in the message heading. We are a friendly team.

To help with deciding, visit communityspeedwatch.org, where there is information about how members can contribute and where they can register and create a new account. Within a couple of days confirmation of acceptance will be sent and the training package can be started.

Once the training has been successfully completed, the co-ordinator arranges practical training on the radar device and to work out availability for monitoring sessions. Why not give it a go?

Mark Zaremba-Tymieniecki

TRANSPORT GROUP ASKS WHERE WARDENS HAVE GONE

The Working Group suggested that the 30 minutes of free parking in the two village car parks would benefit from wider publicity, as it is not immediately clear on the car park signs, nor among the wider community, that there is a free period. Shops and businesses, for example, could advertise the free half hour at their checkouts or in shop windows.

It was also noted that there is only limited parking enforcement in the village, with few patrols and little presence. The Working Group is seeking an opportunity to engage with Elmbridge Borough Council to understand the basis for parking enforcement patrols in Claygate and to provide feedback to Elmbridge on the impact of limited patrols.



- Peter Robinson, who is investigating Surrey County Council's roadworks programme, gave the Working Group a comprehensive update on his work, looking at how Surrey publicises its roadworks plans on its website, and how they link to the Project Horizon highway maintenance investment programme.

From Previous Page

approve siting a new bench on The Parade. The Committee continues to press for one, however.

Bubble Gum signs. As residents will have spotted, these were removed in May, thanks to the Committee's efforts.

Church Road Crossing. The late Mark Sugden, Claygate's representative on Surrey County Council, championed the initiative for a pedestrian crossing in Church Road. Andy Burton, his successor, tells us that the crossing has funding and is now at the design stage. It is scheduled for installation in the first quarter of next year at the latest.

Hare Lane Green. We were recently told by an Elmbridge Borough Council officer that trial pits have been dug at points along the path that crosses Hare Lane Green,

opposite The Swan pub, to determine what is present under the grass. The information gathered will enable a plan to be put together for more substantive improvement works in future.

REMINDERS

Overhanging Trees and Shrubs. The Committee reminds residents of the need to cut back hedges and shrubs where they are causing obstruction or hindrance to fellow villagers. Residents can seek remedial action by reporting such matters to Surrey County Council via the FixMyStreet app, using this link: <https://tellus.surreycc.gov.uk/> The FixMyStreet app can also be used to report a wide range of issues to Surrey and the Parish Council sees evidence of its effective use. We commend it to residents.

Gil Bray, Chair of Environment, Highways and Transport Committee

FANTASTIC RANGE OF EVENTS IN BUSY YEAR FOR THE CVA



More than 40 organisations set up stalls to demonstrate their activities hoping to attract new members at the Claygate Village Association's Get Involved Day. The event, which took place inside and outside the Village Hall, including in the car park, was very well attended, giving everyone a chance to discover a new activity or volunteer for a local organisation.

The day included dances by the Thames Valley Morris Men, who are based in Claygate, and a display by the Esher District Local History Society, curated by Terry Gale.

The CVA thanks everyone who helped to organise the event, including the Parish Council, which paid for the hall hire, and all the participants on the stalls. The village is so lucky to have such a wide range of opportunities in and around Claygate.

OPEN GARDENS

Twelve private gardens took part in the CVA's popular Open Garden Trail in June, some for the first time. The event was first held as part of the CVA's millennium celebrations 25 years ago. Visitors and gardeners reported that they thoroughly enjoyed the trail and the perfect dry and sunny conditions.

Visitors were invited to explore the varied gardens, talking with owners, meeting friends and neighbours and enjoying tea and home-made cakes at some stops.

The trail also included Claygate's two allotment sites, where allotment holders talked about vegetable growing, plus Holy Trinity Church's wild flower garden and the Recreation Ground garden.

The CVA warmly thanks all those who created this pleasurable social event by inviting visitors to share their gardens. Garden owners said that working in their gardens in spring was made more enjoyable with the Open Garden Trail goal to look forward to.

And the CVA thanks the garden visitors for their generous donations: the event raised a whopping

£1,000 for CVA funds, which is invaluable as it depends entirely on community donations to run its various events. The several charities chosen by individual garden owners also benefitted from visitors' donations.

The next Open Gardens event will take place in 2027 and, as more people are coming forward to take part and open their gardens, the CVA will explore holding a weekend-long event. The Association would love to hear from anyone who might consider opening their garden.

CLAYGATE IN BLOOM

The CVA's annual bring-and-buy plant sale in May raised more than £450, thanks to the large number of lovely plants that were donated by residents.

This year it was decided to change the planting scheme of tubs in The Parade to make them more drought tolerant. And the new regime has been a success – the tubs have required less water despite the hot summer. Cath Boyce did an excellent job in researching suitable plants and the CVA offers its thanks to the team of volunteers who have weeded and watered the tubs throughout the summer.



CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

The Claygate Christmas lights will be switched on at an event in The Parade on Saturday November 29, starting at 4pm. Everyone is invited to come and celebrate Christmas in our community. There will be music, carol singing, food and drink, community stalls, children's rides and more.

ABOUT THE CVA

Claygate Village Association is a non-political charity that aims to preserve and enhance the village nature of Claygate. For income, it relies on donations, grants and money raised at events. It also relies hugely on volunteers and always welcomes new people and new ideas.

The Association's Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday November 19 at 7.30pm in Holy Trinity Church Hall. All Claygate residents are automatically members of the CVA and so are urged to go along and have their say about the CVA's work and activities.



After the business of the evening is concluded, there will be a talk: "Blue Hearts and Trees" by Bill Raspin, a local volunteer, who will explain the Blue Heart wildflower verges project (see his article on Page 21). And Dave Page, retired Elmbridge Countryside Estates Officer, will speak about the Claygate Common management programme. Everyone will be warmly welcomed for what promises to be an interesting and informative evening.

CALL FOR CANDIDATES TO LIFT NEXT YEAR'S COMMUNITY CUP

It's time to start thinking about who might lift the Brian Rhodes Community Cup next year. It is awarded annually to an individual adjudged to have made an outstanding contribution to the Claygate community in the previous 12 months.

Parish Councillors vote – by secret ballot – on the nominations and the winner will be announced at the 2026 annual Parish Meeting in the Village Hall. So this is an early call for the people of Claygate to nominate their candidates.

To nominate someone, you must live or work in Claygate – and you can nominate more than one person. The



nominee must also live or work in Claygate and must have given permission for their name to be put forward and publicised.

Nominations must include an explanation, in no more than 50 words, of why and how the nominee has made an outstanding contribution to the community in Claygate in the past 12 months. They should be sent in an email to the Clerk, at

clerk@claygateparishcouncil.gov.uk.

Please note: sitting councillors at Parish, Borough and Surrey levels are not eligible for nomination.

'YOU NEVER REGRET GETTING INVOLVED'



Susannah Moffat, this year's Brian Rhodes Community Cup winner, made an inspiring speech on accepting the award at the Parish Meeting, and spoke again at the opening of the Get Involved Day. Here, she explains what volunteer work means to her:

“ On accepting the award, I was also proud to acknowledge the part so many people play in doing little things that make our community so strong. Volunteering is often described as “giving back”, but the truth is that you gain just as much as you give.

I was about eight when my Dad handed me a tin and plonked me outside a supermarket on a cold Saturday morning before Christmas to collect for a local children's home. At the time, I thought it was embarrassing. Afterwards, counting the coins was exciting, and together with my reward of sweets, I felt good that someone else would benefit, too.

Claygate is a very special place, not least because so many people here are willing to muck in. I saw this first hand working on the Flower and Village Show – the effort that goes into creating this one day of fun is mind-blowing.

But when the gates open and the village pours in, you suddenly realise it's all been worth it. Plus, nothing bonds people quite like trying to pin up 200 pieces of children's artwork at 7.30am in a soggy marquee.

In 2020, when changes to Surrey's youth provision left a big hole, a group of us decided we couldn't just let it slide. That's how Claygate Youth and Community Hub was born.

Building on the work of the Claygate Village Youth Association, we formed a new charity, put in the grant applications and kicked off the fundraising. A new kitchen, fresh paint and new curtains followed, with help from the village and local businesses, and then football nets, benches, and office equipment.

By the end of 2021, we had a team of brilliant people working with our young people, providing two youth sessions in a sparkling new space.

A year later, we'd added a sports night, mentoring, and even mental health support. Now, the Hub is buzzing every week, full of young people making friends, trying new things, and generally reminding us why all the effort was worthwhile.

The Nigerian proverb that says “it takes a village to raise a child” sums it up perfectly. None of this – whether it's the Flower Show, the Scouts, the Church, the Christmas Lights, the Hub, or any of the other many voluntary organisations in the village – happens because of one person. It happens because dozens of people show up, roll up their sleeves, and give a bit of themselves. The more you give, the more you get back.

Volunteering has given me countless laughs, some ridiculous stories, lifelong friends and a true sense of belonging. Yes, it can be tiring, yes, you will occasionally curse the day you agreed to help. But honestly? You will never regret getting involved.

DETERMINED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

The Courier asked Graham Dear about the charity he created in memory of his daughter Grace, who died aged 27

Graham Dear is a man torn in two: one half is the electrician who lives in Telegraph Lane, Claygate, outwardly cheerful among his friends; the other is the heartbroken fundraiser and campaigner, doing all he can to provide a lifeline to young people suffering from serious mental health problems.

He set up the Grace Dear Trust after his 27-year-old daughter took her own life in February 2017, following 14 years of battling "an illness nobody could see".

Graham is open about Grace's story: "It all started when she began suffering and self-harming from the age of 13. And we never picked it up. As a family, we never really understood what was happening.

"Most of the time Grace would have this wonderful smile, and she had a such a loud wicked laugh. She would lighten up any place she entered. Grace could solve her friends' issues most of the time, but sadly she could never find the means to solve her own issue.

"So when we lost Grace, we decided we wanted to try and help as many families with young teenagers so that they didn't have to go through what we went through. I've said this so many times and I have heard others describe the pain – it never really stops. It's like a ripple effect that goes on and on and affects so many people. It's not like any loss you can imagine."

Graham, who was guest speaker at this year's annual Parish Meeting, run by Claygate Parish Council, said the Trust was now raising about £100,000 a year from events and donations: "We have now officially spent over half a million pounds – £550,000 on mental health within schools and on young people."

The Trust has built relationships with several local secondary schools – and more recently primary schools – and pays for the provision of counsellors in those schools; for mental health training; and for the creation of facilities such as outdoor gyms and quiet spaces, that benefit the whole school.

It is now planning to build its own drop-in wellness centre: "We're looking to build an actual room from scratch, to be used by the children of the school Monday to Friday. And then on Saturday and Sunday it'll be used as a call-in centre for adults in the Guildford area. That's going to cost in the region of £150,000 to £200,000. So it's a big thing. But it's a legacy I want to



create for Grace. And the benefits you're getting, you can't really calculate."

Graham said it took a long time for his message about mental health to be understood by local schools: "When we started, we had a budget of about £50,000 from fundraising – and in the first 18 months, it was really difficult to get rid of that money. It was hard for the schools to understand what we were doing and why. But slowly and surely, they started to come round and realise that we're a proper organisation and we're here to help them." He said all money raised and given out has to be spent on mental health related issues, wellbeing for the good of the children or on advising and helping teachers.

Sports clubs were then approached, with coaches being offered mental health first aid training. Graham said: "If youngsters can learn to talk about what they're feeling at a really early stage and you can identify that, then you've got a lot more chance of resolving the issue. Then the issue isn't going further into the teens and 20s, when it becomes so much harder to help."

Graham is careful to insist that Grace did not commit suicide. He says the word "commit" goes back to a time when suicide was illegal and has negative connotations that prevent youngsters speaking out: "If we could all stop using that word then more people would open up and tell others how they are feeling. My Gracie chose to take her own life. It wasn't a selfish act. It was an act of bravery because she just didn't want to live this life any more. She didn't want to be a... She thought she was a burden on us.



"My wife and I used to go out and we never knew what we were going to come back to. We were always worried. But Grace didn't want us, as we got older, to live that type of life. She wanted us to enjoy life. But I'd rather be coming home worrying about her than be where we are now."

He said the family had no tools to deal with the situation: "If only we'd been able to say over and over 'tomorrow's another day', then Grace might still be here. But you get beyond a certain point where it's very difficult to get them back. We missed the signs. That's how easy it is for someone to take their life. It's in that moment that they're full of despair and full of....It's hard to comprehend because you've probably never been there. I've never been there – I've never been in that situation where you just think there's nothing more to do.

"Grace's passing affected me and my family irreparably.

Continued on Next Page

From Previous Page

But we help ourselves by doing what we do and having fun while we're working on these fundraising events and knowing that the little bit that we do is making a difference."

One of Graham's big concerns is school attendance levels. He said attendance at secondary schools has fallen sharply, from about 97 per cent attendance to below 90 in some schools.

He said that when attendance fell at one local school, the Trust created a wellness centre, to which children not attending regularly were invited instead. "They sat down under supervision and got themselves back into the routine of getting up in the morning and going to school. The majority have gone from just popping in to taking part in proper lessons and studying."

Among other similar facilities the Trust has provided are the Willow Centre at Esher High School and the Grace Dear Foundation Room at Tolworth Girls School.

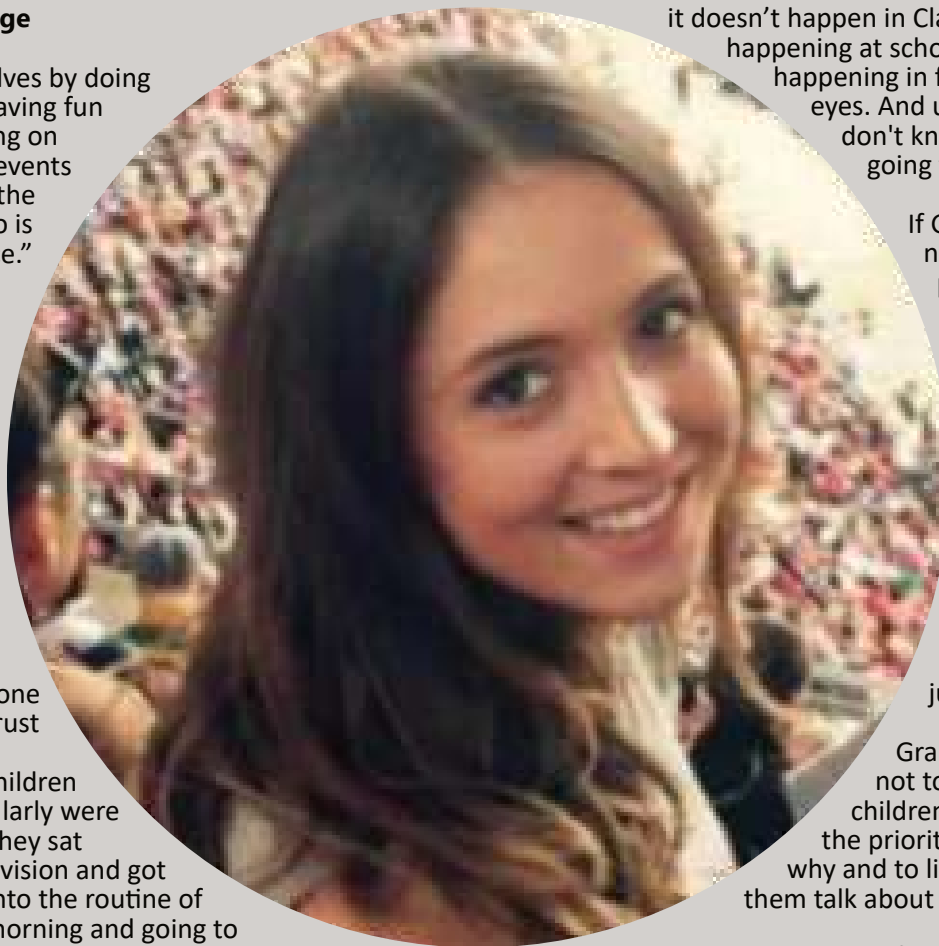
Social media and smartphones are a huge part of the problem, says Graham: "Social media is so stressful. When we were growing up, what happened during the day at school stopped at the school gate. Once you were home, that was it. And the majority of times, when you went in the next day, it all moved on. Now, with phones, it carries on: the whole school knows what's going on. Mobile phones play a massive part in why we are where we are today with young people.

"And, I think there is just too much emphasis on education, education, education." He said raising the school leaving age to 18 made unhappy youngsters stay and suffer longer.

He said drugs and the people selling them were another big factor. "I hope people aren't mad enough to think

FUNDRAISING PARTY

The Grace Dear Trust is holding a fundraising Christmas party at the Averno restaurant in Claygate on Saturday December 13. Tickets are £50 per person and include Prosecco or a soft drink on arrival, live music, buffet-style food, and a DJ playing until late. Visit thegracedeartrust.co.uk to buy tickets.



it doesn't happen in Claygate. It's happening at school gates. It's happening in front of our very eyes. And unfortunately, I don't know how you're going to stop them."

If Grace was 13 again now and in the same position, would things be different?

"Definitely. We would be talking to the school, we would be trying to understand, asking her to talk to us about why she was feeling that way – but not to make any judgment," he said.

Graham warns parents not to overreact if children are self-harming; the priority is to understand why and to listen to them – let them talk about how they feel.

The charity is very locally focused. TV personality and children's campaigner Esther Rantzen told Graham this was important: "We met her and talked about the fact that we'd lost Grace and that we were thinking of starting up a charity and she said, just keep it within your local community. There are others that will take it on elsewhere. So it's all run from Claygate. It used to be Hinchley Wood when we lived there but now we're in Claygate."

Graham has long been a familiar figure in Claygate, playing cricket, visiting its pubs, shopping in The Parade and he and his wife finally moved to the village a year ago: "We just love where we live in sunny Telegraph Lane. It's a great village."

The Trust is staffed mainly by family members and friends of Grace, and kept in line by Hope, Grace's younger sister: "We recently changed some of the trustees. Grace's former boss Andrew, and Judy, a life-long family friend, have stepped down, and more friends and associates have joined so we're hopeful we can push the Grace Dear Trust on a little bit further.

"It's a vast task that we're doing. It's something that the government should really be doing but with the support of the community we can achieve things and move to a society where people do not feel the need to take their own life."

Graham finished by saying the charity work also helped the family: "It's never going to bring Gracie back. But we do know that every pound somebody gives us is going to help some young person somewhere."

WHERE TO TURN FOR HELP WITH BILLS THIS WINTER

As the weather turns colder, Claygate residents are reminded that help is available for anyone struggling with energy bills. The first port of call should be Citizens Advice. Citizens Advice Esher and District is located at Elmbridge Civic Centre in Esher. It has trained staff and volunteers who can help with the following matters:

GRANTS TO HELP PAY OFF ENERGY DEBTS

Anyone in debt with their energy supplier might be able to get a grant to help pay it off. If your supplier doesn't offer grants, one might still be available from the British Gas Energy Trust: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/consumer/energy/energy-supply/get-help-paying-your-bills/struggling-to-pay-your-energy-bills/ It's also possible to check on eligibility for the Warm Home Discount Scheme at: www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme

AGREEING A PAYMENT PLAN WITH AN ENERGY SUPPLIER

Householders struggling to pay energy bills should tell their supplier they want to pay through a payment plan which will cover the amount owed plus an amount for current use. They will pay fixed amounts over a set period, paying what they can afford. A supplier has to take into account how much the customer can afford and how much energy they'll use in the future.

HELP TO CLAIM UNIVERSAL CREDIT

Those out of work or on a low income might be eligible for Universal Credit. The advisers can help residents make their first claim. They can be reached by phone (Freephone 0800 144 8444), or on webchat between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday at www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/contact-us/contact-us/help-to-claim

HELP WITH SCHOOL COSTS

Anyone on a low income or claiming Universal Credit might be able to get free school meals for their children by applying on the gov.uk website. Those who qualify might also be able to receive other help with school costs



– and the child's school might get extra money. Help might also be available from the local education authority with some costs such as uniforms, school activities and school transport: www.citizensadvice.org.uk/family/education/help-with-school-costs

HEALTHY START VOUCHERS AND FREE VITAMINS

Residents on a low income and at least 10 weeks pregnant or with a child under four years old, might qualify for free vitamins and Healthy Start vouchers for milk, fruit and vegetables and infant formula milk. Midwives and health visitors can advise on eligibility, or advice can be sought from the Healthy Start helpline on 0345 607 6823 or check online at www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply

Citizens Advice can advise on all these issues. Call CAB on 01372 464770; visit the Civic Centre in Esher on weekdays between 10.30am and 3.30pm (Wednesdays from 1pm to 3.30); email bureau@eshercab.org.uk; or visit www.eshercab.org.uk

WORKING GROUP DISCUSSES COMMUNITY CENTRE'S FUTURE

Elmbridge Borough Council's plan to hand over the running of its community centres to the voluntary sector has been the main topic discussed by the Parish Council Health, Wellbeing and Leisure Working Group.

A recent event, at which Elmbridge explained its plan to transform the provision of community support services, was aimed at parties interested in submitting a bid to run one or more of the centres.

Working Group member John Bamford, attended the event on behalf of the Friends of Claygate Centre, and Parish Councillor Jenny French spoke in detail about her experience of setting up and running the

Community Hub at the Lower Green Community Centre.

Before the event, Parish Councillors had attended an online briefing about the proposals and it was agreed that any organisations interested in bidding to run the Claygate Centre would be asked to make contact with the Parish Council. So far, the Parish Council is aware of potential interest from three parties. The Parish Council is offering support to all parties bidding to run the Centre, as well as anyone interested in providing services or hiring the venue and is keen to hear from anyone with visions and ideas to ensure the best possible outcome for the Claygate Centre.

Working Group members: Councillor Jenny French (Chair), John Bamford, Councillor Michael Collon, Pam Jarvis, Lucy Pollock

WAITING TIMES CUT FOR ROUTINE APPOINTMENTS

Capelfield patients have been hearing how adjustments to the Surgery's triage system have reduced waiting times for routine appointments. The September meeting of the Patient Participation Group was told that under the triage system all appointment requests are assessed by a doctor to ensure they are matched to the most appropriate time-frame, clinician or resource, according to clinical need.

The Group also discussed the dissatisfaction felt by patients due to a lack of continuity of care by a particular doctor. It was acknowledged that this is not ideal but hard to address, given the chronic lack of funding to general practices, the increased GP workload, the need for clinical triage, rising expertise of other healthcare workers, the need to train junior doctors and GPs' part-time working.

Patients are, however, encouraged to request their preferred doctor for routine conditions and follow-up appointments.

A majority of Capelfield patients have the NHS app installed on their mobile phone but only one in four are using it to its full potential. For example, patients can view their individual health record on the app. The Surgery is urging patients to use the NHS app for requesting repeat prescriptions, rather than using the website, to minimise administration time spent by the Surgery in manually transferring the website requests into the clinical system.

In a recent National GP survey of patient views, Capelfield exceeded the national average for satisfaction levels across the board. The full results can be viewed on the Capelfield website in Edition 3 of the Practice Newsletter, towards the bottom of its home page.

Patients attending the last meeting all wished to thank the Capelfield receptionists for providing a warm reassuring welcome to the practice.

Patient Participation Group meetings are open to all Capelfield patients and provide a forum for residents to be updated, give feedback and ask questions about how the Surgery is operating. The goal of meetings is to enhance the effectiveness of provision for patients by increasing understanding of how it works, and ensuring good communication of the patient perspective.

Minutes of PPG meetings can be found on the Capelfield website under the "About Us" tab under the heading "PPG". All Capelfield patients are warmly invited to the next meeting on Wednesday January 28 at 6.30pm at the Surgery.

- The October Quiz Night of the Friends of Capelfield, has had to be postponed due to a clash of dates. The Quiz Night is now booked for Friday April 24 2026.

ORGANISERS DELIGHTED WITH POPPY APPEAL GENEROSITY

This year's Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal highlights how, when a military veteran's life falls apart, the Legion can help to rebuild it.

For some in the Armed Forces community, issues from service can affect them later on, and a veteran's life can fall apart for many reasons – the lasting impact of a training accident, the loss of a friend or battlefield trauma, and so on. Service-related issues, such as complex mental health conditions, can lead to a rapid downward spiral which needs help. And when something goes wrong, the Royal British Legion is there.

The Poppy Appeal donation raises vital funds for the Legion to support the Armed Forces community for life. And wearing a poppy signals recognition, shows gratitude, is a heart-warming gesture and has an important impact for the Armed Forces. It also connects the nation during the November Remembrance period.



LEGION NEEDS HELP IN CLAYGATE

The Claygate Parish Appeal in 2024 raised £5,795, which was the highest sum donated since the current organiser undertook the task in 2006. The national donations totalled £51m.

But the Poppy Appeal Organisation in Claygate is short of volunteers: there are currently only two in the parish, which makes the Appeal vulnerable.

Anyone wishing to volunteer as an assistant to the Poppy Appeal Organiser should contact either Hugh Stephenson, the Poppy Appeal Organiser for Claygate on 01372 464217 or 07950 029130, or email Hughstephenson7@outlook.com, or Peter Wakeham, Poppy Appeal Organiser for East Surrey on 01273 411058 or 07826 908603. The most urgent need is for a volunteer to help with the forthcoming Remembrance period, from October 27 to November 10.

COMMUNITY LITTER PICK

Families and individuals are invited to come along and help keep Claygate looking green and clean on Saturday October 18, the next Claygate Clean-Up day. Everyone should meet in the Hare Lane Car Park (near Champions) at 10am. All equipment will be provided. After all the hard work, every volunteer will be offered free hot dogs and burgers from the Claygate Parish Council barbecue. It's a fun way to care for Claygate, spend time outdoors, and meet new people.



AIR AMBULANCE DROPS IN ON THE REC

An unexpected and exciting visit from a helicopter on Claygate Recreation Ground caused heads to turn and traffic to stop as it landed and took off.

The Kent Surrey and Sussex Air Ambulance had been called to an emergency in the village but was later stood down when an earth-bound ambulance took over.

It gave the team of pilots and medics a few moments to talk to residents about their work and the helicopter, which is packed with medical equipment enabling the travelling doctor and paramedic to perform general anaesthetics, blood transfusions, and even open heart surgery.

The Air Ambulance Charity is funded largely by donations and fundraising, and serves the five million people living in Kent, Surrey and Sussex, and the 90 million passing through the region each year. It's one of the largest and

busiest air ambulance charities in the UK, covering 3,500 square miles, including some of the country's busiest road networks, most densely populated towns and cities, and extensive coastline and countryside.

Marwa El-Zanfaly, an emergency medical consultant and the team's doctor, pictured above, left, explained: "The whole idea is that we're bringing the hospital to the patient so that they start their care straight away. And we try to treat people outside the helicopter – it's a bit cramped inside. And when you're flying, it's not always super smooth – so not ideal when you've got a scalpel in your hand."

The team was then abruptly called away to another emergency in Fleet, taking off from the Rec and waving to onlookers on the ground. To support the valuable work of KSS Air Ambulance, visit aakss.org.uk.

CAR SERVICE CARRIES 65 PATIENTS A MONTH

The number of clients driven to their medical appointments by the Esher and Claygate Car Service hit 772 last year – 100 more than the previous year. This amounted to an average of 65 trips a month for the service's 52 volunteer drivers.

In spite of the rising demand, the service rarely fails to meet a request for transport – but it means new drivers are always needed to replace those standing down.

The service provides transport to surgeries, local hospitals, physios, dentists and opticians for residents of Esher and Claygate who are unable to use public transport or drive themselves. Volunteer drivers collect clients from their homes, take them to their local appointments, wait and drive them home – although only one-way transport is provided to large hospitals, such as Kingston. There is no charge for the service but a small voluntary donation is suggested.

To make use of the service, or volunteer to be a driver – all that is needed is a clean driving licence and a few spare hours a month at times to suit you – visit www.esher-and-claygate-car-service.com/about-us.

NEW OPERATOR TAKES OVER THE CAFE ON THE REC

The cafe in the Pavilion on the Rec is now called Bertie's after being taken over by a new operator, a company called On the Rec. It aims to do the basics well, with cafe food and more, with an attractive presentation.

Bertie's is retaining the existing staff and is keen to employ local people; it wants to support residents, visitors, community clubs and societies with whatever catering needs they might have – be it a breakfast, bacon rolls and coffee or hosting events at the Pavilion.

Bertie's is managed by Hugh and Sherrill Taggart, who have been running it since July. They have lived in Claygate for 22 years and have been keen contributors to life on the Rec. They are incredibly excited and look forward to developing and enhancing the cafe in the coming months.

Pistachios had operated the cafe from 2021 but this year decided to move on. The Claygate Recreation Ground Trust and all Rec users thank Pistachios for their significant contribution and friendship and wish them all the very best in their new ventures.



AN OUTDOOR GYM

One of the key recommendations from last year's Claygate: The Way Forward report was to research options for an outdoor gym on Claygate Rec and seek funding to implement it once a design was agreed.

To enable this to happen, a grant was obtained from the National Lottery Community Fund and all the necessary permissions have now been received – which means the outdoor gym should be available on the Rec this year. More than 600 residents indicated they would use an outdoor gym – so it is expected to be very busy.

RUNNERS MAKE COUNTRY 5 THE BIGGEST SINCE THE PANDEMIC



This year's Claygate Country 5 was the biggest since the pandemic, with more than 370 runners taking to the woodland paths around the village, starting and finishing on the Recreation Ground.

Many of this year's runners came from local running clubs alongside a good number of competitors from Claygate. The winner completed the five-mile course in just over 29 minutes – but the organisers are always keen to encourage runners of all abilities and the final finisher took one hour and 20 minutes.

The large field and generous support from sponsors, Owen White Catlin,

meant the event made a healthy surplus, supporting the Flower Show. The popular run has been a fixture in the Claygate calendar for more than 40 years, taking place on the Sunday before the Flower and Village Show.

Organising such an event takes time and requires volunteers to help on the day. The organisers are incredibly grateful to everyone who volunteered their time to make the 2025 event happen. To ensure the run can take place in future years, more support with planning, organising and helping on the day are needed. If you can help, please email claygatecountryfive@crgt.co.uk.

FLOWER SHOW A ROARING SUCCESS IN THE SUNSHINE

Happy visitors once again flocked to the Recreation Ground on a sunny Saturday afternoon in July to make this year's Claygate Flower and Village Show another roaring success.

Not put off by soaring temperatures, children and adults came prepared with sun hats and sun cream, refilling their water bottles at the refill station and taking advantage of the plethora of refreshments around the grounds.

The day was filled with things to do and see, with all the usual family favourites: entertainment in the arena, the fairground, Morris Dancers, the dog show, stalls village, classic cars, charity and community groups, tug-of-war and children's sports, to name but a few.

The tug-of-war drew in the crowds with Claygate ladies' netball team claiming victory yet again and the 2023 men's champions returning to win the coveted cup.

It was a good day in the Grand Exhibition Marquee too – the number of entries was up overall with an excellent turnout in the Junior section and in the Flowers, Fruit and Vegetables section – growers had clearly braved and embraced the very mixed weather conditions in the months leading up to the show.

There was a spectacular standard of entries across the board. The organisers send huge thanks to the schools who encouraged their children to enter and to all the creative adults who "had a go" and entered sausage rolls, handicraft, fudge, jam, paintings and photographs. It all made for a wonderful display. And any residents who didn't get a chance to browse the entries in the marquee should make sure they take a look next July.

Organisers are also enormously grateful to all the sponsors who help to make the show a success year after year: Ridgeback Properties, Chessington Equestrian Centre and Elmbridge Tree Services were particularly generous



this year. A comprehensive list of sponsors can be found on the website: www.claygateflowershow.co.uk

Next year's Flower Show will be on Saturday July 11 – so save the date. Feedback is welcome, as are volunteers to take the Show into 2026. As well as the opportunity to join a team that plots, plans and organises throughout the year, there are also small "on the day" jobs which might appeal. Anyone who would like to be part of this enthusiastic and friendly team should get in touch via email – info@claygateflowershow.co.uk – or visit the Show website.

The preparations for next year's Flower Show are already under way and it's not too early to start planning prize-winning entries. Keep an eye out for the Seed Giveaway in The Parade in March to kick-start the growing season.

Bigger and better than ever!



STREET MARKET

The next street market in The Parade will be on Sunday December 14 from 11am to 3pm.

GREAT RESPONSE TO SHOPS AND BUSINESSES SURVEY

The response to a survey of Claygate's shops and businesses, carried out in the spring, has been hugely successful. The Shops and Businesses Advisory Committee of the Parish Council carried out the "Claygate Shops and Businesses' Survey" in April and was delighted to complete it on schedule, and with a fantastic response.

The Committee's target was to secure the involvement of 60 per cent of businesses in the village – but more than 70 per cent were reached. The Committee sees this as a really encouraging sign of interest and support and gives it confidence that the survey's findings will truly reflect the views of our business community.

The Committee thanks the dedicated team of local volunteers who visited every eligible business to deliver the survey invitation. By delivering the invitation letter and taking a moment to explain its purpose, the volunteers made sure every business had the chance to take part and understood why their views were important. The survey explored ideas and recommendations, from collective marketing initiatives to use of public car parks.

Analysis of the data has been delayed due to illness within the research team, but work is continuing and the full results will be shared in due course. Even at this early stage, the responses clearly show a high level of engagement and community spirit among Claygate's businesses. Thank you to everyone who took the time to take part – your input is vital as we work to keep Claygate a vibrant place to live, work and shop.

POSTBOX TOPPER TAKES REFUGE IN THE PUB

The popular knitted “toppers” that have decorated the postbox in Claygate’s High Street for several years have been forced to move, following the installation of a solar-powered box. But they haven’t gone far: the nearby Hare and Hounds has provided a new temporary home.

The toppers began appearing in 2022 at the start of the war in Ukraine, when several members of Claygate Women’s Institute knitted simple sunflowers, sewn on to a crochet base to cover the top of the postbox. From there, they went on to celebrate the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, Wimbledon tennis, the sad passing of the Queen, and the Coronation in 2023.



The WI has also marked the seasons of the year, Christmas, Remembrance Days and the most recent toppers have been for the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, VE day, the Claygate Flower Show, the England Lionesses football team and the latest for the Women’s Rugby World Cup.

Tori Russell (pictured above) is one of the prime movers. She said: “We have had so many compliments and especially when, with the help of my husband Dave, we’ve put the toppers up outside Matthew Pierce’s estate agents. People have stopped to chat, cars winding their windows down to thank us. It’s been so lovely.

“The postbox is now no longer available due to its modernisation with a solar panelled roof. But Nick



Wendy Cannon and Tori Russell add a world cup to the knitted women’s rugby team in the Hare and Hounds

Stafford, who runs the Hare and Hounds, kindly took the topper into the pub to display while the Rugby World Cup was playing.” There are plans for a permanent home for the toppers on The Green.

A Royal Mail spokesperson added: “We appreciate the passion and care that goes into the crocheting, knitting and decorating of toppers. But our new postboxes offer another convenient way for customers in Claygate and elsewhere to access Royal Mail’s services. We are rolling out 3,500 solar-powered ‘postboxes of the future’.

“The new design (right) allows customers to send and return labelled parcels – up to the size of a shoebox – through a postbox for the first time. Customers can also request proof of posting, and track their parcel, using the Royal Mail app.”

The postbox makeover includes: a barcode scanner that opens a drawer to place parcels; a solar panel, positioned due south for optimal sunlight, to power the scanner and drawer; and a separate slot for letters.



OBJECTS BRING SPEAKERS’ SUBJECTS TO LIFE

A fascinating variety of items – including a kilt, a harp on wheels, an unpolished garnet and a crinoline dress made from a pair of silk curtains – have been used by speakers to entertain the members of Claygate WI.

The objects were used to bring to life the speakers’ specialist subjects and the WI reports that members were indeed entertained and fascinated.

The group’s talented knitters have been showing off their specialist skills, too, as they have charmed Claygate residents with their prize-winning postbox toppers (see above). WI members have also been enthralled by performances at Esher Theatre and Claygate Dramatic Society; sparkled in a sequin-fest on a

“Strictly Behind the Scenes” tour; and been immersed in history while visiting the Tower of London and the Royal Palaces at Hampton Court and Kensington.

Hundreds of biscuits have also been baked to sell at the Claygate Flower Show to raise money for the Princess Alice Hospice. And the WI book club has been discussing new literature and old, while other members have been walking in the local woods, crafting Easter decorations or playing Scrabble, all accompanied by a well-earned cuppa and slice of cake.

Anyone who fancies joining this merry band of women – it’s informal, friendly and fun, with an occasional glass of fizz – can visit claygatewi.co.uk for more information or email Judith at infoclaygate@surreyfedwi.org.uk to arrange a free taster session. Claygate WI meets on the second Wednesday of every month from 7.30 to 9.30pm in the hall at Holy Trinity Church, Claygate.

GARDENERS' QUESTION TIME COMES TO CLAYGATE

Two episodes of BBC Radio 4's "Gardeners' Question Time" were recorded at Holy Trinity Church in July, following an invitation from Claygate Gardening Society. And it proved incredibly popular: all 350 tickets were sold in 36 hours, ensuring a full church and a lively and enthusiastic crowd.



Claygate's keen gardeners, supplemented by audience members from as far away as Twickenham, put questions to panellists Bob Flowerdew, Pippa Greenwood and Juliet Sargeant, via Kathy Clugston in the chair.

Questions included a mature olive tree shedding its discoloured leaves, trouble with growing hollyhocks, best vegetables for a small garden and the sometimes impractical nature of professional garden designs.

The evening was interesting not just for its coverage of numerous plant and gardening topics but also as an example of how an outside broadcast radio show is put together, with various real-time edits and re-recordings to

change emphasis or to avoid date-specific references.

It was a great example of the village coming together to support an event. The Society thanks Patrick Bateman, Vicar of Holy Trinity, for making the church available, and is grateful to both of Claygate's WI groups, who provided teas and coffees.

The first programme was broadcast on Friday August 29 as being from "Claygate", the second, nominally from "Elmbridge", was broadcast on Friday September 19. Both can be heard again on BBC Sounds, which can also be accessed via www.Claygate-gardening.org and following the link to the BBC.

GORDON ROAD COMMUNITY GARDEN IN FULL BLOOM

The official opening of the community garden at the corner of Gordon Road and Albany Crescent gave residents an extra reason to celebrate at their annual street party. The garden was created and planted in 2024 after a mature, but diseased, red oak tree on the site was taken down by Surrey County Council in 2022 – leaving an ugly stump surrounded by equally ugly broken Tarmac.

The process – clearing the site and making it ready for planting, securing approval and supplying a legal indemnity to Surrey Highways – took nearly two years. Bulbs, planted by pupils from Rowan Preparatory School, and shrubs, planted by residents, went in just before the onset of winter 2024.

After a colourful spring show of daffodils and snowdrops, the shrubs and perennials were starting to fill out the empty spaces by June, with a riot of colour, shapes and forms. Gordon Road residents gathered around the garden at their June event to drink its health and hear a few words from Ken Kilmister,



Chairman of Claygate Gardening Society and leader of the Gordon Road gardening squad, thanking those who made it possible.

Residents of Gordon Road contributed to the cost, with generous sponsorship from Rowan Preparatory School, and indemnity cover from Claygate Village Association.

The event was tinged with sadness, however, as Mark Sugden, Claygate's representative on Surrey County Council, died just days before its official opening. Mark would have been the guest of honour, as without his lobbying, determination and funding the project might not have come to fruition. A plaque at the garden records these contributions.

During the dry summer, the garden squad watered plants regularly, initially with buckets until a generous nearby resident offered a hosepipe connection. A garden, however, is always "work in progress". There will be repair and maintenance jobs, and casualties to replace, but the garden is now well established and appreciated by all who pass by or linger on the bench to admire the view.

WILDLIFE WILL FLOURISH ON NO-MOW VERGES

Ten large roadside verges in Oaken Lane, Hare Lane, Red Lane and Stevens Lane, totalling more 1,800 square metres, will not be mown next spring and summer, which is great news for Claygate’s birds and insects.

Verges are normally mown during the flowering season but these grass areas, having been granted Blue Heart status, mean they will not be mown by Surrey County Council from March to September. The national Blue Heart initiative aims to improve insect diversity and allow native plants to thrive on grass verges.

While a margin will be mown around each verge to protect traffic sight lines and footpaths, the rest will be left to flourish. As a result, the village will see snowdrops and crocuses emerge in early spring followed by a variety of wildflowers throughout the summer.

This project will also bring important benefits to fauna. Solitary bees, for example, live for between two and eight weeks. During that time the female has to mate, prepare her nest, lay eggs, and pack it with pollen – so they do not want to fly too far, which is the case if their local food source has been mown down.

And there are knock-on effects throughout the ecosystem: insects pollinate flowers, including vegetables, and control many of the bugs that try to eat them. Further up the food chain, insects provide a food source for birds, bats, frogs and mammals, such as mice. Although low in popularity, wasps are also very important for pollinating and controlling garden pests, such as caterpillars and aphids, and for tidying up by eating dead insects and carrion. When grass is left long, it is teeming with activity.



Other wildlife areas in Claygate include the grounds of Wingham Court, which has agreed to limit its mowing. A recent survey by the Surrey Botanical Society found more than 140 species of trees, grasses and wildflowers on this four-acre site. And Elmbridge Borough Council has agreed to limit the mowing of the old football pitch in the middle of Claygate Common. BT is also helping by planting wild flowers in front of the telephone exchange on Hare Lane.

Thanks to the efforts of Surrey County Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, the Claygate Village Association, Claygate Parish Council, Claygate in Bloom, the Gardening Society and Claygate residents showing interest and support, the birds, bees, butterflies and other insects can look forward to flourishing next spring and summer.

For more information on how to be involved, contact Bill Raspin at bill.raspin03@gmail.com



‘OASIS OF PEACE’ OPENS UP

The gates to a new pathway in Claygate are opening as Holy Trinity Church’s Way Maker Project becomes a reality. It means the community will be able to share the beauty and tranquillity of the churchyard, rich in history and natural life, as it is transformed into a welcoming space.

The Church’s vision has been to create a place of peace, wellbeing and biodiversity, where all can feel at home, whether visiting to remember a loved one, take a quiet moment on a bench, walk a new route from Church Road to the Recreation Ground and back, or simply enjoy the wildflowers and wildlife.

Designed by Claygate’s award-winning garden designer, Selina Botham, the project includes a new gate and pathways linking the Recreation Ground, Pavilion Cafe and Church Road; “Peace pockets”, with benches offering space to sit, reflect and enjoy the view; a wildflower meadow with paths; a new wildlife area with trees, shrubs and a shallow pond; and enhancements to the Garden of Remembrance, improving its privacy and beauty.

The project, in part, responds to the Claygate Residents’ Survey, which highlighted the community’s desire for green spaces, walking routes, and biodiversity. The path will open the Recreation Ground to more people, and provide a more direct route between The Green, the Church, the Pavilion, Claygate Primary School and other parts of Claygate.

As well as being a tranquil oasis of peace and calm, the project will offer educational opportunities for local schools to explore nature and history, and community gardening opportunities in the meadow. In these ways, the Way Maker path will support and strengthen the life of Claygate, creating a shared space for all to enjoy.

The Church is grateful to all who have donated, and to its supporters: Claygate Parish Council, Your Fund Surrey (sponsored by the late Mark Sugden), the Nias Wheatley Trust and several individuals. The work is scheduled to finish very soon. Find out more at: htclaygate.org/waymaker

FLOOR REPAIRS BRING NEW SHINE TO VILLAGE HALL

The number of activities and entertainments taking place at Claygate Village Hall continues to grow and widen, while this priceless venue is constantly upgrading its facilities.

It provides space for activities for children, including Montessori pre-school, pre-school football, music, gymnastics classes, dance and performing arts classes – and, for adults, exercise classes, (Pilates, yoga and dance fitness), bi-weekly tea dances and meetings of local societies including U3A, Claygate Gardening Society and Claygate Village WI.

In addition, Claygate Dramatic Society continues to rehearse and perform shows twice a year. Its panto takes place in November (see Page 31). And Claygate Parish Council holds the majority of its meetings at the hall.

One innovation comes from Tenuto Opera, a local society, performing shortened versions of Madame Butterfly and Die Fledermaus from October 17-19 (see Page 29). And on Saturday October 25, Hoaxwind, a rock band playing the music of Hawkwind, will perform.

Local musician Yasmine Giles will once again perform on November 7, Claygate Dramatic Society's panto is staged from November 20-22, and Laughing Chili Comedy Club will be

back at the Hall on November 29. More entertainment follows on December 13 when the Ember Big Band plays.

The Village Hall was Claygate's big project of the 1950s, with local societies and organisations together raising funds to purchase the land and construct the building. Today, the Claygate Village Hall Association is self-funding with the lettings income paying for running costs.

Improvements are also funded from the hall's own funds and grants and, over the past five years, work has included refurbishment of the toilets, new curtains and chairs (with a contribution from Claygate Parish Council community infrastructure funds), and upgrades to the audio-visual system. This summer, a major upgrade was made to the floors: the floor in the small hall had reached the end of its life and needed replacing, while the floor in the main hall was repaired, sanded and sealed.



Day-to-day running of the hall is carried out by a management committee consisting of three officers (Lettings Manager, Hall Manager and Treasurer) and at least two trustees, overseen by a Trustee Board consisting of representatives of local member societies based at the hall and local residents. The Treasurer is looking to stand down at the end of 2025 – anyone interested in being involved should email enquiries@claygatevillagehall.co.uk. The Treasurer receives a monthly honorarium; it is a volunteer post vital to the Hall's running.

- Claygate Village Hall is available for hire for parties, meetings and other events. Information, including contact details for the hall, regular hirers, and information about upcoming shows and events can be found on its website www.claygatevillagehall.co.uk

WINNING HORSE CAMPAIGN BEATEN BY PLAN FOR HOUSES

Hopes of reopening The Winning Horse pub in Coverts Road as a community venue have been dashed, despite tireless efforts and widespread community support for the plan put forward by the Claygate Community Benefit Society.

The September meeting of the Elmbridge East Area Planning Sub-committee approved a planning application to convert the pub into residential housing. This decision came despite 80 formal objections, many from local residents deeply concerned about losing the last remaining community facility serving the Coverts Road end of the village.

Local resident Doug Edwards spoke at the meeting on behalf of the objectors but to no avail. Independent Councillor Mary Marshall stood alone in opposing the application. All the other members of the Committee, however, including Claygate's other Ward Councillors, supported the application and the change of use from a pub to housing.

The Claygate Community Benefit Society was established last year with a single mission – to save The Winning Horse and transform it into a vibrant hub for the local community. Unfortunately, the withdrawal of the Community Ownership Fund following the change of government, coupled with an unsuccessful lottery funding bid, significantly hindered the Society's ability to move forward.

Although The Winning Horse was designated as an Asset of Community Value, this status offered no protection, as the property is no longer on the market. It is understood the conversion is being undertaken by its current owners.

The Society thanks everyone who rallied behind the campaign. While disappointed that they could not "Save The Winner", the Society takes some comfort in knowing that the historic building will be preserved. It will be converted into two houses, with a four-bedroom detached home being built in the garden.

The Benefit Society, however, is to keep running for the time being and use its funds to support a Claygate food bank initiative, in accordance with its constitution.



The way it was: the outdoor pool (left) before being converted into a state-of-the art indoor facility

SO MANY REASONS FOR LOVING THE COMMUNITY POOL

There are many reasons for swimmers to love Claygate Community Pool – it can be an oasis of calm and coolness, or a place to set goals, recover, relax and connect. To find out what the pool, in the grounds of Claygate Primary School, means to its regular users, several were asked to share their experiences:

Fitness goals and charity challenges: For many, the pool is a training ground, with swimmers clocking up laps as they prepare for triathlons or build stamina for big events, such as the Serpentine Swim. One local fundraiser said: “I swam the equivalent of the English Channel – all in the Claygate Community Pool this summer – to raise money for charity.”

Recovery and rehab: Water is a lifeline for recovery. Aquatic exercise supports movement without strain, helping people bounce back after injury or surgery. A hip replacement patient commented: “The pool gave me the freedom to move again without pain.”

Calm and focus: Swimming clears the mind as well as the body and many use the pool to relax. Students find it helps them prepare for stressful times. One sixth-former explained: “A morning swim session at Claygate Community Pool clears my head and calms my nerves before studying.”

Fun and family time: The pool is also a place for simple enjoyment – families come to splash and play while others enjoy a peaceful float on a Monday evening after a busy day. One seeker of serenity said: “The pool is my little escape – 45 minutes of calm.”

Learning and connection: From first swimming lessons with Angel Swim, through school swimming to lifelong friendships, pools help people develop skills and build

bonds. A social swimmer said: “I came for the exercise but stayed for the friends.”

From epic swims to recovery, relaxation and family fun, Claygate Community Pool is more than just water. It’s here for everyone in the village, whether as a member or by booking into its partner-provided sessions; it’s affordable, welcoming and accessible. The water is maintained at a constant and comfortable 30°C, using only green energy.

There is no waiting list and joining is easy, via the link at www.claygatecommunitypool.co.uk. Booking and paying for swim sessions is simple, with a secure, user-friendly online platform. The pool and community room can also be hired for parties on Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes.

There are clubs and groups, enabling swimmers to make like-minded friends, train to compete or take their first ever swimming lessons. The pool is available for hire by teachers or trainers: anyone running a club or providing swimming-related coaching should inquire about hiring the pool (see contact details below).

VOLUNTEERS RECOGNISED

Volunteers who work hard to ensure the Community Pool is up and running for each swimming session were awarded Surrey Community Champion certificates by Saj Hussain, Surrey County Council Chairman for 2024-25.

The six volunteers – Clive Thompson, Brian Howells, Gavin Potts, Peter Whitehead, Gemma Brickwood and Mark Aulds, representing the whole team – attended a presentation lunch at Surrey’s headquarters in Reigate. The awards recognise “local residents who put the needs of others above their own and work so tirelessly and selflessly to improve the lives of others”.

The pool is run by volunteers. Any adult who can spare 45 minutes on a weekday morning to act as a poolside volunteer is encouraged to email claygatepoolmembership@gmail.com. Find out more at www.claygatecommunitypool.co.uk

PUPILS LOOKING OUTWARD BRINGS LEARNING TO LIFE

Learning and experience at Claygate Primary School extends well beyond the classroom, with pupils recently having won prizes at the Flower Show, asked questions on BBC Radio 4's "Gardeners' Question Time" programme, and the school having won an international award.

Pupils enjoy the outdoor life, thanks to a partnership with Claygate Gardening Society, which enables them to look after the school allotments, learning how to plant, and tend flowers and vegetables, as well as harvesting a variety of crops. The school believes gardening brings learning to life, teaching them patience, responsibility, teamwork and the importance of healthy living and sustainability.

The youngsters also have access to the Forest School, which allows them to explore nature, solve problems and build resilience. They enjoy their annual enrichment block, led by an experienced Forest School teacher: building shelters, learning about plants and working together, they gain confidence, curiosity and life skills.

These experiences meant that every pupil contributed to this summer's Claygate Flower Show exhibitions and produce from the school's allotments won first prize. The school also enjoyed a proud national moment when pupils asked a question on "Gardeners' Question Time".

Also looking outwards, the school choir was selected to perform on stage as part of the Massed Choir at Wembley Arena, a big musical event for schools – an unforgettable experience.

GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

Claygate Primary School has been awarded the British Council International School Award – Intermediate Level, which recognises its commitment to global learning and meaningful international partnerships. This work includes collaborations with schools in China, Taiwan and Uganda,



as well as projects with the ACS international school in Cobham. These have involved pen pals, shared art initiatives, charity fundraising and cultural exchanges, spanning subjects such as languages, geography and citizenship. Sandra Cunningham, head teacher, said: "We are thrilled to receive the International School Award. Our children learn that we grow best when we grow together – in our local community, our wider society and across the world."

Shannon West, head of UK Schools at the British Council, praised Claygate Primary for "bringing the world into pupils' classrooms, enriching education and fostering global citizenship".

LOCAL COMMUNITY

The pupils also focus closer to home and play an active role in village life, with school ambassadors and prefects taking part in the Claygate Remembrance Parade, showing their respect for local history and tradition, and the choir performing at the switching on of the Christmas lights in The Parade. These events, alongside strong partnerships with the Claygate Gardening Society, Holy Trinity Church and The Hub, highlight the value of being a village school with deep community ties.

MENTORS HELP YOUNGSTERS EXPAND THEIR HORIZONS

Pupils at seven Surrey schools benefit from an award-winning, relationship-based mentoring programme, working to level the playing field so all young people can achieve their ambitions. Several volunteers from Claygate are now mentoring students at Hinchley Wood School and other nearby secondary schools.

For too many young people, an unfair start means navigating life's toughest challenges alone. But mentoring builds confidence, instils belief, awakens ambitions, and expands their future horizons.

MCR Pathways, which runs the programme in various

parts of the country, launched in Surrey schools in 2022 and, since then, nearly 600 young people have been supported with dedicated mentors contributing more than 7,600 hours of mentoring.

There is always a need for more mentors. No specific skills or prior experience are needed – just a willingness to make a positive impact. Mentors dedicate one hour each week listening to and encouraging a young person in their school. There is a pressing need for volunteers at Sunbury Manor School.

Anyone interested in mentoring, or with questions, should contact Liz Grace, Partnerships Manager in Surrey, at liz.grace@mcrpathways.org. Or, anyone feeling ready to sign up, can visit: mcrpathways.org/become-a-mentor

LIVELY HUB PLANS YET MORE ACTIVITIES

There is always something happening at the Claygate Youth and Community Hub – and as autumn rolls on, things are really gathering pace.

The youngsters are still buzzing from the excitement of the Hub’s recent third annual Claygate Hubfest. The village came out in force to join the fun and help raise hugely valuable funds. The Hub thanks all who attended and bought raffle tickets and hopes no one’s feet are too sore from so much dancing – the team hopes to see everyone again next year.

Summer was as busy as ever, kicking off with the Hub Summer Fair: in spite of soaring temperatures, young people organised a great event with stalls, car washing and sumo suits.

The Hub has now run five of its hugely popular Bike Repair Cafes (pictured right), and is planning another for November – see the Hub website, www.claygatehub.org.uk, for details. And it is planning a Textiles Repair Shop – anyone who can sew and fancies helping out is invited to get in touch.

Alongside the Hub’s regular Thursday Evening Drop-Ins, it ran three free “Summer Monday” sessions, featuring Spanish cooking, a game show and circus skills, with food, games and plenty of laughter – a real reminder of what community is all about.

And it ran courses on managing money in collaboration with NatWest Thrive and Elmbridge West Citizens Advice – a vital skill for all young people. Also in the summer, the youngsters joined the fun at the Claygate Flower Show and enjoyed a great evening at the Claygate Community Swimming Pool.

The Hub is now turning its attention to Christmas events, which it will publicise via its social media pages (see addresses, right).



So far, the Hub has welcomed more than 280 young people through its doors – but it would love to help and do even more.

The organisation is run by volunteers and could not operate without the generosity of local people, who support it by volunteering to help run weekly sessions, by making donations to support its work, or by hiring the hall for parties, classes or meetings. Every ounce of support goes directly into helping the Hub’s work with young people. To stay in touch, find the Hub on Instagram – [@claygate_yc_hub](https://www.instagram.com/claygate_yc_hub), Facebook – www.facebook.com/ClaygateYouthHub, or call Katie Holmes, Hub Manager, on 07900 021942.

The Hub is hugely grateful for the encouragement and support it receives, which enables it to continue to be a safe, welcoming and lively space for the young people of Claygate.

YOUNG PERFORMERS LEARN BY TAKING PART

Young performers from Stagecoach Hinchley Wood and Esher will be busy entertaining crowds in Claygate in the run-up to Christmas, as students and team leaders are thrilled to be taking part in this year’s Claygate Lights festivities.

They are also delighted to be involved once again in the much-loved Claygate pantomime. The youngsters find it a joy to work alongside local groups and performers, and to share in the fun and tradition that make Claygate special.



Stagecoach Hinchley Wood and Esher, which runs its classes at Claygate Primary School, aims to nurture creativity and confidence in children aged four to 18 through an exciting performing arts programme. From singing and dancing to acting and stagecraft, it helps young people grow in skills and self-belief, whether they dream of the spotlight or simply want to have fun and make friends.

Come and meet the group at the Claygate Lights ceremony, cheer them on in the pantomime, or drop in to see what they offer throughout the year. Contact Melanie Edwards, Principal, via email hinchleywood@stagecoach.co.uk or visit www.stagecoach.co.uk/hinchleywood.

GUIDING GROUPS PERFORM, STUDY AND WIN PRIZES

Shetland ponies, performing at the Menin Gate in Ypres, sleeping in a planetarium and winning prizes at the Flower Show have all featured in a busy spell for girlguiding in Claygate. Here is a summary of what the youngsters have been up to.

Claygate Brownies, Guides and Rangers joined counterparts from other groups in the Esher Girlguiding Division for a "Big Sleepover" at Winchester Science Centre and Planetarium in the spring. Particularly popular was a 10-metre giant guitar – reputedly the biggest in Europe. The group also enjoyed discovering the Space section while exploring different zones over two floors of interactive displays. After bedding down among favourite exhibits, the girls assembled the next morning in the Planetarium for an entertaining and informative film about life as an astronaut.



1st Claygate Rainbows (aged 4-7). They have studied stories from England and further afield for their Storytellers badge. Creativity was unleashed when they made up their own story, which was enriched by some dramatic performances.

For their Healthy Mind badge, the girls investigated animal yoga and other relaxing activities, including mindful art, and then bounced back in the summer term with running, jumping and hopping for their Agility badge. This was rounded off with target throwing, a large obstacle course, and a round of balloon tennis – they even made their own bats. Seven Rainbows earned their Gold Award this year, which is a big achievement and the result of very hard work.



1st Claygate Brownies (aged 7-10). They secured the Mindfulness badge by finding out how heart rates rise

with exercise. They then used relaxation techniques to bring it back down again. Some of the older girls studied First Aid, while others worked on Communication. Three Brownies were presented with their Gold Award at the end of term – another great achievement.

4th Claygate Brownies completed the Charities Badge this summer, raising funds for Mary's Meals (a charity that delivers school dinners in the world's poorest communities), and provided a donation to the British Heart Foundation. They also worked on Live Smart and Make Change skills builders, but also found time to help the warden



with conservation work at Arbrook Woods and to visit the Shetland ponies at Stoke D'Abernon.



1st Claygate and 3rd Claygate Guides (aged 10-14). They joined forces for an April residential stay at Walton Firs. As well as working on the Backwoods Cooking badge, they tried challenging activities on offer at the site, and assembled for some raucous singing and sketch performances at the campfire.

1st Claygate Guides celebrated VE Day with a themed evening and by writing messages to a Second World War veteran. They also worked on skills builders – Make Change (getting the girls to talk about changes they would like to see), and Camp (investigating different types of fire, fire safety, and open fire cooking). Two of the Guides have been selected to attend a county trip to Switzerland.

3rd Claygate Guides worked on the Guiding History badge, which included "Blitz Cooking" recipes (with some surprisingly tasty Spam hash), and again had success at the Claygate Flower Show, winning the John Cole group work cup with a creative collage made from scraps of wrapping paper, used greeting cards and magazines.



Claygate Rangers (aged 14-18) are a girl-led group, but couldn't resist joining 4th Claygate Brownies and 3rd Claygate Guides for a July evening visit to the Shetland Pony Club in Stoke D'Abernon, to help groom, walk, feed and water the ponies.

Over the summer holidays, girls from Claygate and Esher Rainbows and Brownies were "cast away on an island" for a week-long day camp at the group's Foxwarren headquarters, where they enjoyed crafts and activities, and worked to achieve a special camp challenge badge.

And some of the **1st Claygate Scout and Guide Band** musicians joined the recent trip to Ypres in Belgium, where they performed two concerts of band favourites – at Ypres Market Square and at Ostend Bandstand. The band also proudly undertook the more solemn Last Post ceremony at the Menin Gate on the Saturday evening.

The Girlguiding movement launched 72 new badges in the summer, meaning all units are spoilt for choice over what to learn.

Girlguiding in Claygate always loves to welcome new girls. Anyone interested in joining a group can register by visiting www.girlguiding.org.uk and clicking on the "Register a Child" button. A leader will be in touch, and the girls invited to meet the leaders and other girls. The group also welcomes new adult volunteers – please email esherdc@gmail.com to get involved. Anyone interested can also follow its news on Instagram.

SCOUT BAND DOES CLAYGATE PROUD AT MENIN GATE

Members of the Claygate Scout Group were kept busy during the school summer holidays visiting Cornwall and Dorset for environmentally friendly adventures.

The Explorer Scouts went to Cornwall, staying at West Coombe National Trust's remote coastal camp site, where they enjoyed an exciting time walking along the beautiful coastline. The young people and adults are especially keen to undertake activities with a low-level impact on the environment, often making rough camp (in the countryside) or sleeping out in bivvies (small tents or shelters) under the stars. The group endured a little rain, but the weather was generally kind.

Highlights of the week included coastering along the stunning South Cornwall coast, as well as a few trips to local villages and beaches to soak up the summer atmosphere.

In late July, the Scout Troop travelled to Buddens Activity Centre near Wareham in Dorset for its annual summer camp. The Scouts took part in a wide range of activities, including kayaking, climbing, zipwire, archery, and raft-building. Each day, they chopped wood and cooked their meals over open fires.

The programme also included excursions to Brownsea Island, the location for Robert Baden Powell's first Scout Camp, and the Tank Museum, as well as an eight-mile hike through the surrounding countryside. With a week of fine weather, the Scouts thoroughly enjoyed an action-packed and memorable camp.

- At the end of the summer holidays, the 1st Claygate Scout and Guide Band travelled to Belgium to perform at a ceremony at the Menin Gate in Ypres in memory of all Allied soldiers who died in



the Ypres Salient during the First World War.

Every evening at 8pm, buglers of the Last Post Association play their simple but moving tribute to the fallen. On this evening, the Claygate band was allowed to join the event, marching through the streets of Ypres to the Menin Gate and performing music under its magnificent arches during the service.

Robin Wilkinson, Band Leader, said: "It was such an honour for the band to be allowed to take part in this moving ceremony. Watched by large crowds, the band's performance was emotional and memorable, including performing a piece composed specially for the occasion by one of our adult leaders in the band, Michael Davies, in memory of both his grandfathers who fought at Ypres in the War."



The response to the band's performance from those watching the ceremony was warm and enthusiastic. But perhaps more importantly, the impact of the occasion on the young members of the band was significant – an event they will remember for many years. Robin added: "Claygate can be proud of the band's contribution to such an important event."

The band's weekend in Belgium also include two concerts, one in Ypres town square and one at the bandstand in Ostend, both of which were very well received by large, enthusiastic audiences.

BOWLS – SEASON OF SUCCESS

Claygate Bowls Club, based at Wingham Court, enjoyed a successful summer, its teams winning many of their friendly matches against other clubs and its team of four (pictured right) being beaten finalists by the narrowest of margins in a tournament held to mark Hershaw Bowling Club's 125th anniversary.

Claygate's annual President's Day Tournament was well attended and the cup won by Neil Macleod in an extra deciding end in the final against Peter Whitehead after the match ended level. And in an internal tournament

the men's winner was Lee McAdam, who beat Dennis Porter in the final, with Shirley Noel beating Jakki Wells in the women's final.



The friendly club also holds simple social events, such as drinks and pizza, and an end-of-season get-together. New members are always welcome. Just email Claygatebowls@gmail.com or visit claygatebowls.bowlsclub.net

'OUTSTANDING SEASON' FOR CRICKET CLUB

The 2025 season has been a remarkable one for Claygate Cricket Club, with successes in every corner of the club, from the senior teams to the junior section, and an ever-growing presence in the community.

The 1st XI enjoyed an outstanding season, finishing sixth on its debut in the Surrey Championship. In its first venture into this competitive league, the team showed resilience and skill, with superb performances throughout the season. The club's top run-scorer, Harry Holly, led the charge with 431 league runs, including a remarkable century against Kempton, which was a highlight of his excellent season.



second in a highly competitive seven-team league. The women's success marks a fantastic step forward for cricket at Claygate, and the team's enthusiasm and commitment to the game were evident throughout the season.

Claygate's junior section continues to thrive, and one of the key highlights of the year was the Under-13 girls' team. Finishing third in their league, the team showed great promise, with stand-out performances from a number of players. Marcie Coleman was particularly impressive, taking seven wickets in a single match and finishing the season with a total of 18 wickets – a brilliant achievement that reflects her growing reputation as a key player in the club.

Off the field, the club remained deeply rooted in the community, hosting and helping with various local events, including running barbecues. As the season came to a close with the annual end-of-season awards in November, it was clear that 2025 had been a fun and successful year, filled with camaraderie, talent, and community spirit. The club looks forward to even more success in 2026.



The ladies' team also made significant strides in 2025, as it entered a first season of competitive softball cricket. The squad quickly adapted to the challenges of league play, finishing

CLAYGATE BRIDGE CLUB

The Bridge Club, based at Claygate Centre, has had to adapt to changes in the venue's administration, while continuing to run its well-attended Monday evening sessions. For example, without warning, members recently arrived to discover the square tables it used had been replaced by large circular ones – which made

play awkward. In response, two committee members drove to the English Bridge Union headquarters in Aylesbury to buy square ones.

The Club typically draws in about 40 players each Monday from a pool of 70 members. The annual Club Championship was won on the final hand of the final round by Meena Samani and Fiona Ross.

TENUTO ACHIEVES A FIRST WITH FULLY STAGED OPERA

What is believed to be the first fully staged opera to be performed in Claygate is taking place at the Village Hall. Tenuto Opera is presenting its "Butterfly and Bat" evening with abridged versions of Puccini's tragic opera "Madame Butterfly" (sung in Italian) in the first half, and Johann Strauss II's comic opera "Die Fledermaus" (sung in English) after the interval.

Both are narrated in English and will entertain all ages, featuring "the best bits" of both of these much-loved operas, from Friday October 17 to Sunday October 19.

Tenuto Opera (previously known as KT Tenuto) is a group of talented, classically trained singers who love to bring quality performances to local audiences. Among



the group are professional and semi-professional singers and gifted amateurs and it has performed concerts in Claygate and Esher for several years.

The group is directed by Peter Crockford, musical director, and Trevor Alexander, singer and stage director. Tenuto Opera says it is delighted to be playing at Claygate Village Hall, with its fantastic stage and lighting facilities: "It's such a wonderful local venue in which to perform."

Tickets (if you receive this copy of The Courier in time) are available at www.ticketsource.co.uk/kttenuto. They are £25 and £10 for students. Visit www.kttenuto.com for more information.

CHORAL SOCIETY TO SING A WORK OF 'GRANDEUR'

Charles Gounod's St Cecilia Mass is to be performed by the Claygate Choral Society in November. This beautiful work prompted fellow composer Saint-Saens to say he was at first "dazzled, then charmed, then conquered" by its "simplicity, grandeur and serene light".

David Terry, the Society's highly acclaimed new musical director, will be conducting the choral performance and music for harp and organ, featuring organist Gareth Giles. The concert is on Saturday November 22 at 7.30pm in Holy Trinity Church, Claygate, with tickets available via the society website and on the door. It promises to be an evening to remember.

The Society is also keen to welcome new members and the concert offers an ideal opportunity to anyone considering joining to hear the choir sing. There are no auditions and the Society promises a friendly welcome. For more information, visit www.claygatechoralsociety.co.uk



RIPIENO CHOIR CELEBRATES MUSIC OF ORLANDO GIBBONS

The Ripieno Choir kicks off its 2025/2026 season with a celebration of the music of Orlando Gibbons, one of the great English composers straddling the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I and who died 400 years ago. Gibbons is renowned for his keyboard music, but even more for his great choral works, both sacred and secular.

The choir, which includes five singers from Claygate, will sing madrigals, including "The Silver Swan" and great anthems such as the six-part "Hosanna to the Son of David", led by Patrick Allies, the choir's superb conductor. The performance takes place at St Mary's church, Ewell, on Sunday November 23 at 3pm. Tickets are available at ripienochoir.org.uk/concerts/tickets

The Ripieno Choir was founded nearly 80 years ago by a group of friends in the Weybridge and Esher area to sing mainly madrigals and carols. Over the years it has grown into a 30-strong chamber choir which, although it does sing music from every period, concentrates on great music of the renaissance and baroque eras. Anyone interested in joining and who can sight-read music, is encouraged to email join@ripienochoir.org.uk. The choir is currently looking for a tenor and a bass.

'ASTONISHING' YOUNG STRING QUARTET VISIT CLAYGATE

One of Europe's leading young string quartets and prolific competition winners performs in Claygate's Holy Trinity Church on Saturday November 15 at 7.30pm. The Fibonacci String Quartet (right) has been praised for its "astounding tonal palette and dynamics" and plays the third concert in the Oxshott and Cobham Music Society's 2025-26 season. It will play quartets by Haydn, Janáček and Beethoven. There will be a free pre-concert talk at 6.30pm.

Now in its 83rd season, the OCMS was formed in 1942 with a recital given by concert pianist, Moura Lympny, in her home in Oxshott. Since then it has grown to present an annual season of six varied world-class quality chamber music concerts from September to March, all in Holy Trinity Church.

Tickets for individual concerts cost either £22 or £25 (with concessions), while Society membership provides entry to all of the season's six concerts for £100. New members are always extremely welcome: for information visit ocms-music.org.uk or contact Cherry Eddy, membership secretary, at cherryeddy102@gmail.com.

The fourth concert in the series, on January 24 at 5.30pm, features Hungarian-born pianist Daniel Lehardt, who returns to Claygate for his second solo recital. The New



York Times described him as playing with "power, poetry and formidable technique". He will play pieces by Beethoven, Schumann, Chopin and Liszt.

On February 28 Connaught Brass will play arrangements of varied works from JS Bach to Fauré, as well as a new commission by British composer, Dani Howard, plus an exciting version of Kurt Weill's Threepenny Opera. The season concludes on March 28, when guitarist Arie Dakesian's programme will include works by Italian composers, with arrangements and compositions by the artist, as well as Spanish folk music.

HOAXWIND BAND WILL GET VILLAGE HALL ROCKING

The exciting sounds of rock music are about to fill Claygate Village Hall.

On Saturday October 25, the venue will be reverberating to the space rocker sound of London-based Hoaxwind, a band that plays the music of the renowned Hawkwind. Moosha Poosha will play in support – they are described as a "Latino punk" band.

Doors open at 7.30pm, concert 8pm. Tickets £10 (plus £1 online booking fee) from wegottickets.com/event/666638



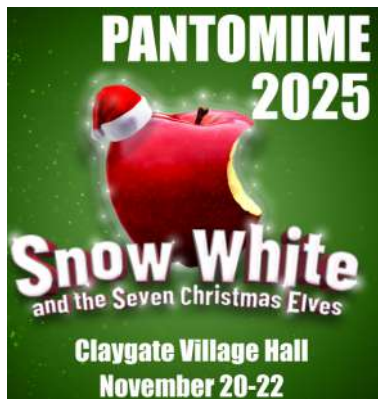


Taking a bow: the cast of 'Don't Get Your Vicars in a Twist' won rave reviews for their 'perfectly delivered humour'

IT'S SNOW WHITE – BUT NOT QUITE AS WE KNOW IT...

A superb cast is rehearsing hard for this year's Claygate pantomime – a twist on the usual Snow White story. Claygate Dramatic Society's production of "Snow White and the Seven Christmas Elves" will be performed in the Village Hall from Thursday November 20 to Saturday November 22 – with two matinees on the Saturday afternoon.

The large cast, including several seasoned actors and several young performers from the Stagecoach dance and theatre group, which holds classes at Claygate Primary School, is being directed by Dawn Lacey, who has been responsible for the Society's hugely successful run of pantomimes.



The plot revolves around the heroine Snow White and the evil Queen Miserables, with jeopardy, excitement and laughs along the way.

Pantomime tickets are now on sale: email belitacharrington@hotmail.co.uk, or call her on 020 8398 8660. They can also be bought by post via the society's website – claygatedramaticsociety.co.uk.

CHAOTIC FARCE TURNS INTO A TRIUMPH

Theatregoers left the Village Hall with big smiles after watching the Society's hilarious production of "Don't Get Your Vicars in a Twist". An elaborate set, involving the construction of walls containing seven doors and a staircase, was built by Greg Moreton and helpers; it created the perfect backdrop for this tale of misunderstandings and mayhem. It was directed by Samuel Helen – who also played one of the leading roles.

One reviewer said: "The colourful cast of characters, streamlined staging (including the running in and out of many doors at precisely the right time!) and perfectly delivered humour, kept every second new and fresh for the audience...The village hall was echoing with laughter!"

The Society always welcomes new members. To get involved, on stage or behind the scenes, email claygatedramaticsociety@gmail.com.

NATASHA KAPLINSKY TALKS TO CLAYGATE

Newsreader, presenter and journalist, Natasha Kaplinsky, will be revealing insights into her life and work at Holy Trinity Church, Claygate, on Thursday November 13, as the third in the series of "Castaway Island Discs" held in aid of Save The Children.

Natasha, who also won the first series of "Strictly Come Dancing", is a global ambassador for the Save The Children charity, President of

Barnardos, Chair of the Royal Ballet School, and President of the British Board of Film Classification. Taking a break from such a busy schedule, she will sit down and talk about her career and choose a selection of music to illustrate various aspects and events in her life.

There will be a welcome drink and canapes in the church foyer from 7pm, where there will be an opportunity to chat with Natasha – although it is expected to be busy. The presentation begins at 7.30. Tickets are £30: email stcesher@gmail.com to book.



PARISH COUNCILLORS

DONNA HOLT

Council chair and ex officio member of all committees

GIL BRAY

Council vice chair; chair of Environment, Highways and Transport Committee; member of Planning Committee

ANTHONY SHEPPARD

Chair of Planning Committee

MICHAEL COLLON

Vice chair of Planning Committee

SAMANTHA BINGHAM

Member of Planning Committee; member of Staffing Committee

GEOFF HERBERT

Member of Planning Committee; ; member of Environment, Highways and Transport Committee

STEPHEN ELLIS

Member of Planning Committee

JOHN BURNS

Member of Planning Committee; member of Environment, Highways and Transport Committee

HADLEIGH MOON

Member of Environment, Highways and Transport Committee

JENNY FRENCH

Member of Environment, Highways and Transport Committee

NON-VOTING ADVISERS

PLANNING COMMITTEE: JOHN BAMFORD

**ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE:
CAROLINE STEVENSON, MARK TYMIENIECKI**

TREE WARDENS: VANESSA RELLEEN, JOHN OVENDEN

**ADVISORY COMMITTEES FOR IMPLEMENTING CLAYGATE: THE WAY
FORWARD ARE CHAIRED BY:**

NEW DEVELOPMENT & HOUSING: CLIVE THOMPSON

HEALTH, WELLBEING & LEISURE: Cllr JENNY FRENCH

SHOPS & BUSINESSES: LEO TYE

TRANSPORT & PARKING: SIMON HOPE

ENVIRONMENT & SUSTAINABILITY: TBA

PARISH CLERK

DAWN LACEY

Email: clerk@claygateparishcouncil.gov.uk

or call **07741 848719**. This is a part-time role and messages will be answered as quickly as possible

Please check [the Parish Council's website](#) and the community notice boards outside the Village Hall and next to Torrington Close for agendas and confirmation of meeting dates, times and venues, which can be subject to change. This information is available, at the latest, three working days prior to each meeting. Anyone wishing to speak at a meeting should let the Parish Clerk know in advance. Please also see our [Facebook](#) page.

CLAYGATE COURIER EDITOR Peter Whitehead

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday October 23, 7.30pm
Treetops Pavilion

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Thursday October 23, 8.30pm
Treetops Pavilion

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday November 20, 7.30pm
Treetops Pavilion

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday November 20, 8.30pm
Treetops Pavilion

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday December 11, 7.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Thursday December 11, 8.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday January 8, 7.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday January 8, 8.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday February 5, 7.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday February 5, 8.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Thursday February 12, 7.30pm
Treetops Pavilion

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday March 5, 7.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Thursday March 5, 8.30pm
Village Hall - small hall

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

Thursday March 19, 7.30pm
Village Hall - main hall

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Thursday April 9, 7.30pm
Treetops Pavilion

ENVIRONMENT, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Thursday April 9, 8.30pm
Treetops Pavilion

A full list of future meetings is available on the [Parish Council's website](#)