

Summer 2021



THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
KINGSTON
UPON THAMES

Look who's

BACK

TRANSFORMING
KINGSTON

Kingston's
COVID-19
heroes

Your

KINGSTON

kingston.gov.uk

YOUR LOCAL PLAN / SPOTLIGHT ON THE COMMUNITY / SUPPORTING WILDLIFE / SUMMER EVENTS

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When you have finished reading me, please **recycle me!**

Get in touch



COMMENTS AND FEEDBACK

If you'd like to contribute to the magazine or have any feedback, please contact: communications@kingston.gov.uk



DIFFERENT FORMATS

If you require this document in a different format please contact us on **020 8547 5000**.



SIGN UP TO OUR E-NEWSLETTER

You can also sign up to our e-newsletter at kingston.gov.uk/newsletter



LET'S TALK

You can join our engagement portal to have your say on local issues: kingstonletstalk.co.uk



CONNECTED KINGSTON

A one-stop-shop for local activities and services and a chance to connect with your community. Visit connectedkingston.uk



MORE INFORMATION

For more information about the council, to contact us or to report an issue, visit kingston.gov.uk



I became **Leader** just as the first **lockdown** took hold and I'm **immensely proud** of the council's **response** to the pandemic.

We started with a clear vision of what needed to be done and we knew our main focus was to protect residents who were most vulnerable.

Our volunteer hub was called 'Kingston Stronger Together' and could not have been more aptly named.

Thank you to our partners in the voluntary sector and to everyone who volunteered to help our communities through these difficult times.

While we've put our shoulder to the wheel to tackle the impact of the pandemic over the past year, we have also been focusing on Kingston's recovery.

We are determined to plan for the future to make our borough an even better place to live when COVID-19 is behind us.

As we look forward, there is so much for the council to do in shaping a new vision for Kingston.

We will do this through our Local Plan, reimagining the town centre and our high streets for a post-pandemic world, and by building homes for everyone through our small sites programme and ambitious regeneration projects.

One of our biggest projects is building a brand new leisure centre on the Kingfisher site, with swimming pools and other state-of-the-art sports and leisure facilities. It's part of a plan to celebrate our beautiful heritage buildings at the library and the museum and transform the whole space into a leisure quarter.

Alongside this, we will continue to invest in our parks and open spaces, work to reduce fly tipping and boost employment prospects across the borough. More than 400 jobs have already been set up through the roll out of the National Kickstart Programme and we have launched our new Work Match scheme with our partners.

The past year has shown how much we can achieve when we work together - the council is determined to carry on working collaboratively with all our partners - the health service, the voluntary sector, the business community and, most important of all, with residents. In a hugely changed world, our community holds the key to us building a stronger future. With dwindling public funding and growing critical need, we should decide together how we preserve and enhance all the services we cherish. It won't be easy, but Kingston is better placed than many to succeed.

Councillor Caroline Kerr
Leader of Kingston Council

Welcome
to our printed summer
edition of *Your Kingston*

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TRANSFORMING KINGSTON



Kingston is a unique and historic borough. We are ambitious to celebrate what's special about it and shape a future in which all our residents can thrive. We are inviting the whole community, across the borough, to have their say in that future.

Breathing new life into Kingston town centre

We all know we have to build a future for Kingston beyond shopping. High street retail will always be important but, as habits change, we need to find new ways to attract people to the town. We want to celebrate our rich heritage and promote our vibrant culture. The council is encouraging everyone who lives, works and visits Kingston to reimagine the town centre and think about how we can embrace opportunities to breathe new life into it. We want to build on our strengths and offer much more than traditional shopping to ensure the town is well-placed to thrive in the new social and economic climate.

In the spring, we held a listening exercise to hear views from across the borough and from different communities on the future of the Kingfisher, Cattle Market and Guildhall sites.

More than 2,500 of you shared your thoughts through our survey, and further feedback was gathered through a series of public webinars and meetings. Thank you to everyone who took part!



Your suggestions emphasised the importance of creating a new leisure facility with a swimming pool. You also told us you'd like an attractive destination with improved indoor and outdoor public spaces and enhanced connections with Kingston Library and Kingston Museum.

Many of you said you'd like more cafés, restaurants and accessible, open areas to gather with friends and family.

People were also keen on making more of the historic Hogsmill River, which runs through the Guildhall complex.



As part of making Kingston better for everyone, we are committed to delivering a brand-new, modern community leisure, wellbeing and cultural destination on the site of the Kingfisher Leisure Centre. This will be accessible for everyone and offer a range of top class facilities.

We will also be looking at the future of our own accommodation, as COVID-19 has highlighted that it's not being used to its full potential and the money we spend to maintain it could be better used on vital services. We are therefore proposing the Guildhall site be put up for regeneration with the Guildhall itself being repurposed.

We are pushing forward with replacing the Kingfisher as soon as possible, as we know many people are missing this valuable amenity. Early designs will be shared with you to get your feedback over the summer. For more information about the plans and how to comment on them please visit kingstonletstalk.co.uk/transform-kingston

Shaping the future together: our vision for Kingston

What should the borough look like in 20 years' time?

The Local Plan is the key document which sets our vision and objectives for future development in the borough. It will define what's important to have in our neighbourhoods, what kind of homes we build and where they should be, as well as where we need medical centres, schools, parks, community centres and much more.

The London Plan, set by the Mayor of London, requires Kingston to deliver 964 homes a year.

SHAPING THE FUTURE TOGETHER
Our vision for Kingston
2023 - 2041

Share your thoughts and ideas by **30 September**
www.kingston.gov.uk/localplan

These targets are not within our control. We have no choice but to deliver the set number of homes. We want to hear where you think these homes can be built.

We would like to work with you to help create our Local Plan, which will run to 2041. It's important we get it right.

We started the process to shape a new plan in 2019 and we had over 1,500 responses - thank you to everyone who took part. Your views are being included in this next stage. Since then, we've seen so much change - the London Plan has come into force and has set us a really challenging housing target, COVID-19 has changed the way we all live our lives, the Government has changed the planning rules and Brexit has happened. As well as all of this, we, as a council, have declared a climate emergency.

This is our Local Plan for our borough. We can all shape it.

Share your thoughts

Please get in touch with your thoughts and feedback by Thursday 30 September 2021.



WEBSITE

You can visit our website kingston.gov.uk/localplan



EMAIL

You can email us at localplan@kingston.gov.uk



PHONE

Or call our freephone call-back service on 0800 008 6309.



WORKING TOGETHER

to lead Kingston through the pandemic



Kingston Council has worked in collaboration with partners to protect the most vulnerable and lead our borough through the most difficult times in living memory. As always, our residents stepped up.



Spotlight on the Rangers

Our Neighbourhood Rangers have been at the heart of our response, delivering food, personal protective equipment (PPE), prescriptions and so much more to help our most vulnerable residents.

"Residents remember me mainly from all the prescription and food deliveries, and often call my name in the street. The council really put in a lot of hard work to help our vulnerable residents, and it's been a privilege to be involved."

Moon - Neighbourhood Ranger

"One memory that stands out is of a family who have been self-isolating for over a year. Although they couldn't answer the door to me, they always thanked me and left me a card, which I still have. It's a very humbling experience."

Jackie - Neighbourhood Ranger

SPRING 2020

As the country moved into national lockdown, Kingston's businesses, charities and residents came together to look after our most vulnerable.



The Kingston Stronger Together (KST) Hub was set up to support those in need.



Over 350

volunteers in the KST Hub

Between March and May 2020 more than

18k gloves

21k masks

35k aprons

were delivered to care workers and other critical staff

Over 8k



calls, texts and letters were sent to council tenants offering support

Over 500

people became library members as the service moved online

About 3100



households supported with food packages and prescriptions

WINTER 2020-21

Our partners in the NHS worked tirelessly to begin the biggest vaccine roll-out in their history, starting with the most vulnerable.

"The positive and open way in which partners in Kingston engaged and were prepared to 'do what it takes', from the Leader of the Council to every one of the volunteers, has been the highlight for me."

John Ryan - Borough Commander for Kingston upon Thames London Fire Brigade

"I'm incredibly proud to have worked with so many dedicated people from all our partner organisations, who truly are doing everything they can to support those most vulnerable."

Jen Edwards - Acting Director of Public Affairs, Kingston University

SPRING 2021

With cases rising in Kingston at the time of print, it is especially important that we all get the vaccine when it is offered, and continue to follow the latest guidance. Don't let all of our sacrifices go to waste.

For the latest guidance, visit kingston.gov.uk/Covid19-latest - for information about the vaccine, visit nhs.uk/COVIDvaccine



SUPPORTING PEOPLE TO THRIVE & PROSPER



SPOTLIGHT ON THE COMMUNITY

We value working in partnership with charities and community interest groups, bringing people together even throughout the pandemic. Here we speak to Sarah from Voices of Hope.



What does Voices of Hope do?

We're a young charity (established 2019) with a huge vision. Our aim is to help build hope and inspire change within our community. We run projects to improve health.

How do you work with the council?

We've really appreciated working with Kingston Council throughout the pandemic. We've collaborated on a number of initiatives to ensure that residents in need have access to healthy food.



These included:

- Kingston Food HUB (meals on wheels)
- Kingston Stronger Together Hub
- The BRITE Box project (healthy meal kits for families)

Achieving for Children were key partners in working with schools and arranging deliveries.

What are you most proud of?

How we adapted, supporting those in need, despite restrictions. Our foundations are in choirs and supporting women. Like lots of charities, we had to work out how to still do this while shutting our in-person services.

Delivering healthy meals to vulnerable/isolated people, and helping with food insecurity generally were significant areas that we felt we could make a difference. Our projects have grown from there.

What initiatives are you running at the moment?

We run choirs for all ages and abilities and the Sisterhood Sanctuary, open to all women but especially those who've been through health challenges, domestic violence, assault, or abuse.

We've continued the BRITE Box Project and the Good Food Co-Op, which makes healthy food (fresh fruit and veg boxes) accessible and affordable. We recently launched the Active Breathing Course (ABC), a six week free course helping restore lung function and capacity through breathing and singing exercises. We've run six courses helping those suffering long COVID, long term respiratory issues, or anxiety/fatigue.

To get involved, become a volunteer, donate or simply find out more visit: voh.org.uk



YOUR COUNCIL

We couldn't do it without you

Government funding for Kingston Council has been reduced over several years. We received £66m of general funding from central Government in 2010. This has been cut year on year and we now receive £0. This makes us very dependent on your council tax to fund vital services.

For more information about this year's budget, visit kingston.gov.uk/council-tax-budget



Our overall budget of £145.7m will concentrate on supporting the most vulnerable and what matters to communities. 55% will be spent on Adult Social Care and Children's Services. In February, we increased council tax by 1.99%, with an additional 3% to support Adult Social Care Services.

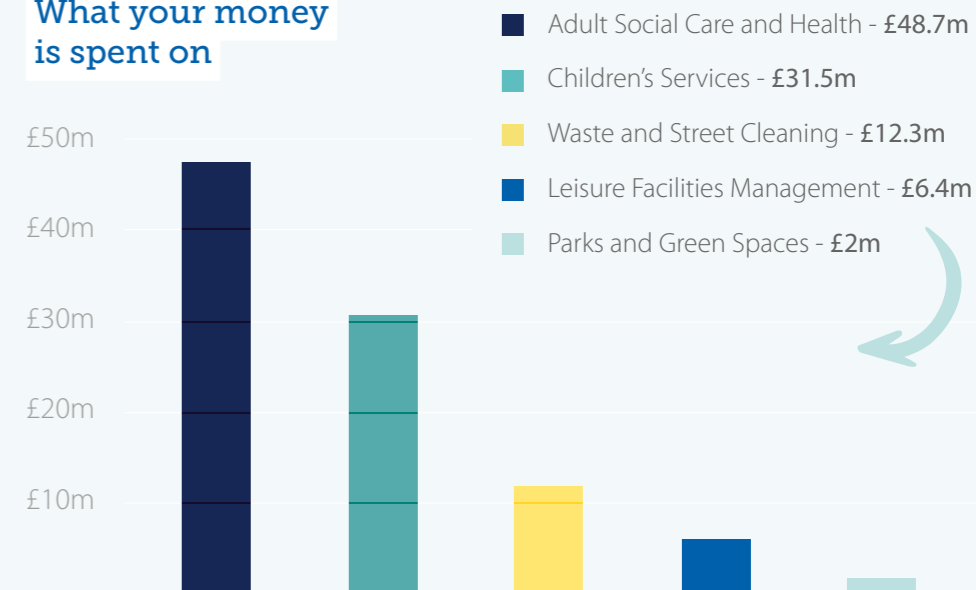
The total increase in council tax for 2021-22 of 4.99% is to meet growing

MAKING KINGSTON BETTER TOGETHER

demand and offset reduced funding from the Government. The Kingston element of the increase is equivalent to approximately £1.55 a week extra for a B and D household.

Over the last ten years we have saved £117m with your help, but we need to go further.

What your money is spent on



Your council tax will help to pay for services like these:



LIBRARIES

We're spending £1.8m on improving and maintaining our library services. In order to stay in touch with our residents we've created a digital offer including the country's first live streamed rhyme time, a virtual job club, supporting schools with home learning and much more.



EMPLOYMENT

With jobless numbers expected to rise by 3,800, we're focusing on boosting employment across Kingston. We've paid out almost £49m in COVID support grants to nearly 9,000 businesses, with an additional £1.6m going to over 350 local firms. We've also launched our Work Match scheme, which links people with jobs, and set up more than 400 jobs through the National Kickstart Programme.



SOCIAL CARE FOR ALL

55% (£79.9m) of our budget will be spent on social care. Our Adult Social Care Services have been rated in the top 10% of local authorities for performance by the Impower INDEX. Alongside our Children's Services, this places us in the top 3% of councils nationally for social care.



PARKS AND GREEN SPACES

We're spending £2m on protecting and enhancing our parks and green spaces. We have invested £1.3m into revitalising playgrounds across the borough through our Community Parks Programme.



WORKING TOWARDS A CLEANER, GREENER KINGSTON

We are embracing a greener future across the borough from working to tackle fly tipping to boosting the borough's rich biodiversity and encouraging wildlife to thrive.



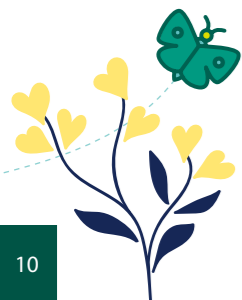
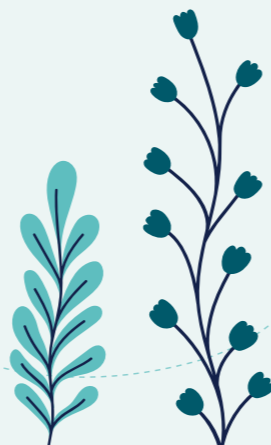
Supporting wildlife

Introducing WildWays

To help boost local biodiversity and introduce some much needed colour to our highways, we are now trialling a new approach to managing our roadside grass verges.

Eight 'WildWays' sites have been introduced across the borough and, over time, rich wildflower meadows will form within them, providing a source of forage for local butterflies and bumblebees.

To find out more about the process involved and to have your say on the trials visit: kingstonletstalk.co.uk/wildways



Bringing back the water vole

We are thrilled to say that water voles will be returning to the Hogsmill in Spring 2022.

The project, led by the community and coordinated by Citizen Zoo (an organisation working to restore nature and habitats) will see the return of the UK's fastest declining mammal. Thirty years ago, the Hogsmill was teeming with this charismatic little rodent, but unfortunately water voles became extinct in Kingston in 2017. However, a group of dedicated volunteers have been working tirelessly with our Biodiversity Officer, Elliott Newton and the South East River Trust to improve the habitat and bring these important mammals back.

None of these projects would be possible if it wasn't for the amazing commitment of voluntary groups and residents.

Thank you to everyone who is working so hard to enhance our local biodiversity and make Kingston an even more wonderful place to live and work.

To keep up to date with what the council is doing to boost biodiversity, please follow our Instagram [@kingston_council](https://www.instagram.com/kingston_council)

Fly tipping - the facts

What is a fly tip?

Waste or items that have been dumped illegally.

What are the consequences of fly tipping?

It is a criminal offence and can mean a £400 fixed penalty notice, a fine of up to £50,000 or a 12 month prison sentence if convicted in a Magistrates Court.

Examples of fly tipped material:

- Materials left from home improvement, such as furniture, mattresses, rubble and wooden planks.
- Black sacks, carrier bags of rubbish and cardboard packaging left in the wrong place or left out on the wrong day.
- Items left outside charity shops.

What effect does fly tipping have on the borough?

It has a negative impact on residents and the environment. Dealing with fly tipping diverts council resources from supporting essential services.

What is the council doing to tackle fly tipping?

We're working with our waste contractor Veolia to identify and target fly tipping hotspots by educating residents and businesses about how and when to dispose of their rubbish responsibly and legally. Where there is strong evidence of fly tipping and it is in the public interest to do so, the council will take firm action against those responsible.

How can you help?

- Report a fly tip kingston.gov.uk/fly_tipping
- Only put your bins out on collection day and where they are meant to go - kingston.gov.uk/when-is-my-collection
- If you have rubbish that won't fit in your bin, book a trip to the Household Reuse and Recycling Centre kingston.gov.uk/recyclingcentre or a bulky waste collection kingston.gov.uk/Bulkywastecollections
- Don't leave items outside charity shops.
- Only donate items to charity shops when they are open and can accept them.





CELEBRATING KINGSTON

SUMMER EVENTS



Come and join in the Summer of Fun!

Events will take place on the grass area next to the Museum on Wheatfield Way where the unique Umbrella Tree can be found.

Themed events will be:

22-23 July: **Environment**

29-30 July: **Environment**

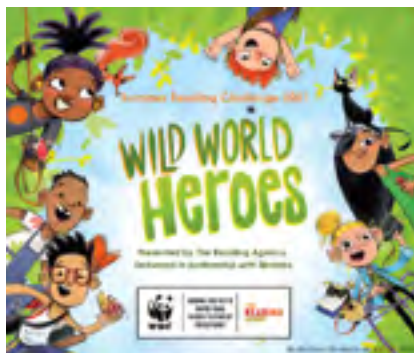
5-6 August: **Storytelling**

12-13 August: **Wellbeing**

19-20 August: **Heritage - Movement**

26-27 August: **Heritage - The Natural World**

Plans may change due to COVID-19 guidelines - please keep an eye open for posters, updates on the council website and social media [@kinglibheritage](#) [#LetsDoKingston](#) for current information.



Get ready for Wild World Heroes - Summer Reading Challenge for children

Launching on 10 July and open to all children aged 4-12, the Summer Reading Challenge has teamed up with WWF to create a nature theme that will inspire you to stand up for the planet. Wild World Heroes will feature amazing books, awesome rewards and plenty of ideas for taking care of our environment. Sign up at your local library or at summerreadingchallenge.org.uk

International Youth Arts Festival

Organised by Creative Youth, the International Youth Arts Festival will be returning this summer with live performances from 2-11 July. Find the full programme at: iyafestival.org.uk/iyaf-2021

Achieving for Children

Take a look at all the events taking place for children, young people and families over the summer holidays by visiting kr.afcinfo.org.uk/events

Planning to hold your own event?

You can find guidance on how to hold an event in Kingston on our website. This includes how we can bring people together safely following COVID-19 guidance. For more information visit kingston.gov.uk/host-event-kingston

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