

Harrow People

SUMMER 2024

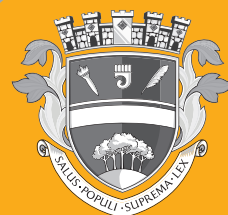
The London Borough of Harrow magazine

String star

Down town with Harrow's harpist

Growing places

A new special school for Harrow



LONDON BOROUGH OF
HARROW



Learn Harrow OPEN DAY

Thursday 5 September

(Courses and employment advice for adults aged 19 and over)

10am - 2pm

Kenton Learning Centre, 86 Glebe Avenue HA3 9LF

- Find out more about our English, ESOL, maths, vocational and digital skills courses
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- Visit our creche and meet our staff

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email learnharrow@harrow.gov.uk or call 020 8204 3576





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HARROW

London Borough of
Harrow, Forward Drive,
Harrow HA3 8FL
Tel: 020 8863 5611

Cover image

Harpist Robyn Hearts in
Harrow town centre

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gov.uk



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lbharrow



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Harrow People is
published four times a
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Comments, products and
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“Harrow’s new special school has the potential to shape many young lives”

I was proud to announce in February that the council had bought a site to locate and build a new special needs school. Getting a new special needs school in the borough is something the council has been trying to achieve for many years.

Since then, alongside the Children’s Services Cabinet Member, Cllr Hitesh Karia, and officers, I have worked hard to get funding from the Department for Education for it to go ahead. I’m now really pleased to say that in April we received the news that we had secured the funding from the government to provide the new school, which will offer 292 places for pupils with severe learning disabilities and autism aged from four to 19 years of age.

I am delighted that that we have managed to secure the land and funding and for this new school to be built. It’s an exciting prospect that has the potential to shape many young lives. There’s more information about the project inside. We also speak to the Headteacher of Alexandra School, which is expanding to offer 30 more places to primary-aged pupils

with learning difficulties. These are both positive developments that will help us to meet the needs of our young people and assist them to achieve their full potential.

In this magazine we also update you on some key projects which are really important to me including the enhancement of the town centre and our ongoing work to make our streets cleaner and safer. There’s also an update on the project to reopen the leisure centre pool. We also meet Robyn Hearts, a local musician who came to wider prominence recently following a viral social media post. Robyn is a licensed busker whose wonderful harp playing also offers enhancements to the town centre.

Cllr Paul Osborn
Leader of the Council,
London Borough of Harrow

Time for some summer fun

Kids and adults alike love the Holiday Activity and Food programme, back for another summer and ready to provide local children with stimulating activities and full tummies.

School-aged children who receive income-tested free school meals can pick from a free programme of activities covering sport, arts & crafts, performance, cooking, technology and more. These families will also continue to receive help from the council with the cost of food during school holidays through the Household Support Fund.

Learn more on the Young Harrow Foundation website, youngharrowfoundation.org where you'll also find a directory of other no and low-cost things to do that are open to all.



Steer the future of transport

What would make you change direction on how you currently navigate around Harrow? Could we steer you to travel more by walking, cycling or public transport? And what puts the brakes on sustainable transport options for you?

These are some of the questions we are asking you as part of Harrow's long term transport strategy consultation, which runs until 2 September.

We're committed to creating more pleasant neighbourhoods and town centres with better air quality, improved accessibility and sustainable travel opportunities for all. Our goal is a more accessible, safer and greener transport system for the borough.

Let us know if we're steering the right way at www.talk.harrow.gov.uk/harrow-transport-strategy



Staff from the council, Octavia Housing and Creative Support at Klute House

Affordable homes to help independent living

Something exciting is happening in Harrow. We're making final preparations with partners from Octavia Housing and care provider Creative Support to help the first residents move in to a new extra care housing scheme Klute Apartments.

The affordable housing scheme will support residents to live independent and healthy lives and feel more integrated into the local community.

It's all part of our priority to put residents first and support those in need. Watch this space as we share further updates in the coming weeks and months.

Support to stay safe and get scam smart

Research by Age UK suggests up to a fifth of over 50s fear answering their phone or opening the door because of the risk of scams.

The charity is on a mission to improve confidence and help us all to better protect ourselves. Here are a couple of things to watch out for – a cold-caller who raises a scary and expensive problem, like a roofing issue; or who pressurises you into a decision or a payment.

In situations like these, always seek a second opinion from someone you trust and never make a decision on the spot. Anyone wanting access to your property should also raise alarm bells. Whatever the circumstances, always ask to see ID – legitimate callers will be happy to provide. It's OK to reject, refuse or ignore any requests – only scammers will try to rush or panic you.

» Find out more at ageuk.org/scams.



Unlock opportunities for work and training

It can be challenging to know where to look for training and work opportunities. The West London Alliance, a group of seven boroughs including Harrow, have launched a Skills and Work Finder to help residents achieve their goals.

The directory brings together a wide range of training, events and employment support from local providers.

» If you are looking to upskill or get into work, or to register as a provider of training or employment opportunities, check out the directory at www.wlskillsandworkfinder.co.uk



Pool to reopen this autumn

Work to repair the ceilings above the pools at Harrow Leisure Centre is progressing well.

The main pool, the learner pool and the sauna have been out of action since a building inspection in March revealed that urgent ceiling work was necessary and a priority for the safety of both public and staff.

Everyone Active and the Council have worked hard to find temporary homes for swimming clubs and lessons over the summertime until they can return.

The rest of the leisure centre is fully open.

We'll reannounce the opening date in our email newsletter MyHarrowNews as soon as we can.

Grab a Gromit library card

Harrow Libraries have a unique offer for young readers this summer.

Continuing their project with stop-motion experts Aardman Animations, which has seen model-making and stop-motion workshops for families, libraries are issuing a special Gromit library card.

The card will be issued to children who sign up for free membership during the Summer Reading Challenge, which this year has the theme Marvellous Makers.

» With many more activities to come, check out What's On on pages 22-23 to find out more.



Helping Hongkonger community connect

A new community group is helping connect Hongkongers in Harrow.

The HK2HA group has been set up with a mission to aid social integration for newcomers. The group, supported by the Mayor of London, aims to provide a strong, supportive network.

There will be welcome events for people arriving from Hong Kong with leave to remain in the UK and wellbeing workshops.

HK2HA will also hold workshops on life in the UK, helping communities access services and navigate available support.

» Email hkbno@harrow.gov.uk or scan the QR code to see details of events and groups.



The UK's Hong Kong welcome scheme started in 2021

Your unwanted clothes collected for free

Each year we find a large amount of textiles in household waste bins that we're unable to recycle. Our recycling officers are on a mission to tackle that unnecessary waste and encourage local people to recycle and reuse.

Through our partnership with TRAIID a charity working to reuse and donate clothes, we've seen the amount of textiles incorrectly placed in bins falling dramatically as TRAIID household collections rise.

Thousands of items of clothing in good wearable condition are collected by TRAIID and resold. The funds raised go to projects that improve conditions and working practices in the textile industry. This free clothes collection service is open to all Harrow residents. Find out more at traid.org.uk.



Former Mayor raises £14k for charities



Former Harrow Mayor Cllr Ramji Chauhan has presented his chosen charities with over £14,000.

During an incredibly busy year, Cllr Chauhan attended 700 [CHECK] official engagements representing the borough and helping support causes close to his heart.

The money raised will go to RITA dementia appeal based at Northwick Park Hospital, and Centrepoint.

Better town centre starts to take shape

Our Enhancing Harrow Town Centre project is well underway, with construction work starting last month for people to meet, visit, shop and enjoy spending time.

The changes will mean some temporary disruption in town centre roads. Stay up to date on these by visiting www.harrow.gov.uk/planning-developments/enhancing-harrow-town-centre.

We'll also be putting up notices in advance of any temporary changes.

Work has also begun on a corner of Greenhill Way car park, installing a range of temporary buildings for art studios, retail and exhibition space.

Get the latest news and events straight to your inbox

Sign up at harrow.gov.uk/myharrownews



How would you be affected by changes to Council Tax Support?

Tell us before 27 October – consultation now open

The council is considering changing the amount of Council Tax Support that some people get towards their bill. We want your views on the proposed changes and any impact they would have on your household.

We're looking at this only because the amount of money the council is spending on Council Tax Support is rising significantly – by £5 million in the last 9 years. Across all of its services, the council needs to save more than £15 million

over the next three years – it's a challenge that many other councils are facing. The council needs to take action so it can continue to provide services that people rely on.

We want to make sure that Council Tax Support continues to be available to support our most vulnerable residents, including people with disabilities, now and in the future. We believe the fairest way to do that is to protect these people and pensioner households and ask others to contribute more.

Fill in our survey



Visit talk.harrow.gov.uk/cts or if you're unable to complete online call 020 8863 5611 for a paper copy.



Join us at an event



We will run events throughout the consultation. Come along to learn more about these proposals and how they might affect you – no appointment needed, just drop in. See details of more events on page 20

Thursday 22 August
10am to 1pm

■ Wealdstone library,
38-40 High Street, HA3 7AE

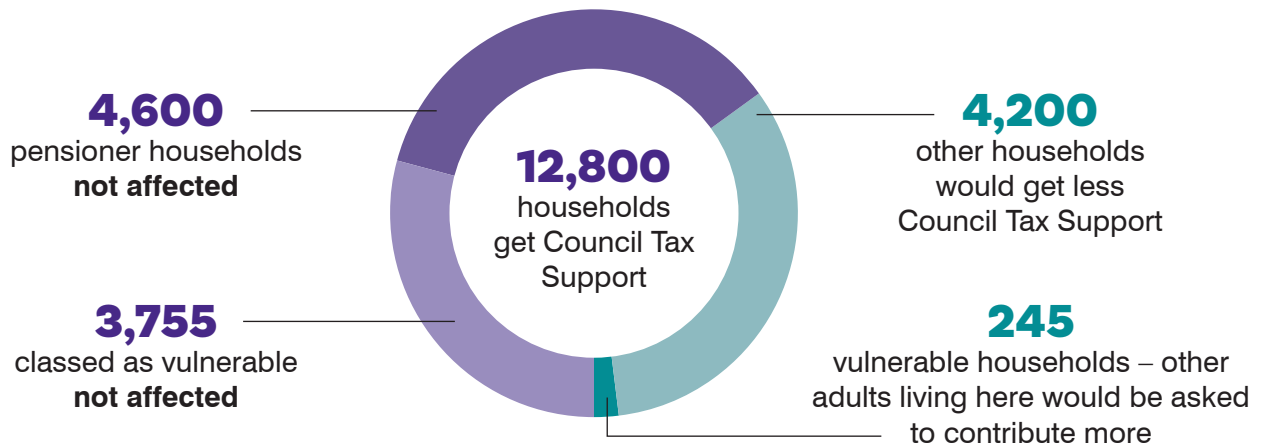
Tuesday 3 September,
10am to 12.30pm

■ Northolt Road Community
Hall, Northolt Road, HA2 0LS

Saturday 7 September,
11am to 3pm

■ Greenhill library, Perceval
Square, College Road,
HA1 1GX

Who would be affected by the proposals?



Pensioner households

Pensioner households could still get help to cover all of their Council Tax bill.

NO CHANGE

100%



All other households

The amount of Council Tax Support all other households get would go down – they could get help to cover half of their bill, down from a maximum of 70 percent currently.

50%

70%



Vulnerable households

Households classed as vulnerable could still get help to cover 86 percent of their Council Tax bill.

NO CHANGE

86%



All other households in higher band properties

These households in properties rated Bands E to H for Council Tax would be treated as if they lived in a Band D property. This means they would pay more Council Tax.

D

H



All households with other adults

In about 700 households there are one or more independent adults. They live with the person that gets Council Tax Support and their partner, if they have one, but don't rely on them for support. We already expect them to contribute towards the household's Council Tax bill. Under the changes, we'd ask these people to make a bigger contribution.

What help would be available?

We're looking at ways to help the people that would be most affected if these changes were introduced, including by offering a hardship fund. The survey asks for other ideas to manage any impact.

What happens next?

You have until 27 October to fill in our survey.

No decision has been made to make any of these changes – we'll look very carefully at the survey results before we make any decision to change Council Tax Support. Your views are essential and we'll keep you updated throughout.

Plucking the Hearts strings

“Harrow is definitely the friendliest town I’ve busked in”
– *Harpist Robyn Hearts*

Busking harpist Robyn Hearts has been performing in Harrow town centre for more than five years. In that time she has built quite a fanbase – and gained a little notoriety.

Robyn, who says she was always “mesmerised” by the instrument, was given a second-hand Celtic harp for her 17th birthday.

She decided to busk as a way of earning some pocket money while studying for her Bachelors degree in bass guitar.

Since then she has become a regular sight in Harrow town centre, building up a local fanbase with thousands of followers on social media.

Associated with ancient civilisation and classical music, Robyn admits her current inspiration has a more modern source. “My favourite song to play has to be anything from the Legend of Zelda franchise. I’m a huge fan of game music,” she says.

Robyn already had a large local following but went viral on social media earlier this year after she was filmed being challenged by a member of the public threatening to report her for begging.

Happily, Robyn had full permission from the council to perform, and is seen calmly continuing to play her soothing music during the confrontation.



Shoppers show their appreciation for Robyn’s music in the town centre

Robyn says: “The people of Harrow have shown nothing but support and positivity to my busking. Harrow is definitely the friendliest town I’ve busked in.

“It’s very rare that I encounter a ‘Karen’, which is probably why I could act so calm!”

Busking is a great way to gain valuable exposure as a blooming artist. Harrow has two designated pitches for licensed buskers. Anyone performing in a non-designated area will be asked to move and may be fined.

» If you’re a budding artist and would like to apply for a busking licence, search ‘Harrow busking licence’ to find out how.

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Tuesday 24th, Wednesday 25th and Thursday 26th September 2024

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(Please book via the school website from September)

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Cllr Salim Chowdhury at London Community Kitchen, his chosen charity for his mayoral year

New mayor offers food for thought

Unity and diversity is the theme for the Harrow's first Bangladeshi Mayor, Cllr Salim Chowdhury.

Harrow's 72nd Mayor will be raising funds for his chosen charity, London Community Kitchen – which helps residents struggling with food poverty.

Away from council business, Cllr Chowdhury's passion is food and he owns two restaurants in the borough.

"It's a privilege and honour to be appointed as the new Mayor of Harrow – and the first British-Bengali mayor," he said.

"As such, I'm reminded of just how diverse our borough is and why we should always celebrate this. I am looking forward to meeting people and community groups – it is these people that make Harrow so special.

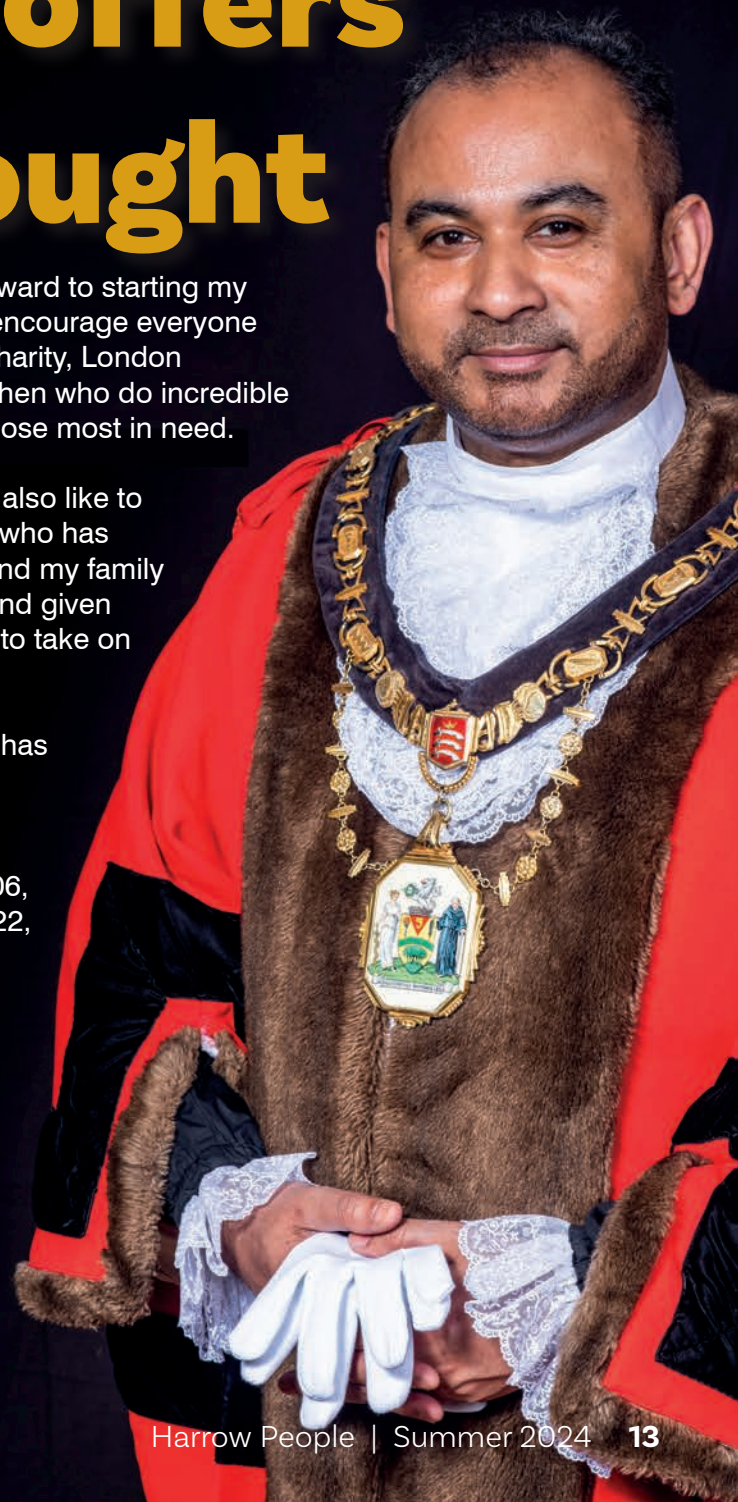
"I would like to thank the outgoing mayor who I have been supporting this last year as deputy. I will continue both his and the legacy of previous mayors to bring people together.

"While I look forward to starting my Mayoral year, I encourage everyone to support my charity, London Community Kitchen who do incredible things to help those most in need.

"Finally, I would also like to thank everyone who has supported me and my family over the years and given their trust in me to take on this role."

Cllr Chowdhury has lived in Harrow since the age of 17, becoming a councillor in 2006, and again in 2022, representing Pinner South and Centenary wards.

► Find out more or donate to London Community Kitchen at harrow.gov.uk/mayor



Hundreds of extra special school places on the way

With around 2,400 children with education, health and care plans in Harrow, meeting demand for school places is a challenge.

Significant work is underway to meet growing need, including a new special school at 265 The Ridgeway.

The council has also approved plans for 30 extra places at Alexandra School, which teaches children aged 4-11 with moderate learning difficulties.

Perdy Buchanan-Barrow, co-headteacher at Alexandra School, says: "We're really pleased the council is partnering with us on this. We want to meet the needs of Harrow pupils first and foremost. So, being able to support more children is great."



The expansion would see the school site and buildings redeveloped, the introduction of a new food technology room and more facilities for targeted curriculum work. The improvements will also give every classroom direct access to outdoor space.

Ms Buchanan-Barrow says they're not underestimating the change ahead.

"It will be a challenge but I know the team are up for it," she says.

"We will need to recruit new teachers and Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and that presents its own challenges but we're good at training our own. We have a learning support assistant who's just done the apprenticeship route to become a teacher this year and another one who will do it next year.

"Our priority is making sure we continue to meet the needs of our existing pupils and the needs of our new pupils as they join us at Alexandra."

Meanwhile, the new school at The Ridgeway will bring an extra 292 school places for local children with complex needs. This will bring significant benefits to families in Harrow and the council – reducing the costs associated with travel and outer borough school placement.

This will be Harrow's first special school for 20 years.

Alexandra School children will see improved facilities after expansion plans were agreed



“It will be a challenge but I know
the team are up for it”
– Perdy Buchanan-Barrow,
Alexandra School

Meeting needs



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22 Harrow People | Autumn 2023

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Day of action

**FLAGSHIP
ACTION**

Keeping Harrow Safe

Another successful day of action saw teams from the council, the police and other partners join Harrow Business Improvement District to tackle anti-social behaviour and safety issues in Harrow town centre.

Two arrests were made, with stop and searches and parking checks also carried out. There were also business compliance checks, as well as littering and fly-tipping investigations.

Since April, we've held four targeted days of action, working with the police to address local issues and ensuring residents and communities feel safe – part of our commitment to restore pride in Harrow.

We've shared safety advice and information as well as tackling anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping, helped homeless people, and carried out weapon sweeps and blue badge checks at events in South Harrow, Edgware and Sudbury Hill.

Further days and nights of action will follow throughout the year.



'Council teams join the Police and Harrow Business Improvement District for a day of action in Harrow town centre'



Day of action



How would you be affected by changes to Council Tax Support?



**HAVE
YOUR SAY**
Consultation
open until
27 October



talk.harrow.gov.uk/cts

or call 020 8863 5611 and ask for a paper copy

**Drop in to one of our events to learn more about
these proposals and how they might affect you**

**Thursday 22 August
10am to 1pm**

■ Wealdstone library,
38-40 High Street,
HA3 7AE

**Saturday 7 September
11am to 3pm**

■ Greenhill library,
Perceval Square,
College Road, HA1 1GX

**Tuesday 17 September
10am to 3pm**

■ Conversation Café,
St Peters Church,
Sumner Road, HA1 4BX

**Tuesday 3 September
10am to 12.30pm**

■ Northolt Road
Community Hall,
Northolt Road, HA2 0LS

**Monday 16 September
2pm to 5pm**

■ Greenhill library,
Perceval Square,
College Road, HA1 1GX

**Wednesday 9, October
4pm to 7.30pm**

■ Julie Cook Hall,
Augustine Road,
HA3 5NW



LONDON BOROUGH OF
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Are you looking after someone else's child?

That might make you a 'private foster carer'.

It's important that you're registered with the council.

We're here to help, and can offer you advice and support, so please get in touch by calling

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HARROW ARTS CENTRE

harrowarts.com

Entertainment

Until 30 August

■ Featuring art from local community members, this exhibition (curated by Harrow Open Studios) showcases entertainment experienced in Harrow past, present and future.

Desi Central Comedy Show

21 September | 7.30pm – 9.45pm | £21

■ Desi Central returns with another hilarious line-up. So round up your friends and family and join us for an uplifting night of laughter with this infamous tour.

Boiler House Festival

Come along and support local talent with the Boiler House Festival. Performances will take place throughout the month, featuring an array of original talent in theatre, music, comedy, visual arts, dance and spoken word. More details online or through the Box Office.

HEADSTONE MANOR & MUSEUM

headstonemanor.org

Headstone Village Show

26 August | 12pm – 5pm
| from £2.50

■ Come along to this magnificent village fair – guaranteed to be a fun-filled

day for the whole family. There will be a horticultural and craft show, entertainment for children and a vibrant market featuring artisan stalls, sustainable food, arts, and crafts from Duck Pond Market.

Black History Month Exhibition

Until 3 November | Community Cupboard in the Manor House | Free
This exhibition serves to celebrate the legacy of the Black community throughout history, and to help us learn about their challenges.

Lights, Camera, Kodak

Until 30 November | The

Community events

Open air puppet shows

18 and 20 August | 11am, 1pm and 3pm | Free | Harrow Town Centre

■ The popular town centre puppet shows will be returning this month. This year joining Punch & Judy will be Little Red Riding Hood, Cheeky Monkey and friends.

Free #DrBike check

31 August | 11am – 5pm | Stanmore Recreation Ground

■ Get a free bike check with our partners, Cycle Confident. They will check everything on your bike from wheels, brakes and gears to lights, pedals, saddles and more.



Meet the Buyer

■ Are you a local business in the technology, health and social care, or construction sector? Hear about council projects and sub-contracting opportunities from major contractors at our Meet the Buyer events. You

will also get free support and training under the Supply Ready Harrow programme to prepare public sector tenders and to acquire relevant sector accreditations. Please register your interest on edo@harrow.gov.uk.

Moat Café | Free

■ This exhibition delves into the history of Kodak and the impact the company had on capturing cherished family moments. Discover how their products and vision transformed the way we document and treasure our most precious memories, shaping the very fabric of family life and cultural heritage.

HEATH ROBINSON MUSEUM

heathrobinsonmuseum.org

Storytelling at the Museum!

Every Sunday until 22 September | 11.30am – 12pm | included with museum entry fee

■ Running alongside the exhibition Michael Rosen: the Illustrators, a group of talented volunteers have come together to offer storytelling sessions in the gallery for kids and families. This is a fantastic way for young people to enter the world of Michael Rosen and appreciate the drawings of some of his most beloved characters.

Art in the Park

Every Thursday in August | 1.30pm – 3pm | £4 per session

■ Fancy meeting like-minded people while drawing outdoors? Join these drop-in art sessions for adults, children and families. Meet in Pinner Memorial Park outside the museum.

Open Air Play

25 August | 6.30pm

■ Fancy a Shakespearean night out? Bring your own



chair and picnic, relax, and watch the timeless Romeo and Juliet performed by the brilliant Illyria. Tickets can be booked online.

HARROW LIBRARIES

harrow.gov.uk/libraries

Marvellous Makers, Summer Reading Challenge

Until 7 September

■ This year's challenge for children aged 4 to 11 years is to read six or more library books over the summer. Children can get a free wall chart and collect stickers for every book they read. Readers can win family tickets for a Wembley Stadium Tour if they complete the challenge. We also have a special limited edition Wallace



and Gromit library card while stocks last.

International Dog Day Origami Craft

24 August | 2pm – 3pm | Greenhill Library | ages 7-11

■ Celebrate International Dog Day by making an origami puppy dog. Booking required.

Shaun The Sheep Craft

7 September | Various times | Greenhill, Kenton, Pinner, Roxeth, Stanmore and Wealdstone libraries

Make a Shaun the Sheep character from the well-known Aardman Animation series from recycled kitchen rolls. Advance booking required.

HARROW LEISURE CENTRE

www.everyoneactive.com

Everyone is Family sessions

£2 per session

Badminton

Every Monday until 26 August | 10am – 11am

Badminton Every Wednesday until 28 August | 10am – 11am

Pickleball

Every Friday until 30 August | 12pm – 1pm

Goodboost

Wednesdays | 1pm – 2pm | with pre-Community Café session, 12pm – 1pm

■ An activity session where members can create a tailored workout plan using AI technology, on tablets provided. Great for those with musculoskeletal conditions.

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Affected by MS?

The Harrow MS Group is here to help.

Together

We provide support, signposts to relevant information, grants, social events & our newsletter.

Contact us: E: harrow@mssociety.org.uk
T: 07535 186520 (Mon-Fri 10am-2pm)



Multiple Sclerosis Society. Registered charity nos 1139257 / SC041990.
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Harrow's
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£1

£2,000
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* Enter before Saturday 31 August. For full terms and conditions go to harrow.gov.uk/harrowwins

Search 'HarrowWins'

Players must be 16 or over

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Meet Luke, our Nature Recovery Ranger. He helps volunteers improve biodiversity in our green spaces - including planting and reducing river pollution.

Luke runs volunteer sessions every week.

» Find out how to get involved at talk.harrow.gov.uk/nature-recovery-project

The great outdoors


We're proud of our fantastic parks and open spaces. In July, 6 of our parks retained the national Green Flag status, ranking them as some of the best in the country. We're now working towards securing Green Flag status for three further local parks - Chandos Recreation Ground, West Harrow Rec, and Hatch End Riverside Park.

From volunteer activities, nature walks and park runs to school activities, flood alleviation programmes, outdoor gyms and bike tracks – everyone loves using our parks. Here's just some of the things you can do at our parks this summer and all year round.

Harrow Health Walks offer a free programme of walks for all fitness levels, every day of the week. Improve your health and wellbeing and health, meet new people and explore Harrow's hidden gems. No need to book – just turn up on the day where a trained walk leader will greet you.

» Find a walk that's right for you at www.harrow.gov.uk/walk





» Kenton Rec has a pump track for BMX riders. You can join Harrow Bike Club sessions for beginners and intermediate riders on Saturdays. Booking is required.

We've resurfaced 36 tennis courts across all our parks, and they are so easy to use.

As well as weekly free park tennis sessions, our courts offer friendly and social local competitions.

Courts cost £5 an hour (£4 for concessions) – small fees that will ensure that the courts are maintained at a high standard.

» **Book a session today at www.lta.org.uk/book**



Parks runs and cycling are a great way to stay fit and active – and make new friends. Whether you want to run, jog or walk, there are some park run events at Harrow Rec and Canons Park. A junior park run also takes place Kanton Rec.

» **Visit www.parkrun.org.uk/harrow to find out more.**

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