



# COMMUNITY HEROES AWARDS 2024-25

### **EVENT PROGRAMME**



LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

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At the heart of Richmond upon Thames is something truly special—an enduring spirit of community. It's seen in the neighbour who checks in on someone living alone, in the volunteer who gives up their weekend to support a local cause, and in the organisation that creates space for everyone to feel welcome, safe and supported.

The Community Heroes Awards are our way of recognising that spirit in action. Each year, we are humbled by the stories of people who step up—not for praise, but out of care for others, deep-rooted empathy and an unwavering commitment to their community. They make our borough not just a place to live, but a place to belong.

This year's nominees are a powerful reminder of what can happen when people choose kindness, generosity, and compassion. From environmental champions to those helping our most vulnerable residents or working tirelessly to build thriving, inclusive neighbourhoods, their efforts ripple outward, touching lives and strengthening the fabric of our community.

To every nominee—thank you. Your contributions may not always make headlines, but they do make a difference and set an example for us all. We are very proud to celebrate you.

CLLR NANCY BALDWIN Spokesperson for Communities, Equalities & the Voluntary Sector





## About the Awards

Richmond upon Thames' annual Community Heroes Awards recognise local people who have contributed to their community.

## Our heroes were nominated for their work in a voluntary capacity in the below categories:

- Business Contribution in the Community
- Communities Together
- Community Group of the Year
- Community Project of the Year
- Community Spirit
- Environmental Award
- Lifetime Achievement
- Outstanding Volunteer
- Trustee of the Year
- Young Person Achievement

Nominations were open from 12 January to 26 February 2025, and we are delighted to share more information about our shortlisted nominees.

We again this year received a large number of nominations, which is a huge testament to the impact of our borough's unsung heroes.

Read on to find out more about our Community Heroes Awards finalists!



### Business Contribution in the Community

Local businesses that have made a selfless impact on their community through hands-on voluntary work or non-revenue-generating charitable projects.

### SHORTLISTED

• Kevin Jones (High Tide Festival) For being the driving force behind the High Tide Festival, an inclusive, high-quality and free-to-attend music event for the whole borough to enjoy. Kevin, owner of Eel Pie Records in Twickenham, volunteers countless hours and uses his passion for music and community to bring people together.

• Thai upon Thames

For tirelessly organising year-round community litter picks, voluntarily cleaning up our communities, no matter the weather, to improve Richmond upon Thames's environment and inspire civic pride and collective action.

• Visiting Angels South Middlesex For hosting a variety of free community health events in their local area. This family-run care company collaborates with local groups, organisations and health partners to regularly bring the community together and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

#### • WR-AP

For their hands-on volunteer work with significant environmental conservation projects including at Petersham Common and Ham Lands, collaborating with local groups, schools and residents to enhance important green spaces, support local wildlife and biodiversity and preserve the architectural heritage of the area.



Kevin Jones



Thai upon Thames



WR-AP



Visiting Angels South Middlesex





### **Communities Together**

Local groups or organisations that have made a significant contribution to fostering equalities and inclusion in the borough, through local work that breaks down existing barriers, builds trust between people and connects our communities.

### SHORTLISTED

• Cocoon - Care After Care For the year-round efforts of volunteers to improve the quality of life for care-experienced young adults the borough, providing a sense of belonging and support during one of life's most critical transitions through fully funded training courses, driving lessons, study equipment, clothing and more, including an annual Christmas Day Dinner.

#### • The People Hive

For creating opportunities and promoting inclusion for individuals with learning disabilities through inclusive workshops and community activities. The People Hive connects clients with their community, fostering confidence, independence, and skills, while providing employment and volunteering opportunities.

#### • Vineyard Community Centre Homelessness Health

For their contribution to the health of local people experiencing homelessness, providing nursing services, regular check-ups, and advice clinics in collaboration with NHS professionals. Their volunteerled activities, including Crisis Dropins, a foodbank and Women's and



The People Hive



Vineyard Community Centre

Refugee Hubs provide critical improvements to client health and wellbeing.

 Visually Impaired Society of Richmond (VISOR)

For offering unwavering support, advice, and social activities for visually impaired residents across the borough, run entirely by dedicated volunteers with lived experience who serve as the heart of this empathetic and vital community resource.



Cocoon - Care after Care

## **Community Group of the Year**

Local groups that have made a demonstrated impact on their community through consistent, everyday efforts and acts of kindness, showing what can be done to make a difference when people work together.

### **SHORTLISTED**

- Richmond Soup Kitchen For the dedicated work of volunteers—from local churches, scouts groups, businesses and more—to provide a regular friendly face and hot meals to those in need, supporting vulnerable residents with warmth, dignity and vital resources prepared with love.
- Teddington Theatre Club For the dedicated work of volunteers to provide high-class, accessible entertainment through the Teddington Theatre Club, enriching the borough through creativity, connection and inclusive community events and activities.

#### • SW Kinship Carers

For their impactful work to offer guidance, support, resources and a sense of community to local kinship carers, advocating tirelessly for systemic change and collaborating with the national charity Kinship to improve financial and practical aid for local families.



**Richmond Soup Kitchen** 



Teddington Theatre Club

#### Whitton Woolies

For the inspiring work of group volunteers to spread joy within the Whitton community through creative community art, brightening the area with crochet post box toppers, creating a community of wellbeing and lifting spirits with every handmade touch.



Whitton Woolies



SW Kinship Carers

## **Community Project of the Year**

Specific projects or initiatives, run in the past year, that have achieved a significant, measurable impact on the local community and the lives of residents.

### **SHORTLISTED**

- Mulberry Centre Soul Midwives For the holistic work of volunteers to provide non-medical end-oflife support with compassion and dignity, helping to ease anxieties and empower countless individuals and families through emotional and spiritual care.
- Nutkhut at Marble Hill For the hard work of volunteers to bring sustainability, art and community together through an inclusive Diwali celebration at Marble Hill, highlighting culture, connection and environmental responsibility.
- Ruils Creative Writing Group For the work of volunteers to foster creativity and connection through weekly writing sessions, offering a therapeutic and inclusive outlet for self-expression and shared experience and creating an inspirational anthology that reflects their collective journey and growth.
- Vine Road Community Growing
  Project

For their community-driven work at the Vine Road Recreation Ground, where volunteers grow fresh produce for those in need while helping to reduce social isolation and build wellbeing and togetherness through inclusive outdoor activities and initiatives.



Ruils Creative Writing Group



Vine Road Community Growing Project



Nutkhut at Marble Hill



Mulberry Centre Soul Midwives



### **Community Spirit Award**

For individuals - not in association with a group or organisation - who help to create stronger communities by supporting others to live happy, healthy lives. This could be a good neighbour, someone who gives their time to help family or friends in need, or a caregiver.

#### SHORTLISTED

#### • Jamie Toma

For her selfless efforts to run a free community playgroup and seasonal events—despite personal challenges—generously funding them herself to give struggling families a welcoming space to connect, play and belong, offering kindness and joy with every cup of tea.

#### Katie Abbott

For her work to unite her neighbours to create a beautiful communal garden in front of All Saints Church, turning donated plants and pots into a vibrant, welcoming space that connects residents, visitors and the local congregation through colour, care and community spirit.

• Pamela Fleming (Richmond May Fair)

For her dedicated work and countless volunteer hours leading a team of other volunteers to deliver one of the borough's largest community events, uniting residents and raising funds for local charities through a celebration of local spirit.







Katie Abbott



6th Cross Road Allotment Committee

#### 6th Cross Road Allotment Committee

For their collaborative efforts to foster community and wellbeing through shared gardening, donating produce to food banks, organising social events, providing support for unwell members, fundraising for local causes and transforming their allotments into a hub of generosity, environmental care and togetherness.



Pamela Fleming



### **Environmental Award**

Individuals, projects or groups that have driven action to address local environmental and sustainability challenges, helping to create a greener borough for all.

#### **SHORTLISTED**

#### • Art Gelling

For his volunteer leadership of Hampton Heath Friends, transforming the green space into a wildlife sanctuary, recording biodiversity, and fostering community engagement, significantly enhancing the ecological value and community spirit in Hampton.

• Barnes Common Limited

For the tireless efforts of volunteers to maintain and restore local nature reserves, connecting people within the community to green spaces through education, conservation and inclusive environmental events that protect biodiversity and promote community wellbeing.

#### • Louisa Carradine

For her dedicated work to bring the Strawberry Hill community together through regular litter picks, garden care and environmental partnerships with local organisations, volunteering her time to significantly improve the area's cleanliness and ecological health.

#### • Surplus to Supper

For volunteers' transformative efforts to collect surplus food from around the borough and turn it into meals for vulnerable residents, fighting food waste and hunger with compassion and sustainability. Their sevenday operation demonstrates what community collaboration can truly achieve.



Art Gelling



Surplus to Supper



Barnes Common Limited



Louisa Carradine

### Lifetime Achievement Award

Those who have shown a long-term commitment to local voluntary work and have made a significant contribution to their communities over 15 or more years.

#### **SHORTLISTED**

### • Posthumous Award - Wendy Salmon

For her tireless efforts in cofounding and supporting multiple charitable initiatives in Hampton, including Sunbury Baby Basics and The Extra Mile, positively impacting thousands of families and children over many years.

#### Amanda Harker

For decades of dedicated efforts with Barnes Community Players, managing costumes, coordinating clear-outs, and leading the group through challenging venue negotiations, all while contributing as a choreographer and costumier.

#### • Barbara Biles

For her efforts as a Community Ambassador improving services for social housing residents, mentoring new ambassadors, and advocating for community needs over many years.

#### • Cora Phillips

For her dedicated efforts in volunteering with The Mulberry Centre for almost 20 years, supporting clients affected by cancer, providing empathetic care, and contributing to community and fundraising events.



Wendy Salmon



Cora Phillips

#### • Flick Roper

For 16 years of dedicated support to Age UK Richmond, training staff and volunteers on IT solutions, and positively impacting vital services and community wellbeing through unassuming and transformative contributions.

Grace Gibbs

For her unwavering efforts in supporting The Mulberry Centre for over 20 years, contributing expertise and leadership, and positively impacting cancer support services and the community through her extensive healthcare experience.



Amanda Harker



Flick Roper



Grace Gibbs

#### • Jude Watts

For 42 years of dedicated efforts in volunteering with the Horse Rangers, nurturing young members, fostering a love for horses, mentoring teenage volunteers, and positively impacting over 1,000 children and their families.

#### Laurie Coombs

For over 50 years of dedicated efforts in the local amateur theatre and arts world, contributing to multiple societies, nurturing talent, and ensuring the success of the Arts Richmond Swan Awards.

#### • Maggie Pope

For over 20 years of dedicated efforts in leading HANDs Befriending services, supporting isolated and housebound individuals in Twickenham and St Margarets, and providing invaluable guidance and care through volunteer management and outreach events.

#### Mark Rice Oxley

For his dedicated work in volunteering with The Real Junk Food Project, collecting and distributing food, despite facing personal health challenges, and helping fight food poverty and social isolation.

#### • Peter and Ann Boyle

For 26 years of dedicated efforts with SEEN, providing emotional and practical support to clients facing unplanned pregnancies or pregnancy loss, and delivering over 100 one-to-one support sessions in the past 3 years alone.

#### • Philip Beal

For over 40 years of dedicated efforts in volunteering with 2nd Whitton Scouts, enriching children's lives through weekly meetings, trips, and activities, and providing support and opportunities to children and families in Richmond upon Thames.



Jude Watts



Laurie Coombs



Maggie Pope





#### Sue Garner

Philip Beal

For her decades-long, unwavering support of carers with loved ones facing mental health challenges. Through her volunteer-led carers group, advocacy and guidance, she has created a trusted space of understanding, helping others to feel seen, supported and never alone.



Sue Garner



### **Outstanding Volunteer**

Individuals who have made a significant contribution to their community during the past year through voluntary work with a group, charity or organisation.

#### SHORTLISTED

#### • Bridget Hynard

For her vibrant and dedicated efforts in supporting Elleray Hall, leading activities, and successfully recruiting and welcoming new volunteers.

#### Carol Webster

For her trustworthy efforts in providing consistent, compassionate support to clients of the Kew Neighbourhood Association, enabling them to live independently in their own home.

#### Caroline Cooke

For her generous efforts in delivering Alzheimer's Society Dementia Friends Information Sessions, helping over 200 people in Richmond become more dementia-friendly and compassionate.

#### Christina von Cramm

For her empathetic and supportive efforts in befriending, motivating others, and creating a positive environment through her volunteer work at Ruils Independent Living.

#### • Eyasu Abate Abebe

For his outstanding efforts in supporting The Mulberry Centre's cancer services, engaging with the community by supporting over 12 local health and wellbeing events and community fairs and making a significant impact on people whose lives have been affected by cancer.



Bridget Hynard



Carol Webster



Caroline Cooke



Eyasu Abate Abebe



Christina von Cramm



#### • Ernie Hoare

For his empathetic efforts and consistently going the extra mile to provide vital support to Hampton and Hampton Hill Voluntary Care as a volunteer driver, through office work and through emergency cover.

#### • Fiona Firth

For her dedicated work to support vulnerable residents through energy-saving home visits, volunteering at events and being a reliable and knowledgeable asset to the Habitats & Heritage team.

#### • Hugh Smith

For his flexible and attentive efforts to help vulnerable members of the community regain confidence through work with Age UK Richmond, including helping older residents familiarise themselves with public transport, empowering them to make journeys on their own through the Community Connections project.

#### • James Williams

For his dedicated efforts in supporting adults with learning disabilities with United Response, building relationships, running activities, and using media skills to positively impact the local community.

#### Leonora Ndreu

For her inspiring efforts to further and improve the wellbeing and belonging of local children from ethnic minority backgrounds through her volunteer work with the Albanian Heritage Club, building a strong chaperone network and inspiring others to volunteer for the betterment of inclusion and diversity.



Ernie Hoare



Fiona Firth



Hugh Smith



James Williams

#### • Maia Lewis

For her dedicated work to support the maintenance of The Real Junk Food Project's cafe and help to create a warm communal atmosphere for visitors.



Maia Lewis

#### Marilene Berryman

For her long-standing dedication to playing piano for people with Alzheimer's, bringing great enjoyment through her Friday concerts at the Woodville Centre.

#### • Mary Carr

For her dedicated work with Shepherd's Star, tirelessly volunteering her culinary talents to support vulnerable adults through shared meals and community programmes. From pandemic relief to baking joyfully for neighbours, her compassion and cake are a source of comfort across the community.

#### Mike Stone

For his unwavering commitment and compassionate support for clients with physical and mental health challenges, providing both emotional and practical assistance through his volunteer work with Ruils Independent Living.

#### • Paula Brackenridge

For her outstanding work to equip older adults with digital skills as a volunteer with Age UK's Connect to Tech service, safeguarding them against online threats and building supportive relationships within the community.

#### • Richard Hillman

For his boundless enthusiasm, commitment to improving systems, guiding colleagues and managing data with clarity and care. His behind-the-scenes support empowers local mental health services like Richmond Borough Mind and uplifts countless lives.



Mary Carr



Mike Stone



Paula Brackenridge



**Richard Hillman** 

#### Sara Gunn

For her exceptional services in providing reflexology therapy to people who have cancer and those nearing the end of life, demonstrating deep empathy, resilience, and a calming presence through her volunteer efforts at The Mulberry Centre.

#### • Shane Forrester

For his impactful support to rough sleepers across the borough through varied voluntary work with SPEAR—from drop-in health days to fundraising events—using his own lived experience of homelessness to inspire change and offer hope, empathy and practical help to those most in need.

#### • Sharon Mehta

For her tireless and varied volunteer work, innovative thinking and unshakeable ability to unite people around local conservation and enhancing biodiversity at Ham Lands Local Nature Reserve.

#### Stephen Prentice

For his outstanding dedication in recruiting young people, leading community events and environmental initiatives, and continuously supporting the Richmond Sea Cadets.

#### • Val Dean

For her generous and selfless support, helping older and isolated people with shopping, befriending, and various activities through her dedicated volunteer work with HANDs.

#### • Will Warner

For his energetic leadership and dedication to the 2nd Mortlake Scout Group and significant contributions to improving communication, developing team skills, and organising successful activities.



Sara Gunn



Shane Forrester



Sharon Mehta



**Stephen Prentice** 



Val Dean





### **Trustee of the Year**

For a trustee of a group or charity who has gone above and beyond in their role.

#### **SHORTLISTED**

#### • Jennifer Peters

For her 10 years of dedicated efforts in driving Skylarks Charity's growth, expanding services, supporting staff, and positively impacting over 4,000 families in the SEN community through excellent governance and tireless commitment.

#### Kate McCormack

For her dedicated work as a Trustee at Cambrian Community Centre, leading kitchen refurbishment projects, volunteering with The Real Junk Food Project, and significantly contributing to community activities and environmental initiatives.

#### • Nigel Cole

For his dedicated efforts in fundraising for Teddington Theatre Club, raising nearly £200,000 for building upgrades, increasing volunteering hours, and enhancing community engagement, ensuring the theatre's survival and regeneration.

#### • Sue Howes

For her dedicated efforts as Chair of Trustees at ETNA Community Centre, securing a 25-year lease, fostering inclusivity, and driving major accessibility improvements, positively impacting the community.



**Jennifer Peters** 



Kate McCormack



Nigel Cole



Sue Howes





### Young Person Achievement Award

Young people (aged 18 and younger) who go the extra mile to drive change in and improve their community and act as a role model for their peers. This might be through meaningful work to support a local cause or helping those who are less fortunate than themselves.

#### SHORTLISTED

#### • Amy Moore For her extraordinary dedication, maturity, and kindness, making a lasting impact on our community through the Horse Rangers' equine facilitated learning programme and unwavering support for younger members.

• Connor McColl-Finucane For his exemplary efforts in helping at Lunch Club and Breakfast Club at Holy Trinity CE Primary School, showing unwavering kindness, concern, and empathy towards all children, and providing invaluable support to peers and staff members.

#### Habitats & Heritage Youth Volunteers

For their dedicated efforts in volunteering 208 hours in 2024, maintaining wildlife habitats, removing invasive species, and supporting community events, all while working as a cohesive team and inspiring future community nature champions.





Amy Moore

Connor McColl-Finucane



Habitats & Heritage Youth Volunteers





#### • Eliza Downes

For her unwavering commitment to offering calm, patient and empathetic support to junior members and riders with additional needs and disabilities through volunteer work with the Horse Rangers Riding for the Disabled (RDA) sessions.

#### • Reggie Perry

For his 18 months of dedicated efforts in volunteering at Ham Youth Centre, supporting a variety of youth activities, setting up equipment, and showing a strong interest in youth work.

#### • Elli Clifford

For her dedicated efforts volunteering with younger members of the Horse Rangers Association, assisting staff during school holidays and inspiring others through a passion for horses, commitment to personal development, and exceptional support within the community.



Eliza Downes



Reggie Perry



Elli Clifford

## Leader's Award

### **Sue Richards**

This year, we're proud to introduce a special Leader's Award, to recognise the dedication of another group of Community Heroes—our local foster carers.

These everyday heroes open their hearts and homes to some of the borough's most vulnerable children, providing not just care, but also stability, love and hope.

Our shining example is Sue Richards, who has fostered in Richmond upon Thames for over 20 years. Sue has welcomed children of all ages, cultures and backgrounds into her home, and in recent years



has specialised in caring for newborns—often from hospital—until they move to their permanent families. Deeply child-focused, Sue is known for capturing each child's unique story in beautifully crafted albums filled with memories and keepsakes, which she also shares with their birth families. Many adoptive families stay in touch, and it's not uncommon for them to find thoughtful care packages from Sue on their doorsteps during special occasions. Her compassion, dedication, and quiet impact make her a true inspiration.

By recognising foster carers like Sue, we hope to shine a light on the life-changing difference fostering can make—for children and carers alike. If you're interested in finding out more or considering fostering yourself, visit **www.achievingforchildren.org.uk/pages/fostering.** 



## THANK YOU

Richmond Council would like to say a tremendous thank you to all of this year's nominees, as well as to those who did not receive a nomination who we know are doing so much to help their local communities. To find out more about the awards please go to our website: www.richmond.gov.uk/ community\_heroes\_awards.

We are also showcasing our winners and shortlisted nominees across our social media channels so please keep an eye on these for updates.

LBRUT

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Thank you to everyone who made a nomination for Richmond's Community Heroes Awards.





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