

RICHMOND'S

COMMUNITY

HEROES AWARDS 2025-26



COMMUNITY HEROES AWARDS 2025-26

EVENT PROGRAMME



Contents

A note from Councillor Baldwin	3
About the Awards	5
Meet our Shortlisted Nominees	6-17
In Memoriam	18
Thank you	19

Richmond upon Thames isn't just a beautiful place to live – it's a borough defined by the people who make it special. We're fortunate to have so many people locally doing extraordinary things and dedicating their time and energy to others. To everyone celebrated this evening, please know that what you do matters.

The Community Heroes Awards exist to shine a spotlight on the inspirational individuals, groups and businesses who volunteer their time to support others and strengthen the local community. It's about recognising their spirit, compassion, dedication and leadership that make a real difference in our borough.

This year's nominees reflect the wide range of individuals and groups, and each heart-warming nomination tells a unique story of generosity, impact, and contribution.

To every nominee and winner, congratulations and thank you for everything you do. Your commitment doesn't go unnoticed, and we're deeply grateful for all you do to make our community and Richmond upon Thames a better place.

Councillor Nancy Baldwin
Vice-Chair, Finance, Policy and Resources Committee
(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
- 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 8 February 2026, 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

- **Barch Gym**
For outstanding, long-term fundraising and community support that has transformed the lives of others and inspired borough-wide involvement.
- **The Cabbage Patch**
For providing free space, ongoing support, and exceptional community hospitality that enables multiple local groups to thrive.
- **F45 Teddington**
For voluntarily running adapted fitness sessions for young people with additional needs, boosting their wellbeing and confidence while supporting local charities.
- **Thai Upon Thames**
For extensive voluntary litter-picking, environmental clean-ups across multiple boroughs, and generous charitable support benefitting the wider community.



Barch Gym



The Cabbage Patch



F45 Teddington



Thai Upon Thames

Community Group of the Year

Local groups that have 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.



Brighter Together



Shepherd's Star

SHORTLISTED

- **Brighter Together**
For impactful intergenerational programmes that reduce isolation, build confidence and create meaningful relationships between local children and older adults.
- **English Speaking Club**
For long-term, volunteer-led dedication to helping older Ukrainian refugees gain confidence, independence and belonging through weekly English classes and warm community support.
- **HomeLink**
For providing compassionate, personalised day respite that supports older people with dementia while giving essential relief, connection and wellbeing support to their carers.
- **Shepherd's Star**
For empowering vulnerable residents to rebuild their lives through innovative programmes that build confidence, skills, community belonging and pathways into work, training or volunteering.



English Speaking Club



HomeLink

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

- **Explore Programme Shepherd's Star**

For transforming the lives of vulnerable residents by building confidence, wellbeing, and pathways into employment through the free, supportive personal development programme.

- **Walk and Talk Group - Princess Alice Hospice**

For providing gentle, volunteer-led bereavement walks that offer compassionate peer support, connection, and emotional healing for people grieving a loved one.

- **Relationship Support Project - United Response**

For the Relationship Support Project and for creating an innovative, volunteer-run programme that helps people with learning disabilities understand healthy relationships, build confidence, and navigate social situations safely.

- **Housing Project - Research & Campaigns Team, Citizens Advice**

For evidence-based advocacy that improves services, strengthens partnerships, and delivers better outcomes for vulnerable residents.



Explore - Programme Shepherd's Star



Walk and Talk Group - Princess Alice Hospice



Relationship Support Project - United Response



Housing Project - Research & Campaigns Team, Citizens Advice

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.



Alina Luts



Ciara Curran

SHORTLISTED

- **Alina Luts**
For her extraordinary voluntary leadership supporting displaced Ukrainians through community programmes that reduce isolation, build cultural connection, and strengthen wellbeing across the Borough of Richmond.
- **Ciara Curran**
For her dedicated volunteer work with Teddington Together, organising the Christmas lights switch-on and year-round community events that bring residents together and strengthen local community spirit.
- **David Chandler**
For his daily, self-initiated litter-picking that keeps local streets clean and inspires pride and care for the neighbourhood.
- **Nikki Goldstone**
For long-standing, heartfelt support of people with Multiple Sclerosis, running a social group single-handedly and providing consistent encouragement to those most affected.

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

- **6th Form Ham Lands Volunteers**
For long-term commitment to restoring and protecting Ham Lands' biodiversity through weekly environmental volunteering that has brought rare species back to the area.
- **Dr Michael de Podesta**
For exceptional personal commitment to reducing carbon emissions and inspiring residents through free talks, home retrofit tours, and climate-focused community engagement.
- **Thai Upon Thames**
For outstanding voluntary environmental work, leading regular litter-picking, river clean-ups and conservation efforts that significantly improve local green spaces.



6th Form Ham Lands Volunteers



Dr Michael de Podesta



Thai Upon Thames

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

- **Anna Belej**
For 18 years of warm, creative volunteering at The Mulberry Centre, where her popular watercolour classes and compassionate support have brought comfort, confidence and joy to countless people.
- **Charles Campion**
For more than 15 years of community leadership in Barnes, using his placemaking expertise to drive major local projects, strengthen public spaces and transport, and bring residents together to shape a more connected, vibrant neighbourhood.
- **Elaine Heanue**
For 18 years of warm, steady and compassionate volunteering at The Mulberry Centre, where her calming presence, empathy and reliable support as a Welcomer have comforted and guided countless people facing cancer and bereavement.
- **Joan Barnett**
For over 30 years of devoted leadership at the Elleray Community Centre, where her guidance, compassion and long-standing commitment have been central to supporting and enriching the lives of elderly residents across Teddington.



Anna Belej



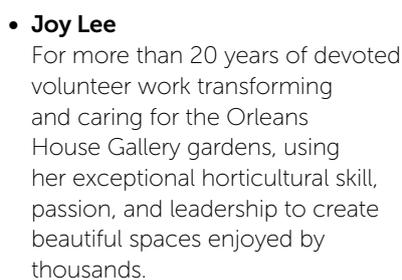
Charles Campion



Elaine Heanue



Joan Barnett



Joy Lee

Lifetime Achievement Award

- **Maureen Woods**

For over 25 years of devoted volunteering at Linden Hall, where her warmth, reliability and daily support have made her the much-loved heart of the centre and a cherished companion to its members.



Maureen Woods

- **Patricia Maskell**

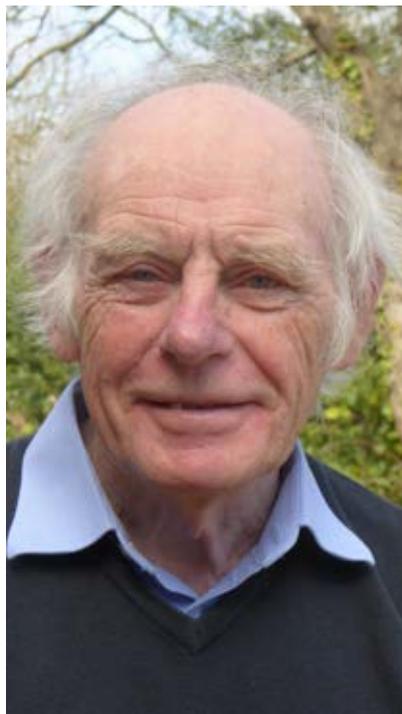
For over 40 years of compassionate, hands-on volunteering with Horse Rangers, where her patience, positivity and unwavering support for young people and participants with additional needs have made her an irreplaceable pillar of the community.



Patricia Maskell

- **Phil Brady**

For over two decades of dedicated volunteering with Citizens Advice Richmond, where his compassion, expertise, and unwavering support have transformed the lives of countless residents and strengthened the organisation at every level.



Phil Brady

- **Sue Morell**

For more than 45 years of dedicated volunteering with Teddington Swimming Club and Teddington Masters, where her kindness, expertise and commitment have helped generations learn to swim and kept the community's swimming tradition alive.



Sue Morell

- **Wendy Brown**

For over four decades of dedicated service to Barn Elms Allotments, where her leadership, event organisation, communication efforts and long-standing commitment have made her an indispensable pillar of the community.



Wendy Brown

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

- **Antonia Alves**

For her quiet, constant kindness and support for others, creating a warm, caring community through her volunteering with Age UK Richmond and her compassionate, instinctive help to anyone in need.

- **Cornelia Costeau**

For years of quiet, heartfelt volunteering, using her creative skills, compassion and support to empower vulnerable women, migrants and community members, making a transformative impact across countless local projects.

- **Danielle Robinson**

For tirelessly giving her free time to support the community through her volunteer work at Richmond Foodbank and for compassionately arranging free vet care for the pets of people experiencing homelessness, ensuring both owners and their animals receive vital help.

- **Derek Papworth**

For using his professional data expertise to transform Shepherd's Star and other local charities by building systems that improve impact tracking, sustainability, and support for vulnerable people across the borough.



Antonia Alves



Cornelia Costeau



Danielle Robinson



Derek Papworth

- **Eddie Thomas**

For a decade of extraordinary, hands-on volunteering with Crosslight, where his compassion, expertise and unwavering commitment have transformed the lives of countless residents facing debt, crisis and hardship.



crosslight
advice

Eddie Thomas

Outstanding Volunteer

- **Emma Love**

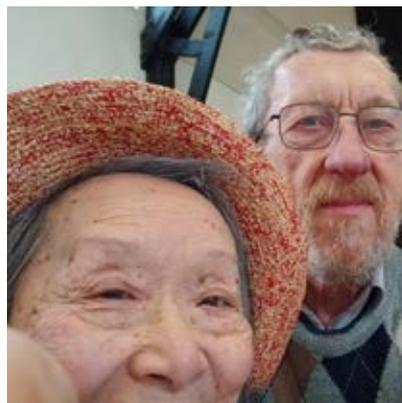
For a decade of exceptional, heartfelt volunteering at Twickenham Primary Academy, where her leadership, fundraising, and community-building efforts have transformed the school experience for countless children and families.



Emma Love

- **Hubert Guidon**

For his exceptional kindness and dedication as a FiSH volunteer, generously providing hundreds of journeys and support to elderly and vulnerable neighbours despite his own full-time caring responsibilities.



Hubert Guidon

- **Judith Cseh-Menczer**

For her compassionate, patient and deeply personalised volunteering with LEAH, empowering vulnerable migrants and refugees across Richmond to build confidence, independence and connection through tailored English support and community guidance.



Judith Cseh-Menczer

- **Lynn McInnes**

For her outstanding and wide-ranging volunteer leadership across Barnes, where her energy, dedication and commitment have made her an invaluable force for the local community.



Lynn McInnes

- **Pamela Dixon**

For her years of warm, reliable and selfless volunteering with FiSH, where her kindness, dedication and support for hundreds of older residents have made her one of the charity's most loved and impactful volunteers.



- **Remo Grasso**

For his decade of warm, energetic volunteering at Homelink, where he uplifts older people every week and for running the London Marathon at 75 to raise over £10,000 for charity.

- **Tasha Sorhaindo**

For her extraordinary compassion and impact in founding Chronically Marvellous, tirelessly supporting people with long-term health conditions through free counselling, practical aid and inclusive community programmes, all while facing severe health challenges.

- **Yair Gal**

For dedicated IT volunteering with Age UK Richmond, where his patient, compassionate teaching empowers older residents to build digital confidence, stay connected, and navigate modern technology with independence.



Remo Grasso



Tasha Sorhaindo



Yair Gal

Trustee of the Year

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

SHORTLISTED

- **Alison Goodbrand**
For her exceptional leadership of Home Start RKH, guiding the charity through major challenges with calm, strategic direction and commitment to vulnerable families.
- **David Cope**
For founding Fair Start and dedicating his retirement to creating and revitalising primary school libraries, giving children greater access to reading, opportunity and educational confidence.
- **Sue Pendle**
For transforming the Cambrian Community Centre through tireless volunteer leadership that strengthened its governance, services, facilities and support for disadvantaged residents.



Alison Goodbrand



David Cope



Sue Pendle

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.



Daisy Jones



Howard Thomas

SHORTLISTED

- **Daisy Jones**

For championing young people's voices through her Youth Council leadership, tackling issues like sexual harassment and mental health while empowering others to speak up.

- **Howard Thomas**

For using his personal experience of serious illness to advocate for inclusive education technology and support for young patients and siblings, becoming a powerful local youth ambassador.

- **Katie Evans**

For her exceptional dedication, empathy and leadership at Horse Rangers, supporting and inspiring younger members every week.

- **Phoebe Staple**

For Phoebe's outstanding commitment to championing young people's voices through leading major youth-led work on sexual harassment, mental health, and youth advocacy while serving as an inspiring change-maker in the Kingston and Richmond Youth Council.

- **Vidhi Saurav**

For extraordinary fundraising efforts, raising over £6,000 and inspiring others to support sick children through books, toys and hospital donations at just eight years old.



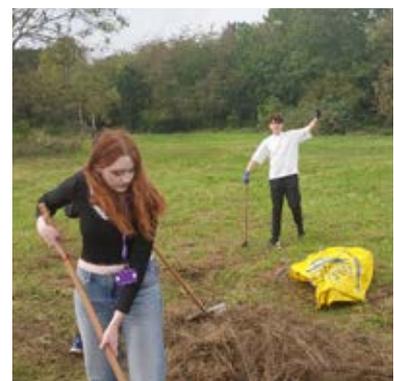
Katie Evans



Phoebe Staple



Vidhi Saurav



6th Form Ham Lands Volunteers

- **6th Form Ham Lands Volunteers**

For long-term commitment to restoring and protecting Ham Lands' biodiversity through weekly environmental volunteering that has brought rare species back to the area.

In Memoriam

- **Andy Sutch**

For his lifelong dedication to community sport, including two decades as Chair of Sport Richmond, where his leadership, advocacy, and support for clubs and facilities left a lasting legacy across the Borough.



Andy Sutch

- **Chris Manning**

For his role in creating and chairing Sheddington, a much-loved community centre that has transformed lives through support, skills, and repair services. His leadership laid the foundations for its lasting impact, making this a fitting tribute to his legacy and those who continue his work.



Chris Manning

- **Stuart Sandys**

For his outstanding contribution to Twickenham as a beloved businessman and compassionate community figure whose dedication, support, and kindness left a lasting impact on countless people.



Stuart Sandys



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.

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 Richmond Council

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

