

**In brief****Tickets on sale for charity ball**

TICKETS are now available for a glamorous night of fine dining, music and dancing in aid of a Weybridge-based charity.

The Silverlining Charity Snow Ball will be held in Saturday November 21 at St George's Hill Tennis Club in Weybridge from 6.30pm.

Tickets cost £80. For more information and tickets email [admin@silverlining.org.uk](mailto:admin@silverlining.org.uk)

The charity helps anyone affected by brain injury to rebuild their lives by helping encourage a social support network for the injured, their family and the wider community.

**Ambulance breakdown**

POLICE closed a road after the axle of an ambulance fell off causing traffic tailbacks in Hinchley Wood.

Officers went to the A309 Kingston Bypass near Claygate Lane, at around 1.45pm on Monday following a report that an ambulance had broken down after damaging a front wheel.

The vehicle was recovered and the road was fully reopened at around 4.20pm.

# Man is jailed for pharmacy raids

By Tom Smurthwaite

A TROUBLED addict who stole prescription drugs from pharmacies in Ashstead and Oxshott using an imitation firearm has been jailed for four-and-a-half years.

Luke Wilson, 25, from Queen Anne's Terrace in Leatherhead, had previously pleaded guilty to two counts of robbery before the sentencing at Guildford Crown Court on Monday.

Two separate charges of possessing an imitation firearm were left on file, although both prosecution and defence counsels agreed that a fake gun was used in the raids.

The court heard that on 6.50pm on June 2 Wilson entered the Lloyds Pharmacy in Craddocks Avenue, Ashstead, with his head up and a scarf covering his mouth.

"The defendant said 'I want all your diazepam.' He produced a gun and pointed it at the pharmacist," Prosecutor Gordon Ross said.

"He told the two members

of staff not to think about setting the panic alarm."

Wilson also took zopiclone during the raid.

Seven days later, at 6.30pm, Wilson targeted the Lloyds pharmacy in Oxshott High Street.

He was dressed in a similar clothes to the previous robbery, Mr Ross said, and was carrying a black handgun.

After taking drugs, including zopiclone and diazepam, Wilson started 'waving the gun at staff', Mr Ross said.

"He demanded cash from the till, saying 'I don't want coins, just notes,'" Mr Ross said.

"The assistant had difficulty opening the till, she started crying. The manager described the assistant as being clearly terrified throughout the incident."

The black plastic grip from the handgun was recovered near the pharmacy, Mr Ross said, with Glock written on the side. Wilson's DNA was found on the grip.

Around £500 was taken from the till, the pharmacist estimated. When Wilson was arrested drugs including

diazepam and zopiclone were found in his house.

Mr Ross read out to the court a victim statement given by one of the pharmacy assistants.

"At the time I was very scared and in shock, I remember pushing myself against the till and having a feeling of helplessness," Mr Ross said.

"I was sitting on the floor and keeping out the way - I was frozen to the spot and couldn't move."

Mr Ross said the use of a gun in the attacks proved they were pre-planned, and highlighted the 'vulnerability of female staff' working in a small shop.

Mark Haslam, defending, said a reliance on recreational and prescription drugs have 'completely ruined' Wilson's life.

While in custody Wilson has sought mental health counselling and treatment for his drug dependency, Mr Haslam said.

"It's clear that despite all the difficulties, those that are close to the defendant are clearly very anxious about his

state of mind, the suicidal tendencies, the use of drugs, particularly in the time leading up to these offences," Mr Haslam said.

"This comparatively young man was clearly at the time not in his right mind."

Judge Christopher Critchlow said these types of offences are 'always regarded with seriousness.'

"You were disguised, you planned it, you went just before the premises were closing - Lloyds Pharmacies were the victims of these crimes," Judge Critchlow said.

"It doesn't matter whether it was a real or imitation fire arm, it is not a factor."

Wilson had been to his GP on June 1 and been prescribed diazepam, Judge Critchlow said.

"It seems you were desperate for more," he added. "This cannot excuse what you did, there must be a term of imprisonment."

Along with the four-and-a-half year prison term, Wilson was ordered to pay a £900 compulsory court charge and a £120 victim surcharge.



Darren Pepe  
en156260

Rosie and Ivy working on the new Cobham Community Garden on the Leg of Mutton field in Cobham.

## Help to grow community garden

THE team behind Cobham's new community garden is urging everyone to visit the site and help transform the plot to ready it for planting.

Environmental group Transition Cobham is behind the garden, situated in the Leg O'Mutton field off Downside Bridge Road.

On Saturday members welcomed a band of enthusiastic helpers to wheel barrows, cut and roll turf, and tend beds.

Stéphanie Jacometti, founder of Transition, said

the early signs are promising people living with dementia.

"They helped us clear eight beds, which means we can start preparing the garden for Spring," Ms Jacometti added.

The garden was created as a place for people to grow fruit and vegetables together, among other reasons.

"It will give people access to fresh produce and gardening is really good for exercise and mental health," Ms Jacometti said. "There are lots of health benefits."

Cobham, in particular, seems to have a keen love of

gardening. "There are three allotments, so we thought it would be a good idea to teach people how to garden," Ms Jacometti said.

The community garden is open on Thursdays from 10am to noon and 2pm to 4pm, and on Saturdays from 9am to 1pm.

"If you want to garden come and join us, we can give you a tour and there's still lots to do," Ms Jacometti added.

For more information, send an email to [garden@transitioncobham.org.uk](mailto:garden@transitioncobham.org.uk).

## Charities link to provide home

HOMELESS people who do not qualify for help from local authorities could benefit from a new place to stay.

Following the merger of Thames Homeless Project (THP) with Walton Charity, a three-bed house in Hersham has been purchased with the first tenant moving in this week.

A celebration to mark the purchase was held on Tuesday at Kia Motors in Walton.

The aim of the merger was to jointly fund the purchase of a house to accommodate local homeless people who do not qualify for help from local authorities.

Since the merger, the substantial funding needed for the house and refurbishment has been provided by Walton

Charity, THP, Elmbridge Borough Council and Kia Motors UK.

Jackie Lodge, chief executive of Walton Charity said: "This initiative shows the power of collaboration and working together. Charitable, statutory and corporate organisations have joined forces to establish a lasting solution to local housing needs. Walton Charity are delighted to be part of this initiative and thank all involved for their fantastic contribution."

Walton Charity will work with Transform Housing & Support to run the new property, with staff providing one-to-one support.

The charity provides housing and support for more than 1,000 homeless and vulnerable people each year in



Howard Springett, trustee of Thames Homeless Project, Jackie Lodge and Hamish McCowan, Kia UK Ltd at the new home.

Surrey and neighbouring areas.

From January to March, Transform Housing &

& Support operated a winter shelter for homeless people with a connection to Elmbridge, Runnymede or

Spelthorne. During the course of its operation, the project in Hersham received 48 referrals - equivalent to one every two days. A total of 28 people were accommodated in the scheme, with 11 of these coming from the Elmbridge area.

Paul Mitchell, chief executive of Transform Housing & Support added: "Transform Housing & Support is delighted to be working with Walton Charity to support homeless people in Elmbridge.

"Last year's winter shelter project showed there is a real need for more services to help local people who find themselves homeless. This new house will give people a stable base where they can rebuild their lives and get back on their feet."

A Cobham development at the old Cargill site is a 'win-win for Elmbridge' which will only enhance the area, councillors have concluded.

The Knowle Hill Park site in Fairmire Lane, comprising 18.5 hectares of land on the border with Stoke D'Abernon, currently features an office building which used to house Cargill but which will now be demolished to make way for a building containing 21 apartments alongside seven two-storey houses.

However, Ian Nelson, chairman of the Stoke D'Abernon Residents' Association, said: "Knowle Hill Park is a splendid example of unspoiled English countryside quite literally on our doorstep. The rustic scene is worthy of a Constable painting.

At the east area planning sub-committee meeting on Monday, planning officer Aneta Mantio said: "The proposed development is an appropriate development with the green belt. It is a well designed proposal that will be in keeping with the general appearance of

the surrounding area. It will enhance the existing landscape and the ancient woodland."

Speaking on behalf of the developers Millgate Developments, Miss Knight said the plans would return Knowle Hill Park to its former glory.

The development will generally be on the footprint of the current office building, the surrounding woodland will be restored for future generations and parked cars will be tucked away in underground garages, she added.

The site already has planning permission for 21 residential units but Millgate Developments wanted to create something more sympathetic, Miss Knight said.

Councillor Elise Dunweber, of

Oxshott and Stoke D'Abernon, said there was evidently a fear of change within the objectors.

She added that it was a 'scheme which, to my mind, would only enhance the area.'

Before the proposal was permitted, Councillor David Archer said it was a 'win-win' for Elmbridge.

Others agreed, with Councillor Alex Coomes saying his heart sunk when he first saw it was another development in the green belt, but after reading the details he decided 'we would be doing a disservice to the community if we didn't approve this.'

While Councillor Shweta Kapadia said it was one of the best thought through and well-designed applications she had seen in 16 years on the committee.

## Lecture series subjects revealed

THE next talks in Elmbridge's Royston Pike Lectures Series have been announced.

Now in its 41st year, the series is set to launch brand new afternoon talks to appeal to a wider audience.

The first afternoon talk will take place at the Cecil Hepworth Playhouse in Walton on Tuesday November 3 at 2pm and will be given by Dave Page, countryside estates officer at Elmbridge Borough Council.

Dave will draw on his 25 years experience in nature conservation to give us an introduction into the natural and social history of Esher Commons.

The second afternoon talk in the series will be held at the Riverhouse Barn Arts Centre in Walton on Tuesday January 26 2016 at 2pm. Guest speaker Maggs Latter, former arts development officer at Elmbridge Borough Council, will explore the impact of the written word on our lives during the course of her talk 'Laughs, Loves and Lies in Famous Literature.'

She will give a spirited talk illustrated by her findings from the various arts forms.

Councillor Mary Sheldon, portfolio holder for leisure and culture, said, "The new Afternoon Royston Pike Talks are a valuable addition to this very popular programme."

"The topics have been chosen with careful attention and I hope that everyone interested in Esher Commons will come along to take a trip back into history to understand how it has evolved with time to become the stunning destination it is today. It will be equally wonderful to welcome Maggs back to the Series. Time spent with her is always memorable as she is particularly gifted at sharing her passion and knowledge with the audience with great humour and good dose of laughter."

Lectures will start at 2pm. Tickets are £3 per person and will be available at the door.

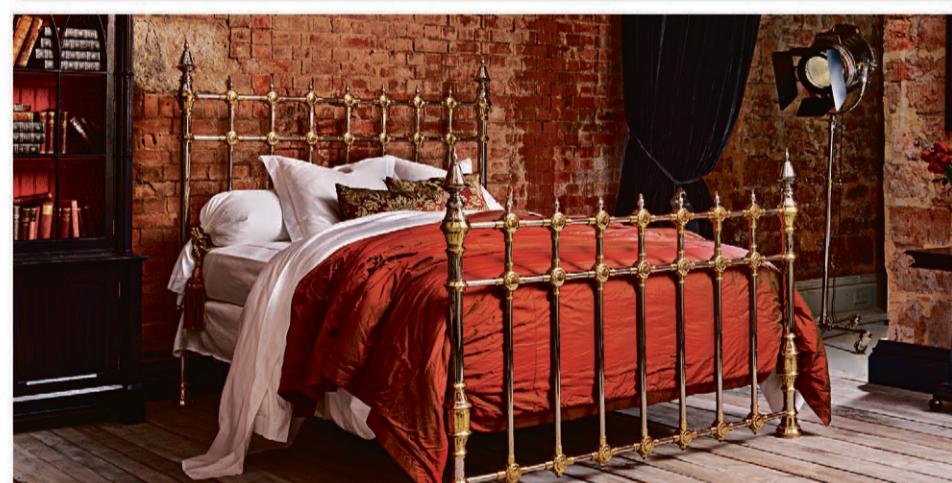
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## Home is where the heart is

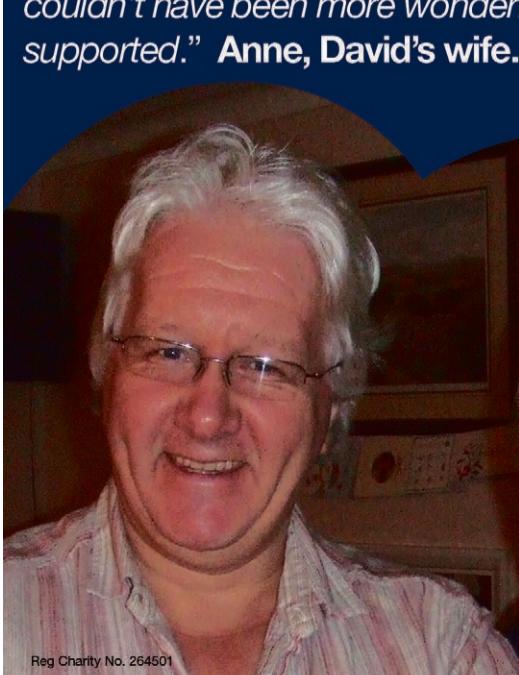
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