# BROOKWOOD NEWS

July 2026


## NEW WWI MEMORIAL UNVEILED TO REMEMBER LOST HEROES



The Princess Royal unveiled a new memorial at Brookwood Military Cemetery to commemorate more than 400 forgotten World War I casualties from the UK and Ireland. The addition to the 37-acre site honours those who died after returning home from the conflict whose graves were never formally identified nor their stories properly heard.

The work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC), the Brookwood 1914–1918 memorial was revealed by its president, Princess Anne.

She said it marks "a profound new chapter in our shared remembrance of those names lost in the archival shadows. She called the new memorial "a physical realisation of that promise" to collectively remember "the soldiers who died of wounds far from the battlefield" or "succumbed to illness while still in service", along with those who "lost their lives in training accidents or were discharged as unfit, only to later die in the care of their families".

The CWGC often says that its work is never done, and this memorial is proof of that truth. The sprawling memorial features 31 large stone slabs arranged to mirror the formation of the brightest visible stars in the sky when the Armistice was signed in the early hours of 11 November 1918.

It's incredible to think that after all these years we are still finding people to commemorate.

The area was designed by the London-based Studio Wignall & Moore; the memorial's "naturalistic, ever-evolving" layout is also complemented by more than 400 new trees which have been planted around it at Brookwood.

## EDITORIAL

**Welcome to the July edition of Brookwood News. It's been a mixed bag of weather so far this year which is great as what else would we have to talk about? The World Cup is well under way and England made a great start; by the time you're reading this, however, they may be on their way home but let's hope not. COME ON ENGLAND and, of course, Scotland too. And good luck to all the teams getting through American immigration.**

***Graham Hunt - Editor***

## DANGERS OF HAWLEY LAKE

During the last heat wave, we tragically saw a steep rise in accidental drownings with sadly 10 deaths in one weekend. Many of the victims were young, including two teenage boys who died in incidents in Yorkshire, and another young man at Hawley Lake in Surrey.

Wild swimming carries risks including cold water shock, hypothermia, strong currents, waterborne infections,

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and physical injuries from slips or underwater hazards.

Swimming in cold natural waters can rapidly reduce body heat, impair swimming ability and affect judgement. Early signs of hypothermia include shivering and teeth-chattering, and prolonged exposure can be life-threatening, leading to drowning.

Rivers, lakes and seas often have unpredictable currents, tides and underwater obstacles. Even experienced swimmers can be caught off guard by strong currents or sudden changes in water depth. Jumping or diving without checking the depth and underwater obstructions can result in serious injuries.

Slippery rocks, submerged branches and uneven surfaces increase the risk of cuts, bruises or head injuries. Running on wet rocks or scrambling along riverbanks can lead to falls.

Natural waters may contain bacteria, viruses and parasites from sewage, agricultural run-off, or wildlife. Common pathogens include E. coli, Salmonella, Leptospira (Weil's disease), and other microorganisms that can cause gastrointestinal, urinary or skin infections. Swimming in officially designated bathing waters is a better option as regular water quality checks are carried out.

Be safe and don't take a risk.

# THE TALE OF TWO FAIRS



It's that time of year again and the great British fairs are in full swing. The great British weather dealt a soggy blow to the Pirbright fair, but it was still well attended and the dog show went down a storm. The Brookwood School summer fair, on the other hand, was bathed in wonderful sunshine, and all the attractions from plate smashing, bouncy castles and the BBQ had a steady stream of visitors.

*Jen and Wendy with a warm welcome on the gate at Brookwood School summer fete*








*Pirbright Fete, "Finding Nemo" flower arrangement*



*Pirbright Fete, Bertie wins most handsome dog*




On Tuesday evenings between 7.30 and 9.00pm all year round, joyful singing can be heard emanating from Brookwood Memorial Small Hall as Voxchoir sing their hearts out to rock and pop songs arranged by professional singer/songwriter Victoria BeeBee, who some may have seen performing locally at Heather Farm, The Cricketers, Horsell, or at The Inn at West End. The choir is led by Dan, and we always have a fun and uplifting evening. There are two other branches to Voxchoir, in Fleet and in Yateley. We all learn the same songs and we get together regularly for public performances which are always great fun. Last year we sang at Guilfest, which was amazing, and we have been invited back this summer. We will be performing at the Brookwood Christmas Trail on 12 December, at which we also appeared in 2024.

We are always looking for new members to join us; so if you enjoy singing, even if you think you're not very good or you think you can't sing, come and join us for a free taster session. Just email info@voxskool.com or phone 07776 133507 and I guarantee you'll receive a warm welcome.

# GOVERNMENT CONFIRMS NEW EAST AND WEST COUNCILS FOR SURREY




We did a brief report on the upcoming changes to Surrey's councils in June but I thought I would add a bit more detail.

The government has announced its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Surrey. This is a major step in reshaping how councils are structured and how services are delivered across the county.

Government is clear that this is a once-in-a-generation reform which will see stronger local councils in charge of all local services, equipped to drive economic growth, improve local public services, and lead and empower their communities; ultimately it will help improve living standards.

**The decision**
Surrey will move to two new unitary councils – East Surrey and West Surrey.

This means the current two-tier system – where county, and district and borough councils share responsibilities – will be replaced by a simpler and more efficient structure. In a unitary model, one council is responsible for all services in an area.

Simplifying local government also ensures a strong foundation for devolution. We are committed to working with government and partners across Surrey, including new unitary authorities once in place, to establish a strategic authority for the area, which will be subject to the relevant approvals at government and local level.

The decision follows a government consultation over the summer.

**Benefits of two unitary councils**
It saves money and offers better value for residents. Stable finances will protect vital services. It simplifies services, delivering everything residents need to a high quality, with fewer points of contact and reduced confusion about which council does what. It will strengthen our local communities by connecting people through Neighbourhood Area Committees in towns and villages.

**The new structure**
From April 2027, Surrey County Council and the 11 District and Borough Councils in Surrey will be dissolved.

The new East Surrey council will replace these existing councils: Elmbridge Borough Council, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, and Tandridge District Council.

The new West Surrey council will replace these existing councils: Guildford Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council, Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, Waverley Borough Council, and Woking Borough Council.

**Impact on services**
Our focus remains on making sure residents, businesses, and communities continue to get the help and services they need – without disruption. Your local councils are still here for you. Services are still being delivered, and support remains in place for those who need it most.

**Woking debt**
In relation to financial sustainability, the government confirmed their commitment to repayment in-principle of £500 million of Woking Borough Council's debt in 2026–27. This is a first tranche of repayment support, and the government will continue to explore what further debt support is required at a later point.

**Next steps**
To support the transition:

Elections to the new shadow authorities took place in May 2026. These elected members will help set up the new councils and operate in a "shadow" capacity until vesting day.

On 31 March 2027, the 12 existing councils will be dissolved.

From 1 April 2027 (vesting day), the new unitary councils will officially take over. They will work with government and partners, including new unitary authorities, to establish a strategic authority (subject to the relevant approvals at government and local level) – timing to be confirmed.

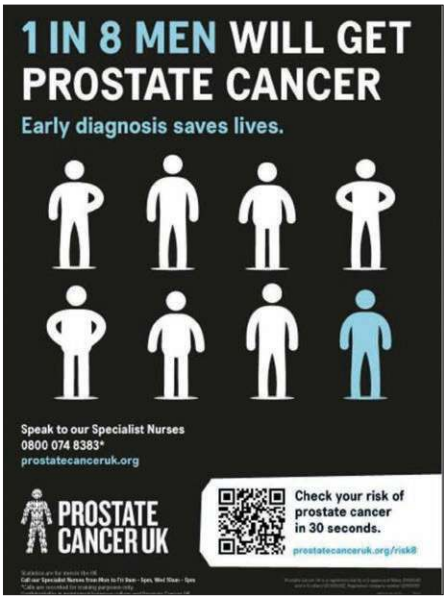
There will be no immediate changes to how residents access services. Council offices and community spaces will remain open, and services will continue as usual.

# KICKING OFF TO SUPPORT PROSTATE CANCER

A number of Brookwood gentlemen attended a beer and pizza night in the village in support of Prostate Cancer UK on 17 June. The fact that England's first game was on the same night was a mere coincidence. A good time was had by all and a total of £810 raised for a very worthy charity. And as some of my good friends who have been through the process would say "don't delay get it checked today". And many thanks to Geoff and Pip for hosting.

**Prostate Cancer UK brief overview**

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men in the UK, with a significant impact on the lives of many. It affects men over 50 years old, and those with a family history or who are Black are at higher risk. The earlier prostate cancer is detected, the better the chances of successful treatment. Prostate cancer is often asymptomatic in its early stages and is diagnosed through a combination of symptoms, physical examinations, and tests such as PSA blood tests and imaging scans. Treatment options include surgery, radiotherapy and hormone therapy, with some patients opting for monitoring instead of immediate treatment. Support services are available for men, their families and friends, including online communities and specialist nurses. Ongoing research aims to improve diagnosis and treatment, with a focus on creating a safe and effective screening programme for all men.



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# TUDOR LOCAL REOPENS




I was very pleased to see that the Tudor local agents has re-opened. Owner Ram Raj and his family have done a great job of re-vamping the store.

# VILLAGE DIARY DATES

**(also see the village website at www.brookwood.org.uk)**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Every Sunday** | Evening Service, 6pm, Woodhill Church (Connaught Rd) |
| **Every Monday** | Babies and Toddlers Playgroup, 9.45am, Brookwood Memorial Hall |
| **Every Friday** | Brookwood Art Group, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Brookwood Memorial Hall |
| **Every Friday** | Pop-up Coffee, 10am to 12pm, Woodhill Church (Connaught Rd) |
| **First Saturday each month** | Bingo, Brookwood Club |
| **Third Tuesday each month** | Brookwood WI meeting, 7.30pm, Small Memorial Hall |

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**NB: DEADLINE FOR SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER IS MIDDAY 20th AUGUST 2026 preferably by e-mail to community@brookwood.org.uk or telephone 01483 480273 or a note through the door of 78 Connaught Road.**

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