

Bid to change town name

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Twickenham might be known around the world as the home of England rugby union, but some hope to follow in the footsteps of nearby Staines and change its name.

Residents in the riverside town have looked to Spelthorne for inspiration after its council successfully added "upon Thames" to Ali G's home town in 2012 in an attempt to revamp its image.

Now a group of people in Twickenham are looking to do the same and have set up a campaign in a bid to rename the town "Twickenham-on-Thames".

Robin Davis, a music lawyer who has lived in Twickenham for 25 years, has created a petition calling on Richmond

Council to explore the possibility of the name change.

Mr Davis, 63, of Riverdale Gardens, said: "I have long advocated major changes to the centre of Twickenham near the site of the old swimming pool.

"I believe the whole of one side of the main road should be opened up and a piazza constructed that would lead down to the river.

"The local authority should

be applauded for having put in place plans to have a square and better access to the river at the top of Water Lane, but it lacks ambition.

"The plans should provide for a much more comprehensive redevelopment in this area.

"A name change to Twickenham-on-Thames, while admittedly being cosmetic, would be a welcome step towards publicising the fact

that Twickenham is on the river.

"I believe locals would welcome it and I suspect businesses would too. Anecdotal evidence suggests that since Staines was renamed Staines-upon-Thames, businesses there have greatly benefited."

Mr Davis added: "If Staines can do it then I am sure Twickenham can."

To view the petition visit tinyurl.com/twiconthames.

Benefits of Staines' altered image

What happens when a town changes its name? The Richmond and Twickenham Times spoke to Councillor Colin Davis, the Spelthorne Borough cabinet member who changed Staines' image forever by updating its moniker.

He said that since its 2012 rebirth the town has stopped being so closely associated with being the birth place of Ali G and has grown into what the Evening Standard called the most sought after place to live outside of London.

Coun Davis said: "There have been a few towns seeking to change their name

post Staines-upon-Thames.

"The most well known being Abbingdon, which had actually dropped its 'on Thames' name about 100 years ago. I reckon, but am not sure, that they dropped it because of the smell.

"Now that rivers are cleaner, lo and behold, two years after we did, I got a call from BBC Oxford asking about towns changing their names.

"Changing a name is all down to Her Majesty's Land Registry.

"If you sell your house it is the one that decides how it will be described. It decides what places are called.

"It told us that in order to change a name a properly promulgated motion passed by the full council was required."

"For us, changing the name has been a massive success.

"The most popular event in the calendar is Staines-upon-Thames Day.

"The Evening Standard has Staines-upon-Thames as the number one destination for people moving out of London.

"The name change really has impacted people's perception of the town. It has made people realise its close ties to the river."

Turing House opinions

Continued from front page

What do the people of Whitton think about Turing House School's permanent home? SEYI OBAYE-DALEY and MADDI HOWELL investigate.



Derek Clarke, retired, said: "There are enough problems there now with traffic. It's just overloaded, we've lived in Constance Road since 1961 and we can't find a parking space anymore. We've got traffic problems all the time."



Music teacher John Park will be doing a presentation at Turing House in a couple of weeks and said: "I do have some concerns as there is already a Twickenham Academy there, obviously there's going to be increased traffic while the building is going on.

"But the fact that only 20 per cent of children from Whitton will be eligible to go to Turing House and it's for Teddington kids kind of screws up my morals a little bit. Those are all the concerns I have. If they address that situation then fine, we do need quality schools in the area.

"They should put the school in Imperial College where they initially proposed it, but they want to have their cake and eat it in Teddington."



Carol Wiggins, 60, lives in Whitton's Rodney Road and said: "We've only got Twickenham Academy in the area at the moment. There are worse things that could come to the town than a new school. When it comes to admissions though, it should be first come, first served."



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