# Lifestyle writer swaps Shepherd’s Bush chaos for Surbiton calm — and refuses the 'boring' verdict



When Alice Giddings, a 25‑year‑old lifestyle writer, left a tiny flat in Shepherd’s Bush for a spacious two‑bedroom apartment in Surbiton she did so with surprising calm — even though she had read online that the town was a “fate worse than death”. According to reports of her account, she still chose to put down a £3,900 deposit and, in pieces written for national titles, has described the move as one she does not regret.
(According to the original report, she has bylines in Metro and MailOnline and has been publishing personal lifestyle features for national outlets.)

The contrast she sketches between the two corners of London is blunt. Shepherd’s Bush, she says, was noisy, crowded and at times intimidating; in her own telling she felt she had “no sense of safety” and experienced abuse in the street, while constant traffic, pubs spilling out onto pavements and emergency sirens punctured any quiet. By contrast, Surbiton has given her the simple comforts she lacked in west London: quieter streets, a balcony and the sense of being able to relax at home.

That quiet, however, sits beside an awkward notoriety. A Telegraph list labelled Surbiton among Britain’s more tedious towns — a verdict picked up and relayed around the web — and locals sometimes shrug at the commuter tag. Yet cultural commentators have pushed back: Time Out pointed out the town’s leafy streets, village pubs, monthly market and the handsome art‑deco railway station that many residents treat as part of its appeal, arguing that the “boring” label is too reductive.

For Giddings the nearby green spaces helped seal the decision. She now spends time in Bushy Park and close to Hampton Court’s grounds — not just pleasant patches of grass but significant public assets: Bushy Park is London’s second‑largest royal park and a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, with lakes, deer and formal gardens that offer real breadth of escape from urban life. Closer to home, Surbiton’s monthly farmers’ market on Maple Road has proved a local draw, with dozens of stalls and a strong volunteer‑run, community ethos.

Commuting remains a practical trade‑off. She reports that her journeys into central London cost more than when she lived in Shepherd’s Bush, even though the time on the train is similar. That matches the practical picture of services from Surbiton: South Western Railway runs frequent direct trains to London Waterloo with typical journey times of roughly 15 to 25 minutes depending on stopping patterns, and the economics of a commute vary markedly with ticket type, season passes and railcard discounts.

Local retail and social life help explain why she feels settled. Surbiton sits a short walk from Kingston, whose historic market, riverside and department store names draw visitors; Giddings lists familiar high‑street and department store options and says the combination of local shops, cafés and green spaces has made the move feel like an upgrade in quality of life, even if some running costs — she describes council tax as “extortionate” — are higher than she expected.

The particulars of her experience — a desire for safety, outdoor space and a slower pace — will resonate differently for different households. The farmers’ market runs on the third Saturday of each month, with roughly two dozen to four dozen stalls and a community focus that many newcomers cite when describing Surbiton’s appeal; the parkland nearby supports regular events such as Parkrun and provides habitat for wildlife, factors that amplify the town’s family‑friendly reputation.

Giddings’s account is one personal testimony among many about life on the edge of London: a mix of cost, commute and quality‑of‑life calculations. As she has demonstrated in her own portfolio of lifestyle features, the decision to trade inner‑city intensity for suburban calm is rarely simple, but for her the balance has clearly tipped in favour of Surbiton — a place that some lists may call “boring”, but which offers her the quiet, green and connected life she sought.

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## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://alicegiddings2.journoportfolio.com/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://alicegiddings2.journoportfolio.com/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.timeout.com/london/news/one-of-britains-most-boring-towns-is-in-london-052625)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.royalparks.org.uk/visit/parks/bushy-park), [[7]](https://www.surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.southwesternrailway.com/train-times/surbiton-to-london-waterloo)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.timeout.com/london/news/one-of-britains-most-boring-towns-is-in-london-052625)
* Paragraph 7 – [[7]](https://www.surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk/), [[6]](https://www.royalparks.org.uk/visit/parks/bushy-park)
* Paragraph 8 – [[3]](https://alicegiddings2.journoportfolio.com/), [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.southwesternrailway.com/train-times/surbiton-to-london-waterloo)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/article-14996411/I-moved-one-uk-boring-towns-never-want-leave.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - A Daily Mail travel article reports that Alice Giddings, aged 25, moved from a tiny Shepherd's Bush flat to a spacious two bedroom apartment in Surbiton. She paid a £3,900 deposit and says she now feels safer and enjoys quieter streets, a balcony and nearby green spaces including Bushy Park and Hampton Court Park. Giddings contrasts Shepherd's Bush's loud traffic, pubs and sirens with Surbiton's calmer pace, notes local shopping in Kingston such as John Lewis, H&M and Fenwick, mentions the town's 'boring' reputation and a longer, costlier commute despite similar journey time. She still says she would not leave.
3. <https://alicegiddings2.journoportfolio.com/> - Alice Giddings’s online portfolio presents her as a lifestyle journalist whose work has appeared in Metro, MailOnline and other national titles. The site lists her specialist subjects — relationships, dating, sex, travel, health and real life features — and showcases selected articles and bylines. It highlights her experience as a feature writer, gives contact details and examples of commissions, and promotes a friendly, conversational tone. The portfolio confirms Giddings’s media credits and offers links to published pieces, supporting the Daily Mail report that she has written about moving to Surbiton and other personal lifestyle stories. It is updated with recent work regularly.
4. <https://www.timeout.com/london/news/one-of-britains-most-boring-towns-is-in-london-052625> - Time Out reported on a Telegraph list that branded Surbiton the second most boring town in Britain, noting that its principal attraction was the art‑deco railway station. The piece disputed the harsh judgement, pointing out Surbiton’s leafy streets, village pubs, monthly farmers' market and easy access to Kingston’s shops and riverside. Time Out acknowledged Surbiton’s commuter identity and lack of Underground links but argued the area still offers green spaces, characterful architecture and convenient transport to central London, presenting a more balanced view than the Telegraph’s dismissive take. It also mentioned nearby attractions such as Hampton Court and Bushy Park.
5. <https://www.southwesternrailway.com/train-times/surbiton-to-london-waterloo> - South Western Railway’s Surbiton to London Waterloo page gives practical timetable and ticket information for services between Surbiton station and Waterloo. It confirms frequent direct trains operated by South Western Railway, with many services running every few minutes and typical journey times from about 15 to 25 minutes depending on stopping pattern. The page explains ticket types, season passes and railcard discounts, offers live departure boards and travel updates, and encourages passengers to check for engineering works. It supports claims that Surbiton provides a fast rail link into central London, making commuting straightforward for residents, noting season ticket availability too.
6. <https://www.royalparks.org.uk/visit/parks/bushy-park> - The Royal Parks’ Bushy Park page describes the expansive historic park beside Hampton Court Palace, noting it is London’s second largest royal park and a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest. It highlights features such as the Diana Fountain, Longford River, Upper Lodge Water Gardens and extensive woodland and grassland habitats that support wildlife including red and fallow deer. The site details visitor facilities, Parkrun events, playgrounds, cafes and access information, emphasising its value as a nearby green space for Surbiton residents and confirming the proximity of significant parks cited in personal accounts of moving away from inner London daily.
7. <https://www.surbitonfarmersmarket.co.uk/> - Surbiton Farmers' Market’s official website explains the monthly market on Maple Road, held on the third Saturday between 9am and 1pm. Founded in 2009 and run by volunteers, it hosts around 26 to 40 stalls offering local produce, artisan foods, crafts and live music. The site highlights the market’s community focus, charitable fundraising and awards, noting it has supported local causes and raised significant sums. Practical details include stallholder information, event dates and contact addresses. The market page substantiates claims that Surbiton offers local amenities and community life beyond its commuter reputation. It attracts new residents and weekend visitors alike.