

Local action to tackle global climate crisis

24 September 2023



According to the **Eco-Friends of Epsom** we are in an era marked by the increasingly pressing issue of climate change. The urgency of understanding its scientific underpinnings and potential solutions cannot be overstated.

Join The Eco-Friends of Epsom for a discussion with **John Mackintosh**, local expert in environmental matters, who serves as the Environment Manager at Mole Valley District Council and an Environmental Consultant at GreenGoals.

On Wednesday 27th September at 7.30 in the **Methodist Church, Ashley Road, Epsom** a meeting open to the public will take place. The event is not just about delivering information—it's about fostering a deeper understanding. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with John, probing him with questions to better grasp the challenges and solutions.

Neil Dallen, who is a local RA councillor and active in Eco-Friends said: "Climate change knows no boundaries, and its impact is being felt across the globe. Unusual weather patterns have led to a surge in natural disasters, including floods, extreme temperatures, and debilitating droughts. While the causal link between specific events and climate change can be debated, the stark reality is that thousands of lives have already been lost, and countless more have seen their homes and possessions reduced to rubble.

"The evolving landscape of our planet demands immediate attention. While some may harbour doubts about whether it's too late to reverse the course, one thing is unequivocal: doing nothing is not an option. Our actions, or lack thereof, will profoundly influence the lives of future generations."

"The question that looms large is, "What is the right course of action?" This quandary is not one that any individual or nation can resolve in isolation. Climate change is an international predicament, and governments worldwide must come together to find viable solutions.

"You might be wondering, "Can I, as an individual, truly make a difference?" The answer is a resounding yes. Change begins at the grassroots level, and each of us can play a part in mitigating the impacts of climate change. By coming together as a community and sharing knowledge, we can embark on a journey towards a sustainable future."

Mr Dallen added: "Join us for an enlightening evening with Eco-friends in Epsom, where we'll explore answers to these pressing questions and more. Together, we can take the first steps towards a better-informed, more sustainable future for our planet and generations to come."

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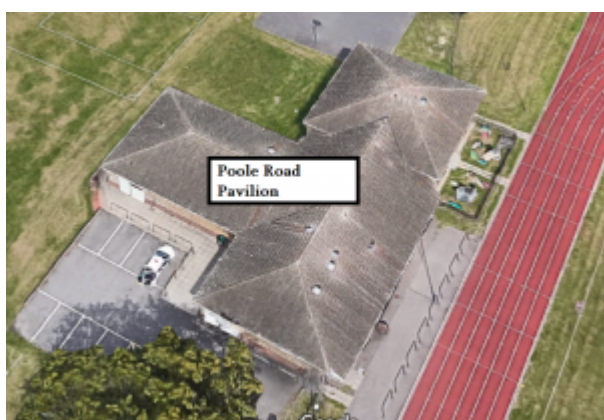
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Costs through the roof enquiry for local Council

24 September 2023



Epsom and Ewell's Poole Road Pavilion re-roof costs go through the roof. The Strategy and Resources Committee Epsom and Ewell Council met September 21 to authorize the extra costs.

The tenders received exceeded the allocated budget. An extra £105,000 from the capital receipts reserve is needed to

cover the increased costs.

Cllr **Robert Leach** (RA Nonsuch) stated he did not object to the proposal in principle but raised a concern. "The three tenders all come in suspiciously close and all above the manufacturers estimate. This seems to be the trend in local authorities. We get a lowball estimate. And then when the tenders come in, we find that they're significantly more." He questioned why the estimate was so far off the mark, resulting in a cost that is over a third more than originally anticipated.

The Council's Senior Surveyor responded to concerns about cost estimates and tenders. He explained that prices can vary significantly in the current market due to factors like energy and transportation costs. In this case, the manufacturer may have provided a lower estimate, contributing to the cost discrepancy. "I don't think it's because we're a council. It's just the way it is in the market."

Cllr **Alan Williamson** (RA West Ewell) was also concerned about the substantial increase in cost for the roofing repairs. "That's quite a big discrepancy on the original estimation."

The Head of Finance explained that the reason for bringing the roofing project cost increase back to the committee is the significant change in costs. "It's right that you as members should consider whether, at the increased cost of a quarter of a million, you still think it's a viable scheme that the council should progress."

"In this particular instance, I think I was given some dodgy advice from the manufacturer. So apologies for that," he said.

Cllr **Shanice Goldman** (RA Nonsuch) asked about the process for evaluating estimates. "Do we use our own internal expertise to kind of look at that and check the validity of estimates that we've been given?" As she understood it, the original amount of £150,000 was agreed upon just nine months ago in January, rather than two years ago.

The officer responded: "The process for the capital bidding starts two years before. So when you're getting the estimates together, by the time we get on site, it is virtually two years past." He also added they relied on the manufacturer's estimate for the cost, and while they usually expect estimates to be higher, they couldn't have foreseen the extent of this particular cost increase.

Cllr Goldman sought assurance that the council will take steps to ensure the accuracy of the data provided for decision-making. She said "It's quite difficult for members to make a vote or to vote on matters where the data isn't accurate." She asked for improvements in the estimation process to enable members to make informed decisions based on reliable information.

Cllr **Hannah Dalton**, the Vice-Chair of the Committee, (RA Stoneleigh) recommended that an internal audit look at this particular procurement to allay any member's concerns around it.

The additional funding for the project was approved as was the recommendation that an internal audit review of the procurement process take place.

On the Council's IT strategy Cllr **Alison Kelly** (LibDem Stamford) raised questions regarding the council's carbon reduction target, emphasizing the need to avoid greenwashing practices and ensure that suppliers can demonstrate their commitment to carbon reduction. She asked, "How are we as a council going to avoid falling into that trap? And will the suppliers be expected to explain how they meet carbon reduction neutrality? And what weight would be put on these when choosing the preferred supplier?"

The Head of IT, highlighted the importance of incorporating metrics like Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) into their procurement process as they shift to cloud-based services. "We will be looking to include a number of metrics within our procurement.....in particular, as we move to cloud-based services."

Cllr Kelly also inquired about the reuse and disposal of old equipment. "I want to know what consideration has been given to the reuse and disposal of old equipment. Will this perhaps be indicated in later report?"

The officer expressed willingness to consider requests for equipment reuse and mentioned interactions with recycling companies and charities for equipment recycling. "I'm happy to receive any requests from councillors where they've potentially got a use for equipment," The Council also receives inquiries from recycling companies, some of which offer free services. Additionally, there are charities, both local and in the southern region, that aim to recycle equipment for use in schools and further education.

The discussion then shifted to the reskilling of current staff members to adapt to new IT strategies.

The officer highlighted the Council's training plans. "Within our Microsoft Enterprise Agreement, there is a free training suite, and we are working our way through that to actually develop a learning plan for individual staff." He also added that this learning plan is designed to help individual staff members acquire new skills and knowledge.

Cllr **Chris Ames** (Labour Court Ward) raised questions about the factors affecting residents' ability to adapt to service changes. "I think there maybe a larger number of factors that might lead some people to have difficulty in channel shift."

On the Household Support Fund, Cllr **Neil Dallen** (Committee Chair - RA Town) explained the urgent need for funding to support vulnerable residents. The item proposed to continue the partnership with the Good Company, a local charity that runs the local food bank, Epsom Pantry, and the Epsom Refugee Network.

The last two items on the agenda, included the Commercial Tenant Update and the Commercial Property Update were discussed in private as they "pertain (ed) to information related to the financial or business affairs of specific individuals or entities."

Crime and Disorder committee gets policies in order

24 September 2023



Three important items were debated at the **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Crime and Disorder Committee** meeting on 12 September 2023. The Video Surveillance System Policy (VSS), the Community Safety Intervention Policy, and the Community Safety Action Plan. The press and public were excluded from The Community Safety Review Report discussion.

The Public Protection Manager, introduced the Video Surveillance System Policy (VSS). He clarified the need for the council to update its policy on video surveillance systems, highlighting the growing public concern as well as changing laws and regulations. "This item is really to start to address that," he said. "By studying the route to adopt a policy which will govern the use of video surveillance for the entire council," The proposed policy would regulate the use of video surveillance throughout the council, including body-worn cameras, CCTV, and potential emerging technologies like drones and artificial intelligence (AI).

During the discussion, Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington) raised questions regarding funding availability. He asked, "Are there funds available from central government? And have we investigated all those routes to get the funding so that we can have a robust and working CCTV system?"

The officer assured that funds were being sourced effectively. "Yes, I can say that the present system in Epsom town is brand new, as of February of this year, replaced a system that was funded by the Home Office seemingly 30 years ago, and was updated also with Home Office funding for this year."

Councillor **Alex Coley**, (RA Ruxley) the Chair of the Committee added, "That was a sizable grant from the Home Office at £271,000 as part of the safer streets initiative, which that CCTV provision is part."

After a short discussion, the motion for the Video Surveillance System Policy was passed and is recommended for adoption at Full Council.

The second item discussed was the Community Safety Intervention Policy. The Officer explained that this policy aims to allocate resources efficiently, focusing on high-priority and needy cases, with victims' interests at the forefront. It seeks to empower individuals to resolve lower-priority issues independently, rather than relying on the council for every concern.

Councillor **James Lawrence** (LibDem College) inquired about the policy's applicability to councillors facing harassment. Lawrence asked, "I was just wondering, and I understand that resources are short in council, but is the policy for dealing with harassment [of a] councillor? Would that be through the same process as this or would there be a different route or more prioritised routes?"

The Officer clarified that criminal harassment falls under the police's jurisdiction, but the policy complements it and applies to all members of society. "There is such thing as criminal harassment, and that's under separate criminal law dealt with exclusively by the police, actually. [...]. So it certainly would apply to any member of society," Nelson said.

The community safety intervention policy was recommended for adoption at full council.

The third item was the Community Safety Action Plan. At the beginning of the discussion, Councillor Alex Coley, the Chair of the Committee said, "This is something that I've asked for. It lays out a series of actions that we are committed to taking over, I believe, a two-year period as part of the CSP (Community Safety Partnership), and it will go to public consultation, so that partners, stakeholders and the public, including councillors, have an opportunity to feedback their thoughts, and that can then be adopted at a future committee."

The Officer emphasised that this marks the first time their service area has released an action plan with the intent to involve the public in consultations. "We are primarily driven by the priorities of the Community Safety Partnership, which is a statutory coming together of partners in which two non-statutory members have also been invited to take part," he added. He further explained that while the partnership establishes a high-level strategic plan, individual organisations are encouraged to develop their specific strategies for implementing the overarching policy. In this instance, the council has meticulously extracted practical actions from the policy priorities agreed upon within the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Cllr **Bernie Muir** (Conservative - Horton) expressed concerns about the quality of data and suggested formalising data contributions from partners within the plan's framework,

Cllr Coley clarified, “The community safety action plan is a plan for the CSP (Community Safety Partnership) itself.” He also encouraged Cllr Muir to provide recommendations during the consultation.

All councillors agreed to the draft plan for public consultation and to agree to receive the results of the consultation and any resulting revisions to the action plan at the next meeting of the committee.

The Community Safety Review Report was discussed during the private session of the meeting, which was conducted without press or public participation. The decision is based on legal advice, citing that this portion of the meeting falls under paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972. Specifically, it pertains to information related to the financial or business affairs of specific individuals or entities.

Related reports:

Safer nights in Epsom in sights

Safer nights ahead in Epsom with funding boost

Council solve Scots Pine tree puzzle

24 September 2023



The Planning Committee Meeting, held at Epsom Town Hall on 7 September 2023 centred around two key topics: a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) concerning a Scots Pine tree in Grafton Road and the modification of approved plans for a construction project in Boleyn Avenue. After a brief discussion, two motions were passed.

Regarding the Scots Pine tree TPO, a historical mapping error had inaccurately placed the tree. Originally, it was marked as if it were located in the front garden of No. 10, but it was listed under the address of No. 8 in the TPO schedule. To rectify this, it was recommended to issue a new TPO, providing temporary protection to the tree. The Planning Development and Enforcement officer presented the motion and explained the TPO application procedure, highlighting the historical nature of the error.

Three key recommendations emerged:

1. Confirmation of Tree Preservation Order No. 476A without modification
2. Revocation of Tree Preservation Order No. 476.
3. Modification of Tree Preservation Order No. 6 to remove the reference to Pine T17.

However, some debate ensued as both the tree owner and the neighbour raised concerns. Their primary worries included the tree’s height, branches falling during strong winds, and damage to the pavement caused by birds. Additionally, the tree owner expressed frustration over the extended duration of their application and objection to the TPO.

During the meeting, several councillors voiced concerns about potential limitations on future actions concerning the tree if the TPO application succeeded. Councillor **Julian Freeman** (LibDem College) questioned the evaluation system and its impact on daylight where the trees were located, while Councillor **Peter O’Donovan** (RA Ewell Court) expressed concerns about the tree’s size and height and its potential impact on nearby residents and properties.

On the other hand, Councillor **Neil Dallen** (RA Town) emphasised that the motion primarily aimed to correct documentation. He clarified, “As I understand, for the TPO to be corrected and put in the right place. If the tree gets too big or branches start falling off, then even though it’s got a TPO, they can apply to prune the tree or do whatever’s needed. It’s not causing any damage to property.” The motion passed with one abstention.

The second topic discussed was the modification of approved plans for a construction project at 15 Boleyn Avenue. This project involved a two-story, two-bedroom dwelling with additional garage space. After a brief presentation by the officer and clarifications by Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington), the motion received unanimous approval.

Epsom horse owners asked to take survey

24 September 2023



Britain's inaugural **Thoroughbred Census** has been initiated, inviting former racehorse owners to partake in the survey open until December 31, 2023. The primary aim is to enhance the traceability of retired racehorses.

About the Census: The census is a collaborative effort with Retraining of Racehorses (RoR), the official aftercare charity of British Racing, funded by the Racing Foundation. It receives support from World Horse Welfare and Weatherbys General Stud Book and is coordinated with experts from Hartpury University. This initiative is a crucial component of British Racing's Horse Welfare Board's five-year welfare strategy, 'A Life Well Lived.' The project's objective is to enhance the traceability of thoroughbreds after their racing careers conclude.

The Census seeks to address a recognized data gap resulting from infrequent updates to equine identification documents (passports) once thoroughbreds transition into private ownership. By improving data accuracy, British Racing and RoR aim to provide enhanced support to owners, including access to educational resources and avenues for competition if desired. Additionally, it fosters informed and supportive communities. Furthermore, it equips the Horse Welfare Board and RoR to enhance and adapt welfare initiatives and facilitates rapid and effective communication in the event of an equine disease outbreak.

Helena Flynn, Programme Director of the Horse Welfare Board, stated, "This campaign will help us emphasize responsible ownership and the critical role every thoroughbred owner plays in ensuring the accuracy of their equine identification document (passport)."

What Information Does the Census Require? To complete the survey, owners must provide the horse's equine identification document (passport) number, microchip number, age, current residence, second career, and other pertinent details to compile a comprehensive dataset for retired British racehorses in 2023.

Why is an Additional Objective of the Census Necessary? Typically, new horse owners are expected to update ownership information within 30 days. During their racing careers, this information is meticulously maintained by breeders, owners, and trainers in the Weatherbys General Stud Book. However, data for former racehorses significantly declines when they enter private ownership after retiring from racing, with equine identification document (passport) compliance averaging just 20% across the equestrian community. This decline may stem from a lack of awareness regarding the importance of this phase, uncertainty about associated costs, a reluctance to update documents even after a horse has passed away, and a general disinterest in participating in the process.

Therefore, an additional goal of the census is to engage with private owners to encourage them to review and, if necessary, update their horse's equine identification card (passport). Moreover, owners of horses previously registered with licensed British trainers will be invited to register their horses for free with RoR.

David Catlow, Managing Director of Retraining of Racehorses, emphasized, "The 'social license' for the use of horses in sport is under increasing scrutiny, with the welfare of former racehorses after retirement being a specific concern. This initiative is a significant stride toward ensuring thoroughbreds enjoy a healthy and caring existence throughout their lives, while also providing the racing industry with pertinent data to inform future decisions."

To complete the form, please visit: https://uwe.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8bNJFzR2FB95ZIQ

Participation in the census is voluntary, but owners are strongly encouraged to join the community and contribute. Full findings will be disclosed in the first quarter of 2024.