

# Is Delay Defensible in the Fight to Protect Epsom's Green Belt?

1 November 2024



As Epsom and Ewell Borough Council deliberates its Local Plan in the face of imminent, significantly higher government housing targets, the council's slow-paced approach raises crucial questions about its strategy to protect our borough's green spaces. Led by the Residents' Association, the council is balancing on a tightrope between procedural rigour and an increasingly urgent need for action. But with higher housing quotas looming, is this balance tipping too far towards delay, at the cost of our precious Green Belt?

Nine opposition councillors have proposed an Emergency Full Council Meeting, arguing that swift action is essential to avoid a target increase to 817 new homes annually—double the current requirement. They rightly point out the risks to Epsom's character and environmental integrity. With development pressure escalating, the loss of even a small proportion of green spaces would have lasting consequences, affecting not just our landscape but also the local ecology and community fabric.

Residents' Association leaders, meanwhile, cite the need for strict adherence to regulatory procedures, with Councillor **Peter O'Donovan** (Chair of the Licensing Policy and Planning Committee, RA Ewell Court) cautioning against shortcuts that might render the plan "unsound" in the eyes of government inspectors. RA Leader Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (Stoneleigh) echoes this sentiment, emphasising the need for quality and robustness in the plan to withstand scrutiny. But, does adherence to every procedural step outweigh the immediate urgency to avoid a government-imposed target that could open up the Green Belt for development?

If every councillor claims to prioritise the protection of our green spaces, it's difficult to justify the RA's slow and careful approach. What would be lost by speeding up the process, even at the risk of minor regulatory issues? The Local Plan's objective is clear: it must serve the community's best interests by ensuring sustainable development, but without jeopardising the green spaces that make Epsom unique. Rushing to complete this plan before the higher targets take effect doesn't mean compromising on quality—it means acknowledging the urgency of our current position.

The RA's insistence on caution may reflect their commitment to procedural integrity, but in the face of a looming housing target that threatens everything they aim to protect, this stance appears increasingly illogical. The stakes are high, and with public consultation already delayed due to a halt in 2023, it is hard to see what further delay achieves. As **Janice Baker** of the Epsom Green Party rightly points out, legal pathways exist to expedite the consultation phase, saving precious weeks and potentially allowing the community to dodge the higher target.

In the end, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council must decide if this cautious approach truly serves our borough's best interests. Every resident who treasures our green spaces deserves a council that can act quickly and decisively in their defence. The council's commitment to procedural correctness is admirable, but it must be weighed against the real and immediate threat of intensified development. It's time to ask, "What are we willing to risk?" Because in this case, the greatest risk might just be the price of waiting.

Related reports:

[Call to Epsom and Ewell Council to speed plan denied](#)

[Opposition Calls for Emergency Council Meeting Over Epsom and Ewell Local Plan](#)

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## Epsom school fined for finger loss

1 November 2024



A school trust in Surrey has been fined after part of a pupil's finger was amputated.

The five-year-old boy, a Year 1 pupil at Danetree Primary School in Epsom, had been leaving the toilet on 15 June 2022 when his right hand slipped and went into the hinge side of a door.

There was no door guard installed and he trapped his right hand in the door.

This led to the tip of his middle finger becoming detached as his right hand was stuck in the door.

A teacher found the tip of his middle finger, and the boy underwent surgery to re-attach his finger at St Georges Hospital in Tooting, London.

Although younger pupils in Key Stage 1 were taught in a newer building where hinge guards had been fitted on the doors, the incident occurred in a separate building where the older children in Key Stage 2 were taught.

The Key Stage 1 pupils would use the Key Stage 2 building at least once a week to use its library and learn about music and science. While in this building, the Key Stage 1 pupils were allowed to use the toilets unsupervised.

A Health and Safety Executive (HSE) investigation into the incident found GLF Schools, the trust that runs Danetree Primary School, had failed to identify the risk to its Key Stage 1 pupils while using the toilets. This meant hinge guards were not installed on the toilet doors of the building where Key Stage 2 pupils were taught.

GLF Schools, of Picquets Way, Banstead, Surrey, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 3(1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974. The trust was fined £6,000 and ordered to pay £6,875.70 in costs at Staines Magistrates' Court on 30 October 2024.

HSE principal inspector Emma Stiles said: "This little boy and his family could have been spared a lot of pain and upset if the trust had installed widely available, effective and inexpensive hinge guards on the doors the young children had access to. I would ask all schools to review their estates to make sure they have hinge guards where needed so no other children are hurt in this way when at school."

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## 31st October 2024

1 November 2024

Arts Community News Volunteers

### The Horton Hid Hiring From Regulator



30 October 2024

Controversy surrounded the appointment of the salaried Centre Manager of Epsom and Ewell's new arts and exhibition venue, The Horton Arts Centre. Documents obtained by the Epsom and Ewell Times ... [Read More](#)

News

### Caring Mentors in Epsom and Ewell sought for young



30 October 2024

MCR Pathways, (Mentoring, Charity, Relationships) an award-winning charity dedicated to transforming the lives of young people through mentorship, is looking for volunteer mentors to support a young person throughout their ... [Read More](#)

Business Community Transport

### Epsom High St in need of more love?



29 October 2024

Driving safely, parking appropriately. Romy Sustar reports: This is the second article in my series following on from "Epsom town as a safe place to Live". It seemed to me ... [Read More](#)

Health News

## Frozen Shoulder Link to Menopause



29 October 2024

Frozen shoulder, also known as adhesive capsulitis, is a painful condition that restricts movement in the shoulder joint due to adhesion and inflammation in the joint capsule. While this condition ... [Read More](#)

Business Council Environment

## Up hill struggle to stop oil drilling in Surrey - pays off?



28 October 2024

A clash between environmental advocates and oil developers at Horse Hill in Surrey has resurfaced as local campaigners question why oil production continues despite a lack of planning permission. The ... [Read More](#)

Rugby Sports

## Miracle with Medway



28 October 2024

For the hosts it was a Saturday of availability Armageddon with an injury list mounting that targeted the front and back rows. Players of yesteryear were called to arms and the ... [Read More](#)

Arts Community Council

## Epsom and Ewell Council bank on street art



28 October 2024

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has completed two new community arts projects in Epsom and Stoneleigh during September and October, in collaboration with globally recognised street artists Positive Arts, local ... [Read More](#)

Community Council

## Licensed to walk



28 October 2024

The Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee has voted to launch a 12-month pilot Commercial Dog Walking Licensing Scheme in Nonsuch Park, starting in April 2025, following a consultation with the ... [Read More](#)

Business Westminster

## Nominate heroic businesswomen of Epsom and Ewell



28 October 2024

A new scheme entitled "MP HERoes", In Partnership with NatWest and Supported by the Women & Enterprise All-Party Parliamentary Group has been introduced. A cross-party Parliamentary programme that celebrates local ... [Read More](#)

Football Sports

## Epsom and Ewell see more red in away defeat



27 October 2024

Abbey Rangers 2-1 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 26th October 2024. Eleven months ago we visited Addlestone Moor and lost 2-1 in a ... [Read More](#)

Council Health

## Surrey smokers quitting for free



24 October 2024

Ex-smoker Councillor Mark Nuti, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, and Public Health, visited the One You Surrey stop smoking service to find out how we're supporting smokers to quit. ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

## Opposition Calls for Emergency Council Meeting Over Epsom and Ewell Local Plan



24 October 2024

In a move that underscores growing concerns over the future of development in Epsom and Ewell, nine opposition councillors from the borough council have requested an Emergency Full Council Meeting ... [Read More](#)

Business News

## Fresh New Look for Ernest Jones Epsom



24 October 2024

Sponsored article: A refreshed Ernest Jones store, designed for Epsom's shoppers, has opened its doors in the Ashley Centre. Customers are welcomed into a bright interior, with a host of ... [Read More](#)

Council Education Finances

## No wonder Woking went bankrupt. Scandal of private school loans



24 October 2024

A private school was loaned millions of pounds at favourable rates by Woking Borough Council before it went bankrupt. Now questions are being asked as to whether an independent inquiry ... [Read More](#)

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## Caring Mentors in Epsom and Ewell sought for young

1 November 2024



MCR Pathways, (Mentoring, Charity, Relationships) an award-winning charity dedicated to transforming the lives of young people through mentorship, is looking for volunteer mentors to support a young person throughout their education.

The charity addresses the widening gap in educational and employment outcomes between care-experienced young people and their peers. Research shows that those who do not receive MCR Pathways mentorship are 23% less likely to progress to college, university, or employment compared to their mentored peers. By connecting young people with caring mentors, MCR Pathways helps bridge the gap between aspiration and achievement.

Mentors meet with their mentees for just one hour each week in school. This consistent interaction provides a valuable opportunity for young people to focus on their future, discuss any concerns, and share their thoughts and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. Research shows that even one hour a week with a caring adult can significantly boost a young person's confidence, improve academic performance, and open doors to a brighter future.

Since its founding in 2007, MCR Pathways has made a significant impact, launching its programme in Surrey in 2021 and establishing partnerships with seven schools across the county. With the growing demand for mentors, MCR Pathways is actively seeking new volunteers in **Epsom and Ewell**. If you're ready to make a meaningful impact in your community, find a school near you by visiting [mcrpathways.org/school-locator](https://mcrpathways.org/school-locator).

To find out more about the programme and to register, head to [mcrpathways.org/whats-stopping-you](https://mcrpathways.org/whats-stopping-you) or for any enquiries about becoming a mentor, please reach out to Liz Grace, MCR Pathways' Surrey Volunteer Recruitment Manager, at [liz.grace@mcrpathways.org](mailto:liz.grace@mcrpathways.org) or call 07483 390702. Together, we can help create a future where every young person has the opportunity to thrive. Join MCR Pathways today and be the change in a young person's life!

## Nominate heroic businesswomen of Epsom and Ewell

1 November 2024



A new scheme entitled “**MP HEROes**”, *In Partnership with NatWest* and Supported by the Women & Enterprise All-Party Parliamentary Group has been introduced.

A cross-party Parliamentary programme that celebrates local women-owned businesses throughout the UK. MP HEROes enables each MP to highlight the vital contribution of women entrepreneurs to the local economy and beyond, generating positive PR for the business and for the nominating MP.

By nominating a woman business owner in the Epsom and Ewell Constituency, the goal is to create and celebrate local role models and encourage other women to start and grow a business. All HEROes become part of the MPH community, with regular events and workshops both online and in person, which support the business owner and their business.

**Helen Maguire**, Epsom and Ewell's new MP, can nominate a local woman business owner from any sector or industry, the only requirement is they are based in your constituency.

If you wish to suggest someone to Helen Maguire email [helen.maguire.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:helen.maguire.mp@parliament.uk)

*NB There is no closing date, business owners can be nominated throughout the year.*

### Points you may wish to consider when nominating your HERO woman business owner

- established in the area
- provides a useful product or service
- employs local people
- supports the local community

### What happens next

We contact the business to let them know about the Award. It's not a competition, all MP HEROes nominated businesses (one per constituency) are award-winners and welcome within the MPH community. The MPH Award runs across 2-years, currently 2024/25.

### Next steps for MPs

Once the business is confirmed, each MP and their HERO is featured on [www.mpheroes.com](http://www.mpheroes.com) and highlighted throughout the local press and on social media. It's great for the business, the local economy, and an opportunity for MPs to promote their support for local business.

### Celebration and Awards event at Westminster - 3.00pm November 20, 2024

MPs and their HEROes are invited to a celebration event at Parliament during Global Entrepreneurship Week. A Certificate is presented to each HERO and we hope as an MP you're able to pop in during the afternoon to grab a photo with your business HERO. Should you nominate a business in the next year, the next Celebration takes place in spring 2025.

Image: local women led business Oracle PR

# Fresh New Look for Ernest Jones Epsom

1 November 2024



Sponsored article:

A refreshed Ernest Jones store, designed for Epsom’s shoppers, has opened its doors in the Ashley Centre.

Customers are welcomed into a bright interior, with a host of new features to improve and enhance their shopping experience.

Every aspect of the refurbishment has been thoughtfully designed with local shoppers in mind.

“We wanted our Epsom customers to feel right at home from the moment they enter our store,” said store manager, Denise Ducasse.

“As a trusted jeweller with a reputation for quality, craftsmanship and expertise, we’re here to help our customers celebrate milestone moments and so we really wanted to heighten that sense of occasion in our store,” she said.

“We’re really excited and hope our customers, will love our makeover,” she added.



**To celebrate the opening of the new-look store, this weekend from October 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, Ernest Jones is inviting shoppers to join them for a glass of bubbly with an opportunity to view the latest collections, learn more about the range of jewellery and watch services available as well as an enjoying an extra 10% off the final weekend of sale.**

Ernest Jones Epsom is part of a multimillion-pound store investment programme by parent company Signet Jewelers UK and Ireland. A total of 14 Ernest Jones stores and 41 H Samuel stores across the UK are being refurbished.

“This significant investment underscores our dedication to local high streets and shopping centres across the country. We believe that a vibrant retail sector is a vital part of a thriving community and we hope our refurbished stores will be warmly welcomed by local shoppers,” said Neil Old, Managing Director Signet Jewelers UK and Ireland.

**Ernest Jones Ashley Centre, 10 Central Square, Epsom KT18 5DA**

# 24th October 2024

1 November 2024

Health News

## Epsom and St Helier Hospitals in Desperate Need of Repairs



23 October 2024

Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals are in need of urgent repairs, with more than £150 million required to address crumbling infrastructure, according to the latest NHS data. Epsom and ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

## Epsom's neighbour cracks on with its Local Plan



23 October 2024

More than 6,000 new homes will be built in the Surrey borough of Mole Valley, with Leatherhead taking on the largest share after the district council approved its long-term planning bible. ... [Read More](#)

Community Council Sports

## Loads of coaches for Epsom tennis



22 October 2024

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Environment committee has authorised the contracts for three tennis coaching providers in Epsom. R&A Sport will be carrying out coaching sessions at Auriol Park, Sutton Tennis ... [Read More](#)

Business Horse racing

## Modern Yard Revitalizes Epsom's Historic Racing Scene



22 October 2024

The Daily Telegraph (Monday 21st October) has highlighted a significant revival for Epsom's historic role in British horse racing, reporting on the recent developments at Downs House, a training yard ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances

## Only the cashless will be “on the Hook” Road car park Epsom



22 October 2024

A town centre car park is set to go cashless after plans to upgrade its ticket machines were approved. Pay metres at the Hook Road multi-storey car park in ... [Read More](#)

Council Editions Editorial

## Correction to our Epsom and Ewell Council reports



21 October 2024

We apologise unreservedly to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Chief Executive Officer Jackie King for an unintended publication of a report dated 26th September 2024 titled Challenges to Epsom and ... [Read More](#)

Football Sports

## Fofahan makes FA fans as Epsom & Ewell progress in Vase



21 October 2024

Epsom and Ewell FC 3-1 Berks County. Isuzu F.A. Vase - First Round. Sunday 20th October 2024 Just 6 days before the 50 year anniversary of our very first F.A. ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

## Epsom & Ewell’s Green Belt controversy tightens



18 October 2024

Tensions flared during a heated meeting of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LPPC) in Epsom on October 17th, 2024, as residents voiced strong objections to the proposed housing targets ... [Read More](#)

Community Council Finances

## Epsom & Ewell Council Greenlights Local Projects



18 October 2024

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Licensing and Planning Policy Committee has given its provisional backing to over £2 million in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding for a variety of local ... [Read More](#)

Arts Culture

## Verdi's Requiem adapted for Epsom Church



18 October 2024

Epsom Choral Society (ECS) will perform the Verdi Requiem on Saturday 23rd November at 7:30pm, at St Martin's Church in Epsom. This concert promises to be a remarkable event, showcasing ... [Read More](#)

Community Council

## County pledge to Epsom charity's fight to end poverty



18 October 2024

In a significant move for the region, Surrey County Council (SCC) has signed Good Company's End Poverty Pledge, marking a bold step towards addressing the growing issue of poverty across ... [Read More](#)

Council Housing Planning

## Mole Valley 'won't bend' to petitioners



17 October 2024

The fight to protect the green gateway into a Leatherhead goes on after campaigners seeking to stop a popular park from being turned into high rises were told the council ... [Read More](#)

Community Education

## Nescot proud to sign the Armed Forces Covenant



17 October 2024

North East Surrey College of Technology (Nescot) is proud to have officially signed the Armed Forces Covenant at a special event at the college today (16 October). The Covenant is a ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

## Epsom and Ewell adopts new Climate Action Plan



16 October 2024

Tuesday 15th October Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Environment Committee approved a new five year Climate Action Plan (2025-2029). The Plan outlines a comprehensive strategy to meet the Council's commitment

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## Modern Yard Revitalizes Epsom's Historic Racing Scene

1 November 2024



**The Daily Telegraph** (Monday 21st October) has highlighted a significant revival for Epsom's historic role in British horse racing, reporting on the recent developments at **Downs House**, a training yard with a prestigious past. According to the *Telegraph's* racing correspondent, **Marcus Armytage**, the once derelict site is now undergoing a transformation into a modern facility, spearheading efforts to attract London-based owners back to the area.

The report details how New Zealander **Mark Travers**, who has lived in the UK for two decades, undertook the ambitious seven-year project to restore Downs House. Situated just a quarter of a mile from the start of the Derby, Downs House had long symbolized Epsom's decline as a training hub, having lost its prominence as a centre for racehorse training decades ago. However, the newly revamped facility, now boasting space for 70 horses and cutting-edge amenities, is positioned to revive the town's fortunes.

The *Daily Telegraph* also reports that **George Baker**, a Stewards' Cup-winning trainer, will move his operation to Downs House in January. Baker, along with his wife Candida, was struck by the state-of-the-art facilities and the untapped potential of the nearby gallops. The move signals a bold step forward for Epsom's equine industry, which has long played second fiddle to more prominent centres like Newmarket and Lambourn.

Baker, who has trained horses from his base in Chiddingfold, shared with the *Telegraph* how unlikely the move to Epsom once seemed. Yet, the combination of modern infrastructure and proximity to London convinced him to seize the opportunity. In an era when racehorse ownership is increasingly attractive to Londoners, Downs House's accessibility could be a game-changer.

As reported, Baker hopes that his move will contribute to the broader rejuvenation of Epsom as a competitive training centre. With room for 50 horses initially, Baker is aiming to fill the yard within two years, making the facility a top choice for owners seeking convenience and quality.

While Epsom's journey back to its glory days remains a work in progress, the ambitious restoration of Downs House, as highlighted in *The Daily Telegraph*, marks a pivotal step in the town's efforts to reclaim its place on the racing map.

Image: Downs House aerial - Google

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## Correction to our Epsom and Ewell Council reports

1 November 2024



We apologise unreservedly to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Chief Executive Officer Jackie King for an unintended publication of a report dated 26th September 2024 titled Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council's Handling of Local Plan, reporting on the 24th September 2024 meeting of the Licensing, Planning and Policy Committee.

This report was overtaken by a report entitled Epsom Local Plan controversy heats up also reporting on the same meeting.

We attributed remarks to Jackie King even though she was not at the meeting. This part of the report has been repeated elsewhere on social media causing some concern in this sensitive area.

The first report was a draft that was intended to be discarded as it was clear that there was a muddle in interpreting the subtitles of the meeting. We do not usually report twice on the same meeting.

The report Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council's Handling of Local Plan has now been unpublished.

Let us take this opportunity to appeal for new writers. You do not need a degree in English or Journalism. We can always reorganise the writing to a publishable standard. What we need is observers with time to provide us the facts of local matters. A Borough our size cannot sustain paid journalism. We rely on volunteers.

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## Verdi's Requiem adapted for Epsom Church

1 November 2024



Epsom Choral Society (ECS) will perform the Verdi Requiem on Saturday 23rd November at 7:30pm, at St Martin's Church in Epsom. This concert promises to be a remarkable event, showcasing a special arrangement of Verdi's grand work with chamber ensemble by Michael Betzner-Brandt.

Celebrating over a century of musical excellence, ECS has been delivering exceptional performances to its audiences to mark its centenary in 2022. The choir has programmed a series of exciting and diverse concerts over the past two years, including a gala performance of Handel's Messiah and a spectacular rendition of Walton's Belshazzar's Feast at London's Cadogan Hall.

There are four outstanding international soloists:

Elizabeth Findon - soprano

Judy Louie Brown - mezzo

John Findon - tenor

Mark Nathan - baritone

The concert will be conducted by ECS Music Director, Julian Collings.

This November, ECS invites its loyal followers to experience Verdi's Requiem like never before. The arrangement by Michael Betzner-Brandt is designed specifically for a chamber ensemble, allowing the choir to bring the grandeur and emotional depth of Verdi's masterpiece to a more intimate setting while still capturing the essence and intensity of the original composition.

"Our aim is to create an unforgettable musical experience for our audience," said Nina Kaye, publicity manager. "The Verdi Requiem is one of the most powerful works in the choral repertoire, and this unique arrangement allows us to perform it in St Martin's Church in Epsom."

Tickets for this not-to-be-missed event are priced at £20, with a special half-price offer for under-25s and can be bought online [www.epsomchoral.org.uk](http://www.epsomchoral.org.uk). Attendees are encouraged to book early to avoid disappointment, as this concert is expected to attract a large audience.

Join Epsom Choral Society on Saturday, 23rd November at 7:30pm at St Martin's Church in Epsom for an evening of

stirring music, passion, and community. Experience Verdi's Requiem in a new light, and be a part of the rich musical heritage that ECS continues to build in Epsom and beyond.

For more information and to purchase tickets, please visit [www.epsomchoral.org.uk](http://www.epsomchoral.org.uk).

## 17th October 2024

1 November 2024

Council Finances Housing

### Epsom's homelessness crisis



16 October 2024

Finding temporary accommodation for families at risk of homelessness is the "biggest financial pressure" facing Epsom and Ewell. Following Epsom and Ewell Times report 13th October 2023 on Epsom and ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances Housing

### Some Surrey boroughs get brownfield funding



16 October 2024

Surrey councils will get nearly £2m to release disused brownfield sites to unlock desperately needed land for house building including cash to clear asbestos and transform the "heart of Camberley". ... [Read More](#)

Council Elections News

### Surrey Tories bouncing back already?



15 October 2024

The Conservative election turnaround in Surrey shows no sign of slowing after the party beat the Liberal Democrats, Labour and independents to take two more seats at the October 2024 by-elections. ... [Read More](#)

Football Sports

### What were the odds of Epsom & Ewell's 4 x 2 + 2?

Combined Counties League Premier Division South										
		P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	PTS	
14	Horley Town	14	3	4	7	29	34	-5	13	
15	Epsom & Ewell	13	3	4	6	19	30	-11	13	
16	Camberley Town	11	3	2	6	15	22	-7	11	
17	Chipstead	12	3	1	8	17	35	-18	10	
18	Sheerwater	13	2	3	8	21	37	-16	9	
19	Balham	12	1	3	8	14	31	-17	6	
20	Spelthorne Sports	13	0	4	9	8	27	-19	4	

15 October 2024

Epsom and Ewell 2-2 Fleet Town. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 12th October 2024. For the fourth time in a row our match resulted in a 2-2 ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances

## Surrey County Council finances under the spotlight



14 October 2024

A recent Local Government Information Unit report presents a worrying picture of local government finances across the UK, with a particular focus on the impact of budget cuts on services ... [Read More](#)

Business News

## Ancaster acquires the Epsom keys to Allams



14 October 2024

Sponsored article: Ancaster Group has announced the acquisition of Allams of Epsom, a prominent Skoda dealership that has been a cornerstone of the local automotive industry for over 70 years. ... [Read More](#)

Rugby Sports

## Sutton & Epsom Rugby beat the unbeaten



14 October 2024

On Saturday 11 th October 2014 Sutton & Epsom RFC visited Crescent Farm to play Sidcup whowere the early season league leaders of London 1 South after five games. On ... [Read More](#)

Community Health

## Public meeting about Epsom Hospital future



12 October 2024

A public meeting has been scheduled for October 17th, 2024, at the Epsom Sports Club, located next to Epsom Hospital, to discuss the future of local healthcare services. The meeting, ... [Read More](#)

Council News

## Fly-tippers force closure of Surrey recycling centre



12 October 2024

A Surrey recycling site will permanently close due to persistent fly-tipping at the site. The Mound car park in Tattenham Corner has been repeatedly hit by high levels of dumped ... [Read More](#)

Arts Business Education

## Epsom Station gets an artistic makeover



11 October 2024

In the hustle and bustle of daily life, railway stations often feel like transient spaces where passengers rush through without a second thought. However, at Epsom Station, something unique is ... [Read More](#)

Community Volunteers

## Winter fuel support in Epsom



10 October 2024

Changes to the Winter Fuel Payments means that many people are worried that they may not be able to heat their homes this winter. For the eighth year running, Citizens Advice ... [Read More](#)

Community Volunteers

## Epsom Pantry has a sister in Banstead



10 October 2024

Sat bang in the middle between M&S and Waitrose on Banstead high street, a new community food store has opened to help people struggling to buy affordable groceries in Surrey. ... [Read More](#)

Council Education

## Surrey sorry for SEND shortcomings



10 October 2024

The leader of Surrey County Council (SCC) has apologised to families who have been 'failed' over the provision of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services. Parents have previously told ... [Read More](#)

Education News

## Surrey student satellite stars



10 October 2024

Meet DARWIN - the award-winning, small satellite that could detect and track wildfires, built by students from the University of Surrey. Surrey's Peryton Space team has won the prestigious UK Students for the Exploration and Development of Space (UKSEDS) satellite design competition, beating teams from around the country for the second ... [Read More](#)

Council Letters Transport

## Epsom and Ewell Council answers parking complaint immediately



10 October 2024

Charles Moseley of Hurstpierpoint complained in a letter dated 8th October to the Epsom and Ewell Times about the running out of Epsom Playhouse beer and the Ashley Centre Car ... [Read More](#)

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## Ancaster acquires the Epsom keys to Allams

1 November 2024



Sponsored article: Ancaster Group has announced the acquisition of Allams of Epsom, a prominent Skoda dealership that has been a cornerstone of the local automotive industry for over 70 years. This move comes as Ancaster celebrates its 75th anniversary, marking a strategic expansion for the group across South West London and Surrey.

Allams of Epsom, located on Longmead Business Park, has been serving customers in the region since its establishment in 1952. The dealership is well-known for offering the full range of Skoda vehicles and operates as an authorised service and MOT centre. For decades, it has built a loyal customer base, providing reliable service and quality vehicles to generations of local residents.

With this acquisition, Ancaster Group continues to solidify its presence in the South East, adding to its existing network of 13 dealerships representing brands such as Nissan, Hyundai, MG, Renault, and Dacia. This addition will allow the group to further enhance its customer offerings, particularly in the fast-growing Skoda brand. Ancaster's Managing Director, Stephen Wood, expressed enthusiasm for the future, stating, "This acquisition is a strategic milestone for us, as it accelerates our growth and broadens the brands we offer in South London and Surrey. Allams and Ancaster share the same important core values of customer service provided by a motivated and committed team."

Allams will continue to operate under its current name, with customers benefiting from the enhanced support and synergies provided by Ancaster's wider network. The acquisition positions Ancaster to serve the Surrey and South West London markets even more effectively, with a strong focus on customer satisfaction, as both companies are known for their dedicated service teams.

The Allams dealership has long been a fixture in Epsom, having earned a reputation for trust and quality in automotive sales and servicing. For local residents, this acquisition signals the continuation of a trusted service, now backed by the broader expertise and resources of a larger dealership group. Ancaster's purchase ensures that Allams will remain an integral part of the community, while also benefiting from new growth opportunities within a larger organisation.

Ancaster Group, which was founded in 1949, has built its reputation over the decades through customer service, trust, and value. With this latest acquisition, the group looks set to strengthen its ties to the local community, continuing to offer a comprehensive range of new and pre-owned vehicles across multiple brands.

For Epsom motorists, this new chapter in the history of Allams promises continuity in quality service, combined with the benefits of a broader dealership network under the Ancaster umbrella.

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## Winter fuel support in Epsom

1 November 2024



Changes to the Winter Fuel Payments means that many people are worried that they may not be able to heat their homes this winter.

For the eighth year running, Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE) has teamed up with the Rotary Clubs of Epsom and Ewell to bring much needed support to those in the borough in need of help with paying fuel bills this winter.

This year, residents in the Epsom & Ewell borough are being asked to donate any amount to Project Wenceslas to help those affected. All funds will help those struggling with electricity and gas bills, as well enable energy efficient appliances to be purchased. CAEE manages the distribution for the benefit for those in fuel poverty, direct to fuel suppliers with no deductions for costs or fees.

Lisa Davis, CEO, Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell, said:

“With changes to the Winter Fuel Payments this winter, an increased number of people in our community are worrying about heating their homes. Many people relied on the Winter Fuel Payments to help manage their energy usage and budgets. Some people may be eligible for benefits but many may not.

“Project Wenceslas is more important than ever to provide that much needed support and peace of mind for individuals and families across the borough who are struggling. Please get in touch if either you want to donate or you are in need of support.”

To find out more about donating, please contact via the websites [epsomrotary.uk](http://epsomrotary.uk) or [ewellrotary.club](http://ewellrotary.club) and search for Project Wenceslas.

If you are struggling with fuel bills, then contact Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell on 0808 278 7963 (Mon-Fri, 10am - 4pm) or see our website: [www.caee.org.uk](http://www.caee.org.uk).

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## 10th October 2024

1 November 2024

Community Nature News

### Secret 100 acres just north of Epsom and Ewell



7 October 2024

Despite being home to ancient hedgerows, a locally significant population of brown hairstreakbutterflies, and a small fragment of wetland, the series of seven meadows spanning 42 hectares (about 100 acres) ... [Read More](#)

[Football Sports](#)

## Epsom & Ewell FC draw with leaders



7 October 2024

Redhill 2-2 Epsom and Ewell. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 5th October 2024. I wrote last week that matches against Redhill and Fleet Town would give us ... [Read More](#)

News Policing

## Surrey Cop demoted for racist texts



6 October 2024

A Surrey Police sergeant who shared racist texts and a video of a man attempting to take his own life has been stripped of his rank - but will continue ... [Read More](#)

Health Sports

## There's always Buckland Park for winter swimmers



6 October 2024

Guildford Lido, in Stoke Park, used to be open 12 months a year from 2014, but that ended during the pandemic. This year's summer season ended on September 15. Nestled ... [Read More](#)

Council Education Environment

## Surrey schools greenest in England



6 October 2024

Surrey County Council is proud to announce that it continues to lead in England in environmental education, boasting the largest number of Eco-Schools Green Flag awards for the second consecutive ... [Read More](#)

Community News

## Ashtead heroes recognised by local Rotary



6 October 2024

Ashtead 'local heroes' were recognised for their outstanding service to the community at last night's 2024 Ashtead Rotary Community Awards. Three awards were made, to people nominated by their peers, ... [Read More](#)

Culture Education News

## Art, culture, and science collide in Surrey



6 October 2024

This November, the University of Surrey will open its doors to the public as it hosts two prominent research festivals: the Being Human Festival and the ESRC Festival of Social ... [Read More](#)

News Sports

## Epsom and Ewell's over 60s win multi-sports



6 October 2024

Wednesday 2 October saw the 16th running of the Better Club Games tournament at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Copper Box Arena. The annual event put on by charitable social enterprise ... [Read More](#)

News Policing

## More or less Surrey Police challenge to Commissioner



6 October 2024

Staffing cuts at Surrey Police could be in the pipeline as the force attempts to fill a potential £23.4 million financial hole. Surrey Police has to make the savings in ... [Read More](#)

Local History News

## American baseball started in Surrey



6 October 2024

The latest BBC Secret Surrey podcast features Julian Pooley, Public Services and Engagement Manager, who tells the story of a previously unknown William Bray diary. Covering 1754-1755, the diary was found in ... [Read More](#)

News Planning

## Hampton's Jolly Boatman has more to be jolly about



6 October 2024

Hampton Court and its historic views will be forever changed after the secretary of state approved controversial Jolly Boatman plans to build 97 homes together with an 84 bed hotel ... [Read More](#)



# Secret 100 acres just north of Epsom and Ewell

1 November 2024



Despite being home to ancient hedgerows, a locally significant population of brown hairstreak butterflies, and a small fragment of wetland, the series of seven meadows spanning 42 hectares (about 100 acres) at Tolworth Court Farm is far from reaching its ecological potential.

**Citizen Zoo** is working with Kingston Council and The Community Brain to change that! Our shared vision is to establish a dynamic, mixed-mosaic nature reserve that nurtures a more diverse and abundant wildlife population. We will restore and enhance the site's ecological balance while honouring its rich farming heritage through innovative rewilding measures inspired by rural projects such as mixed grazing regimes.

## Mixed-Grazing Scheme

Despite its size and location along the green corridor of the Hogsmill, the site is underperforming in terms of the wildlife it supports. After 20 years of annual hay cuts that should increase botanical diversity, the site's plant communities have degraded since the last surveys were conducted in 2003. Additionally, while the 1000+ insects and 40+ bird species recorded sounds an impressive number, this is far below what a site of this should support. Indeed, a few decades back the site was home to nationally rare ground-nesting birds such as skylarks and lapwing, plus increasingly scarce bullfinches.

Adopting the mixed grazing methods of successful rewilding projects in rural areas, such as Knepp and Wild Ken Hill, we are currently preparing the site for the re-introduction of livestock!

We will be introducing a small number of cattle and pigs, which through their varied grazing behaviours, will improve plant diversity, aerate the soil, and create a diversity of habitats. This will create a dynamic ecosystem within Kingston's largest nature reserve helping to restore ecological balance and create a healthier ecosystem for local species and people. With the invaluable support of our dedicated volunteers and local students, we are clearing vegetation around the perimeter of the site, and preparing to install a secure livestock fence. Once in place, the cattle will be free to roam within the designated area. Each individual will be fitted with a GPS tag, allowing us to monitor their movements and make adjustments if needed, ensuring their welfare and the protection of the environment.

We are aware of the vital importance of the site in terms of local people's access to green space as well as its popularity among dog walkers. However, with the presence of cattle, it will be increasingly important to keep dogs on leads. We will be using Sussex cattle, which will have received training around the presence of humans and dogs, and also be individually selected for their docile traits. This is a common breed for grazing in urban areas and means we can be confident of no issues arising, however, as with other projects, we will ask dog walkers to keep their dogs on leads within the enclosure as an extra precaution.

We are recruiting a dedicated team of 'Wild Guardians' to conduct checks on the livestock and their welfare every day. If there are any issues flagged with the individuals or regarding their safety on site we will respond immediately. Do get in touch if you would like to be a part of this group. It will be a wonderful opportunity to get hands-on experience with a traditional breed, and we would love to have you on board!

## Wetland Restoration Project

Another key feature of the Wild Tolworth project is the restoration of a large wetland area in the Great Meadow. Historically, the Hogsmill River flowed through the western corner of Tolworth Court Farm Fields, which acted as a floodplain for the site stream. The river was straightened around the 1950s to reduce flooding in the area. This was a commonly used method of flood reduction that counterintuitively passed the risk of flooding on further downstream, as the water flows quicker from A to B. While we would like to have re-diverted the river back through the site, due to electrical, sewage, and gas utilities on site, this was not possible. Instead, we will mimic the flow of the river with an enhanced closed-system wetland. By restoring this important feature, we will rejuvenate the ecological balance of the area, providing vital new habitats for local wildlife while also reconnecting the site with its historical roots. This will increase the presence of many bird species and amphibians on site. Additionally, by storing surface runoff

and slowing water entering the river, the wetland will help to prevent flooding downstream. We will increase the accessibility of the site with a wheelchair-friendly boardwalk over the wetland, offering everyone the opportunity to enjoy the natural beauty of Tolworth Court Farm and experience this unique habitat up close.

This restoration project required us to gain planning permission from the council (as shown by the green planning notice signs at the entrances to the site). There will be no buildings constructed on site.

### **Work to Date**

This project has been a long time in the making. Citizen Zoo, alongside Kingston Council and the Community Brain, has coordinated comprehensive ecological surveying including engaging with nationally recognised invertebrate experts and botanists. Further to this work, in conjunction with the Field Studies Council and Biological Recording Company, we have run over 10 Community Field Recorders Days, where volunteers can learn from species experts to help survey the site and learn more about the incredible species that can be found within the reserve. This has provided insight into the biodiversity of Tolworth Court Farm and informed the changes that can be made to improve the health of the ecosystem and bring benefits to wildlife and people.

We intend to begin work on our livestock fences and wetland restoration project in late 2024 to early 2025.

### **Nature-Friendly Dog Walks**

Tolworth Court Farm is a cherished local space, and we want everyone to feel informed and involved. If you have any questions regarding the logistics of these changes please come along to one of our Nature-Friendly Dog Walks on site. This provides a great opportunity to ask any questions you have while we show you the vision for the site. You can find more information on these on our website ([citizenzoo.org](http://citizenzoo.org)) or our Eventbrite page!

### **Further Questions**

If you are unable to make it to a dog walk but you have any questions regarding the logistics of these changes please see our website by googling 'Citizen Zoo Wild Tolworth' for some FAQs or email [hello@citizenzoo.org](mailto:hello@citizenzoo.org).

### **Pia Trevelyan-Ashby**

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## **Ashtead heroes recognised by local Rotary**

1 November 2024



Ashtead 'local heroes' were recognised for their outstanding service to the community at last night's 2024 Ashtead Rotary Community Awards.

Three awards were made, to people nominated by their peers, for outstanding services to the local community.

The **Individual Community Service award** was given to **Richard Garrard** who, in 2017 set up the Patient Participation Group with Ashlea Medical Practice. The Group was such a success that it won a national award in 2020. Richard is also Chair of Ashtead Good Neighbours, growing the Group to over 100 drivers who provide transport for medical appointments. He also led the Ashtead British Legion Poppy Appeal which raised £12,000 last year.

The **Group Service Award** went to the Trustees of **Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall (APMH)** whose centenary is being celebrated this year. The trustees and volunteers are committed to improving and maintaining the Hall which is an outstanding community facility for the Ashtead community.

The **Service above Self Community Award** was awarded posthumously to **John Woollatt**. John sadly passed away in May 2024. He was the Chair of the Trustees of Dyscover, a local charity for people suffering with aphasia, a complex language disability. John brought a business approach to Dyscover making it a progressive well-known local charity. He was also a very 'hands on' Chairman where no task was too big or too small.

### **Ashtead Rotary Club President Tony Webb said,**

*"The Charitable support that Ashtead Rotary Club receives from the local community through Ashtead Village Day, is immense. In large part this is down to individuals and organisations, such as those who we celebrate this evening, for the support they give to our local community.*

*"This evening, local community nominations have enabled us to go some small way to say a big 'thank you' to those who*

*have undertaken such outstanding work. I would therefore like to pay tribute to them on behalf of Ashted Rotary Club, and to all of those other volunteers in Ashted who put in time and effort to help others in our local community”.*