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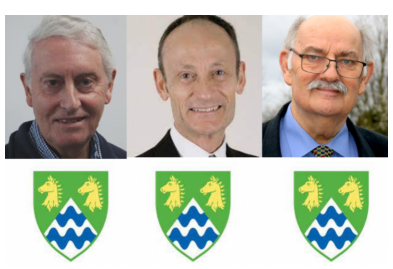
COUNCIL FINANCES

Epsom and Ewell Council goes East

13 December 2023

Councillors at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council voted last night to undertake the relocation of the council's Town Hall accommodation. Staff currently located at the Town Hall will move to … READ MORE



COUNCIL COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Alderman awards for Epsom and Ewell trio

13 December 2023

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Tuesday 12th December conferred the title Alderman of the Borough on three men who long served the district as local councillors. Former Councillor Eber Kington … READ MORE



COUNCIL FINANCES PLANNING

Local Plan costs eat into Council reserves

13 December 2023

An officers' report to the Council advised a further £629,000 is required to progress the Local Plan 2022-2040. The matter was considered by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources … READ MORE



COUNCIL NEWS

Smoke safety lessons for Surrey services

12 December 2023

A 63-year-old bedridden man was killed in a house fire after smoking in bed, shortly after an "inexperienced" officer carried out an "unscrutinised" safety visit of his independent living flat. … READ MORE



BUSINESS COUNCIL NEWS

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Surrey borough kicks up a stink about stink

11 December 2023

More than 200 tankers of human poo were shipped in to Camberley from across Surrey, Hampshire and London, saving Thames Water millions in potential pollution fines and its sewage trucks … READ MORE



COMMUNITY FOOTBALL VOLUNTEERS

Community Football hero retires

11 December 2023

Christ Church United Football Club is a community club that has been coaching the childrenof Epsom since the early ’90’s. The club that’s always welcomed both boys and girls … READ MORE



ARTS LOCAL HISTORY

The Wisdom of Epsom

11 December 2023

The Wizard of Oz is this year’s Epsom Playhouse Pantomime. Running Friday 15th December 2023 to Monday 1st January 2024. Book Tickets HERE. And it is a good excuse to … READ MORE

RUGBY SPORTS

Top dog toppled in windy contest

11 December 2023

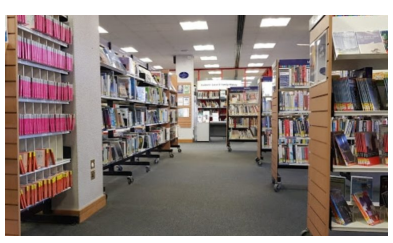
Beckenham RFC 22 – Sutton & Epsom RFC 26. Saturday 9th December. Saturday marked the start of the home stretch with the first of the reverse fixtures. In Week 2both … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

Salts beat County Town, or City?

11 December 2023

Epsom & Ewell 4-3 Guildford City. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 9th December 2023. On Saturday we welcomed Guildford City to our temporary home at Cobham for a … READ MORE



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

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RAAC’s latest victim

11 December 2023

Redhill Library has had to close with immediate effect following further investigations of the known reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) in the building. The closure of the library will allow … READ MORE



COUNCIL FINANCES

Surrey County chief talks to the BBC

7 December 2023

Cllr Tim Oliver, Conservative Leader of Surrey County Council was interviewed this morning on BBC Radio 4’s Today programme by Amol Rajan. Also Chairman of the County Council Network he … READ MORE

Community Football hero retires

14 December 2023



Christ Church United Football Club is a community club that has been coaching the children of **Epsom** since the early ’90’s.

 The club that’s always welcomed both boys and girls was set up by the Rvd. Clive Potter over 30 years ago.
 Now Reverend Potter is due to retire and the club want to thank him for leaving a lasting legacy of real community football in the area.

A popular community football club founder is hanging up his cassock after over 30 years at the St John’s Evangelist Church in the Surrey village of Milford. Local Vicar, the Rvd. Clive Potter, also founded the **Christ Church United Football Club** which has been coaching the children of **Epsom** since the early ’90’s

Having arrived at the parish, Rvd Clive was looking for somewhere for children to play, but the problem was that youth football traditionally takes place on a Sunday morning and this prompted him to start thinking about starting a club.

Having been involved with football all his life he got the idea during a church service one morning to set up a team. He approached the vicar at Christ Church who initially suggested a cricket club instead. However, being an Eastender by birth, with a working-class background, he felt much more comfortable starting a football team.

Current coach, Paul Wilson, takes up the story: “They started in September 1992 with just 12 kids in the first week. At the end of the first session, he asked all the children to bring a friend the following week, saying that if they did and then they all also brought a friend they would get to about 50 children and that would be enough for a club. And that’s how it began.”

The membership grew to over 100 children, but it wasn’t easy. Getting a pitch was the first task. They played at a local primary school, Stamford Green, before growing out of that and moving to Blenheim High School, where the club remains to this day. Like now, the coaching staff was made up of volunteers and he began convincing people to do coaching courses to take the club to the next level.

Rvd Clive then began the missionary work to take the ideas to others in the community. He became a sports advisor for the diocese and encouraged the setting up of many more clubs. Other clubs bought into the opportunity for competition with a Bishop’s League, a Bishop’s Cup and a Bishop’s Shield.

The Christ Church United Football Club was then affiliated with the Football Association with an aim to become professional in style if not attitude. The club still holds its affiliation to the FA and coaches benefit from training on many of its Coaching and Safeguarding courses.

Rvd Clive met Ted Powell, the then England U18 Coach, who came to a presentation evening, and

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they formed a long-lasting friendship. Rvd Clive got involved with organisations like Christians inSport and the British Sports Trust until, in late 1996, he moved to Guildford and repeated the process.

Speaking about his role, Rvd Clive said: “The vision was always to relate the church to the community, to build a good ethos and to develop friendships. I’m delighted to see the club still running after all this time, it’s brilliant for the community.”

Paul added: “He was delighted to hear that today’s Christ Church United Football Club embraces much of that first ethos. The fees are still affordable and the club is open to girls and boys regardless of ability. Some of our current coaches are kids who were once players at the club and the club is also providing support to the Refugee Network with players being drawn from the Ukrainian community in Epsom. We want to thank Rvd Clive for having the foresight and drive to create the club, and we are hoping for another 30 years and beyond of kids (and their families) enjoying the beautiful game. We’re always looking to welcome new members so please get in touch if you are interested.”

The club trains at Blenheim High School every Saturday morning during term time, from 9:00-10:30

Paul Wilson

7th December 2023

14 December 2023



COMMUNITY NATURE VOLUNTEERS

Dedicated Epsom tree-man

4 December 2023

Dedication event at Alexandra Recreation Ground honours local hero Mike Ford Epsom & Ewell, 3rd December 2023. In a heart warming event volunteers from Friends of Alexandra Park and the … READ MORE



COUNCIL TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Draft advice may lead to energy savings

4 December 2023

Surrey County Council has been awarded £745,000 of funding through the Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) project, to trial new and innovative approaches to tackle residential energy emissions, help residents … READ MORE



RUGBY SPORTS

Unflagging Bunting clinches victory at the end

4 December 2023

Sutton & Epsom RFC 21 Old Colfeians 17 Saturday 2nd December. Old Colfeians arrived at Rugby Lane as the form team in the league with five victories onthe spin. Meanwhile … READ MORE

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FOOTBALL SPORTS

Salts fail to clear foggy condition

3 December 2023

Alton 2-0 Epsom & Ewell FC. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 2nd December 2023. “Sorry you had to see that” said our young Captain Harvey Keogh as a … READ MORE



LOCAL HISTORY

Surrey women who stood for Parliament 1918

2 December 2023

On 14th December 1918 women across the country turned out in their thousands to first vote in a General Election. In some areas they outnumbered men voters by 20 to … READ MORE



HEALTH NEWS

Local HIV testing proves its worth

2 December 2023

Tens of thousands of patients going to St George’s, Epsom and St Helier’s emergency departments (EDs) have been tested for HIV in the past year, thanks to a pioneering scheme … READ MORE



EDUCATION WESTMINSTER

Sunak in Surrey

1 December 2023

The University of Surrey welcomed Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and Guildford MP Angela Richardson to campus on Thursday (30 November). Epsom and Ewell Times notes the Guildford Parliamentary Constituency is … READ MORE

Dedicated Epsom tree-man

14 December 2023

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Dedication event at Alexandra Recreation Ground honours local hero Mike Ford Epsom & Ewell, 3rd December 2023. In a heart warming event volunteers from Friends of Alexandra Park and the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board (EETAB), local councillors Steven McCormick, James Laurence and Bernie Muir, the Epsom & Ewell Tree Officer and the Mayor, Councillor Rob Geleit gathered on December 3rd at Alexander Recreation Ground to pay tribute to a beloved local figure, Mike Ford, affectionately known as 'Mr. Tree.'

Mr. Ford has been a cornerstone of our community, dedicating countless hours to the preservation and enhancement of our natural environment. His unwavering commitment to the cause of tree conservation and environmental stewardship has left an indelible mark on Epsom & Ewell.

The dedication event served as a poignant moment to recognize and express gratitude for his exceptional contributions.

The event was opened by Howard Gregory the chair of EETAB with words from Kevin Greening and Simon Alford, EETAB members, before introducing the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell. The Epsom and Ewell Tree Officer then presented Mike with a collection of photographs taken when the original copse was planted.

In his speech Mayor Rob Geleit said "Mike is firmly rooted in his conviction that planting a tree today is an investment for the whole community, combating climate change and helping biodiversity as well as a thing of beauty in itself. His and the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board's aim is ensure that they pass on to future generations a borough that is at least as leafy as the one we have all inherited."

As well as speeches, the event included a symbolic tree layout for the planned rejuvenation of the Ford copse, and the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to forever mark Mike Ford's contributions at Alexander Recreation Ground.

The event concluded with a sense of community pride and a commitment to carrying forward Mr. Tree's legacy.

For further information about Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board:
epsomandewelltab@gmail.com
www.eetab.org.uk/
Facebook: @EpsomEwellTreeAdvisoryBoard

Surrey women who stood for Parliament 1918

14 December 2023



On 14th December 1918 women across the country turned out in their thousands to first vote in a General Election. In some areas they outnumbered men voters by 20 to 1.

The Representation of the People Act 1918 had been passed in February 1918, and widened the parliamentary electorate to women over the age of 30 (but still required a minimum property qualification).

Men over the age of 21, including the millions of soldiers returning from the First World War, were also able to vote for the first time. Due to wartime casualties women outnumbered men in the population as a whole, and under the new provision women would make up around 43% of the electorate. However, imposing a higher age qualification for women ensured that they did not become the majority in the electorate.

Whilst universal franchise for women would take another 10 years, the passing of this Act forever changed the established way that political parties campaigned and canvassed during elections.

Find out how Surrey women responded to their newly won voting rights with our Exploring Surrey's Past web page https://bit.ly/2pqRC3c.

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The Emily Davison Memorial Statue in the Market Square Epsom. A suffragette who died in Epsom after a protest at the Derby for women's voting rights.

Top image: All three Surrey women fought for seats in the 1918 General Election but were unsuccessful. Credits: Postcard showing 'Mrs Despard, President, The Women's Freedom League (SHC ref 10065/1) Postcard of Emmeline Pethick Lawrence, 'Joint Editor of "Votes for Women" – Honorary Treasurer National Women's Social and Political Union. 4 Clement's Inn, W.C.' (SHC ref 10065/2; this postcard was originally from an album compiled by Women's Freedom League members, Edith, Florence and Grace Hodgson). Norah Dacre Fox in her youth.

Surrey History Centre

Read more from the Surrey History Centre HERE

Local HIV testing proves its worth

14 December 2023



Tens of thousands of patients going to St George's, **Epsom** and St Helier's emergency departments (EDs) have been tested for HIV in the past year, thanks to a pioneering scheme that helps people with the virus start treatment more quickly.

All three hospitals offer the opt-out testing – and carried out nearly 130,000 checks between April 2022 and September 2023. As a result, 33 people were diagnosed with HIV and able to receive effective early treatment and reduce onward transmission, and a further 19 previously diagnosed patients were re-engaged in care.

It also means people were able to access other support they may need, such as appointments with health advisors or psychologists who can help them come to terms with the diagnosis.

The figures have been released to mark World Aids Day, a global movement to unite people in the fight against HIV and AIDS, and comes as St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group sign up to become a founding organisation for the HIV Charter Mark. The charter has been established by the National Aids Trust to address

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HIV stigma and poor knowledge of HIV within healthcare settings.

Dr Richard Jennings, Group Chief Medical Officer at St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: "HIV is a long-term manageable condition and people living with HIV have full healthy lives, but the earlier someone with HIV is diagnosed the better. An early diagnosis means effective treatment can be started, and effective treatment means a person cannot transmit HIV to other people and can stay well themselves.

"We have put a lot of work into routinely offering HIV testing to people who attend our emergency departments, and we are committed to increasing awareness, reducing stigma and training up our staff. It doesn't stop there, however – we are on hand to deliver results to any patients who test positive and to talk through the developments in HIV care and the improved outcomes with treatment. We also offer free routine care and treatment to people who are living with HIV, and we offer psychological support."

St Helier Hospital has been offering testing since 2019, though it had to pause it at points during the pandemic.

It has one of the highest testing uptakes in South London, with 90% of eligible patients having a blood test that can detect the virus – compared to just 11% in April 2022. In the six months alone between April and September 2023, 11,785 tests were carried out at the hospital.

Dr Olubanke Davies, a GUM/HIV Consultant based at Sutton Health and Care's Rosehill Clinic, which is based at St Helier Hospital, said: "The earlier someone with HIV is diagnosed, the better. An early diagnosis means that they can start treatment and reduce the risk of developing severe illness.

"With the help of our colleagues in the emergency department, we've put a lot of work into routinely testing patients, increasing awareness and training up staff."

To find out more about HIV – including getting tested, the symptoms, and living with the virus – visit: https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hiv-and-aids/

St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

Image cc Unicef

Not all have well-wishes for proposed Alderman

14 December 2023



The Epsom and Ewell Times does not endorse Ian Strutt's "Letter to the Editor" below. Its subject, Eber Kington, declined to comment in response. We have covered the Wells community centre story before and the links are at the foot of the page. We encourage our readership to share their views on local issues in these pages. We will not publish gratuitous personal attacks. Mr Strutt's letter responds to a proposed personal recognition of a long-serving local councillor and thus falls within consideration of a Council proposal.

Letter to the editor,
How can Councillor Eber Kington deserve an award from Epsom council when he wasted an estimated several hundred thousand pounds shutting down the Wells Social Centre, then putting forward a failed design for a block of flats on the site?
This highly impractical design was turned down 10 : 2 by the council's own planning committee.
Kington robbed Epsom residents of their very long-running centre vital to their social life and used by workers needing economic desk space to carry out their businesses.
Kington also caused a mass demonstration by Wells residents, but told protesters in the council chamber that his plan "would go ahead."
No council can afford the vast amount of money wasted by Kington.
Thankfully, the centre is re-opening in December despite Kington and his council cronies. So, my thanks are due to the Epsom and Ewell planning councillors who DID display their social consciences.

Ian Strutt

The Wells Estate, Epsom

Related reports:

Local Council stalwarts up for local honour

Epsom's Wells Plan has a hole in it

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Wells Centre’s Appeal

All’s well that ends well for the Wells Centre

Sunak in Surrey

14 December 2023



The **University of Surrey** welcomed Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and **Guildford MP Angela Richardson** to campus on Thursday (30 November).

Epsom and Ewell Times notes the Guildford Parliamentary Constituency is rather marginal. The 2019 General Election result was:

Conservative Angela Richardson 26,317
Liberal Democrats Zöe Franklin 22,980
Labour Anne Rouse 4,515
Independent Anne Milton 4,356
Peace John Morris 483

During their visit, the Prime Minister and Ms Richardson met nursing students and staff from the School of Health Sciences, where they observed practical lessons taking place. They also toured Surrey’s world-class facilities, including a unique immersive simulation suite which digitally replicates different healthcare settings. The Prime Minister also took the time to personally speak to Surrey’s students to learn more about their journey in becoming nurses and why they chose to pursue the profession.

Professor **G Q Max Lu**, President and Vice-Chancellor, of the University of Surrey, said:

“I am honoured to welcome the Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak and Angela Richardson MP to the University of Surrey campus. Our reputation for training highly skilled and inspiring health care professionals precedes us. The strength of our excellence in teaching and student support makes Surrey an exceptional place to study. We are delighted to have this opportunity to showcase some of our state-of-the art facilities to our distinguished visitor.

“As part of our commitment to producing the sought-after health professionals for the future, we are pleased to be welcoming our first cohort of medical students in 2024. Combined with the innovative biomedical and healthy living research undertaken at Surrey, we are steadfast in our contribution and support to the NHS and our communities.”

The School of Health Sciences, which sits within the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, at the University of Surrey continues to go from strength to strength. The calibre of nursing programmes at the school are both nationally and internationally recognised, being ranked seventh in the QS World University Subject Rankings and eight in the UK (The Times / Sunday Times Good University Guide 2024). This builds on an established history of the school, which recently celebrated 40 years of educating nurses at Surrey.

Professor **Paul Townsend**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

“It is an enormous privilege to have the Prime Minister and our local MP visit us.

“Surrey is not only the home to cutting edge research but is a world leader in educating health professionals of the future. Our team of dedicated teaching staff work hard to ensure that our students have the knowledge and skills needed to care for patients and that they embody the culture and values of the NHS. It is a great honour to be a part of the Surrey family and to witness our students succeed in their studies.”

Jackie McBride, Associate Professor, Head of Department: Professional Preparatory Programmes at the School of Health Sciences at the University of Surrey, said:

“I am delighted that the Prime Minister has met some of our future healthcare professionals here at the University of Surrey. I am beyond proud of our students and of everything they have and continue to achieve. Nursing is more than a job, it requires dedication, empathy, knowledge, and skills, and I know the Prime Minister will have seen today all these attributes in our students.”

Surrey University Press Office

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COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

Well trained Father Xmas coming to Epsom

27 November 2023

Epsom Rotary are pleased to confirm the dates for this year's street collections with Tilly the Train and Father Christmas around Epsom Town and we are excited to confirm we … READ MORE



COUNCIL HOUSING PLANNING

Anchored in reason on local housing need?

26 November 2023

The Draft Local Plan lacks a proper negotiating position on future house building numbers in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. So said an unnamed member of the public who … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

Penalty shoot out in normal time….

25 November 2023

Abbey Rangers 2-1 Epsom & Ewell. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 25th November 2023. In a match decided by three penalties and some rather odd officiating, we were … READ MORE



NATURE NEWS

Surrey Hills now a "National Landscape"

25 November 2023

All designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales are becoming National Landscapes, including the Surrey Hills National Landscape. The new name reflects their national importance; the … READ MORE



ARTS CULTURE

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Lavish production of Elijah reviewed

24 November 2023

Nigel Williams reviews Epsom Choral Society's performance on Saturday 18th November of Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio Elijah staged in the town's St Martin's Church. The Old Testament prophet's story was lavishly … READ MORE



COUNCIL FINANCES

Poorest will pay for a Council's mismanagement

24 November 2023

Vulnerable people are set to bear the brunt of service charge rises after Woking Borough Council's executive committee agreed to inflation-busting increases. People who receive community meals or extra care … READ MORE



COUNCIL CRIME FINANCES

Good money goes after bad

24 November 2023

A cash-strapped council will spend up to £350,000 on an investigation into potential fraud in its housing department. Guildford Borough Council confirmed police are working alongside an accredited anti-fraud investigation unit … READ MORE

Well trained Father Xmas coming to Epsom

14 December 2023



Epsom Rotary are pleased to confirm the dates for this year's street collections with Tilly the Train and Father Christmas around Epsom Town and we are excited to confirm we have added new routes this year. Tilly the Train has been a feature of Epsom Rotary Street Collections for a number of years and has brought many smiles on faces over time, along with Father Christmas able to chat to children and bearing a small gift. Christmas is a special time for us all and the monies collected will go to local charities, to include Epsom Pantry and Epsom Girl Guiding, who will also take part in some of the collections. Tilly the train was invented as long ago as 1970 by a group of apprentices from Epsom Coaches and has been the highlight of the Epsom Rotary Christmas Street collections and the approach will be by Christmas music and a band of Christmas elves!

There will be nine street collections this year from Sunday, 09 December to Sunday, 17 December 2023 as well as some collections at the Ashley Centre with carols by various local schools and local choir group.

Dates for the Ashley Centre Carols/by the Clock Tower are:

Wed, 06 Dec 2023 – from 10.30am with Stamford Green School and 2.00-3.00pm with Rosebery School – Ashley Centre

Thurs, 07 Dec 2023 – from 20.30am – 12.30pm With Epsom Choral Society, 1,00 -2,200pm with The Vale School and 2.00-3.00pm with Meadow Primary School – Ashley Centre

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Wed, 13 Dec 2023 – 1.00-2.00pm with St Martins Junior School – The Clock Tower Epsom

Tilly the Train and Father Christmas Street Collections are:

Sun, 10 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Hazon Way and Miles Road and area

Mon, 11 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Parklawn Avenue and area

Tues, 12 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Langley Vale and area

Wed, 13 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Hookfield area

Thurs, 14 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Woodcoote area

Fri, 15 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Mopsey Crescent and area

Sat, 16 Dec 2023 – from 4.30pm – Horton & Manor Park area,

Sunday, 17 Dec 2023 – from 4.30 – College Ward area

We hope to see many wonderful people along the way and thank you for supporting.

Maria Anstiss – Epsom Rotary

Image: Rotarian Elves welcome the arrival of Father Christmas to the Tilly Train garage (early hours 25th December 2022).

Surrey Hills now a “National Landscape”

14 December 2023



All designated Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales are becoming National Landscapes, including the **Surrey Hills National Landscape**. The new name reflects their national importance; the vital contribution they make to protect the nation from the threats of climate change, nature depletion and the wellbeing crisis, whilst also creating greater understanding and awareness for the work that they do.

This is a significant milestone for the UK and the next step in fully realising the National Landscapes’ vision to be the leading exemplars of how thriving, diverse communities can work with and for nature in the UK: restoring ecosystems, providing food, storing carbon to mitigate the effects of climate change, safeguarding against drought and flooding, whilst also nurturing people’s health and wellbeing.

The Surrey Hills National Landscape was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958, the second to be designated in the country. It covers around a quarter of Surrey, the most wooded county in England, and is situated within the London Metropolitan Greenbelt with 1.5 million people living within 10km of the landscape. With rising national pressures regarding climate change, the biodiversity emergency the mental health crisis, the Surrey Hills as a National Landscape will better protect precious habitats such as heathland, downland and woodland which are home to important species, as well as providing space for people and nature to thrive.

Kathy Atkinson, Chair of the Surrey Hills National Landscape says:

“There’s often a healthy scepticism around talk of “re-branding” and people might reasonably ask, “What’s the point?” in calling the Surrey Hills a National Landscape instead of an ‘AONB’.

Firstly, the legal status of the Surrey Hills as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is unchanged. This amazing area retains the same protections in law as a National Park. As set out by the Glover review in 2019, AONBs are fragmented, misunderstood and often see even greater pressures with less resource. Glover recommended not only a renaming of ‘AONBs’ to National Landscapes, but the power which could follow in terms of a strengthened network, with increased funding, governance reform, and new shared purposes to help us fight against the challenges our protected landscapes may face.

We need to use this rebrand as a step change to how we connect with our protected landscapes. To excite and engage the widest possible public in the task of protecting the Surrey Hills, a cherished landscape that is under threat like never before. This is a critical decade for our natural world, and National Landscapes brings the opportunity to collectively reduce the impact of substantial threats from a National and localised perspective. So, I urge everyone to embrace our National Landscapes vision as a tool to help us support a healthy and thriving landscape, for nature and for people.”

Text provided by Surrey Hills National Landscape

Related Reports:

Winter walks in the Surrey wilds

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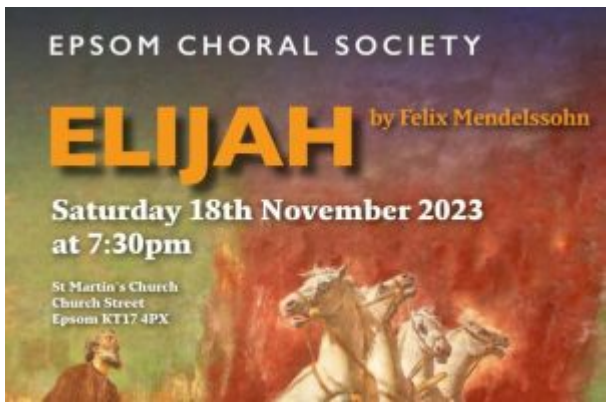
Oiling the wheels of justice on Surrey Hills

Image – Surrey Hills Credit Aleksey Maksimov CC BY-NC-ND 2.0 DEED

Lavish production of Elijah reviewed

14 December 2023



Nigel Williams reviews **Epsom Choral Society**'s performance on Saturday 18th November of Felix Mendelssohn's oratorio Elijah staged in the town's **St Martin's Church**.

The Old Testament prophet's story was lavishly told with five soloists, an orchestra of strings, brass, woodwind, timpani and organ, and a chorus of several dozen well-drilled and responsive singers under conductor **Julian Collings**.

Your reviewer had attended their open rehearsal early in the term, when **Marion Lea** was supplying single-handedly (well, two-handedly) all the orchestra's notes on the piano and the chorus were learning how their parts fitted together. In the time since, Epsom Choral Society turned early sketches into a complete painting. An "iron" sky could be coloured by high woodwind chords, limping string phrases could suggest Elijah's weary departure for the wilderness, and ringing timpani and organ chords underpinned a song of pious thanksgiving for the end of a famine. Felix Mendelssohn knew how to deploy an orchestra and the best way to appreciate it was to hear it live.

The Choral Society's task was to project their sound from the tiered staging behind the orchestra and unfold a series of choruses with very different challenges. In chordal passages they needed to keep in tune with each other, whereas in complex contrapuntal turn-taking movements the challenge was also keep up with the tempo and find their entries in among all the other notes. Elijah is also a big sing. It needs a lot of volume to deliver its full dramatic grandeur. They deliberately avoided over-singing the afternoon rehearsal, so there was still something in the tank even by the final two choruses, delivering whirring scale passages as Elijah went by a whirlwind to heaven. Those words ended very loud but began with some dramatic rapid whispering. Mendelssohn's style relishes the idea of light "shining forth". In one of those contrapuntal passages, the tenors, though fewer in number, still had that luminous quality more than two hours into the concert.

Before then, we had heard ample demonstrations of prowess from elsewhere in the choir. Not quite as outnumbered as the tenors, basses had a difficult task to make their entries clear when competing with organ, timpani and low strings but they were up to it.

Elijah is very much an English piece, written in the tradition of German composers working this side of the Channel. Mendelssohn was keen to make his lines fit the words of his English translator, William Bartholomew, and Choral Society made sure we heard them. You don't often hear the word "laveth" in song but we heard it on Saturday. The most German-sounding moment came when the Angels' trio "Lift thine eyes to the mountains" was sung by the choir sopranos and altos, instantly painting a scene of alpine villagers, with a lightness of touch that belied words about a foot that shall not be moved. There were not so many opportunities to show off delicacy and beauty of singing tone. They took that one, and the serene full-choir chorus that followed, "He, watching over Israel, slumbers not nor sleeps." I missed "He that shall endure to the end", cut for reasons of timing, which I think would have showed them off well.

Having an orchestra, the English Sinfonietta, and five soloists was a luxury. Treble Brandon McGuinness, taught singing at Epsom College by Christopher Goldsack, sang a resolute succession of top Gs while the orchestration changed underneath him. It is worth hearing those notes while they last. I have heard John Findon (tenor), Elizabeth Findon (soprano) and Judy Brown (mezzo) before and fully understand why they regularly get invited back. Judy Brown got the show-stopping movement, "O Rest in the Lord". She kept it simple, with a voice both unaffected and affecting, offering half reassurance, half lullaby. They also gave us some delectable ensemble singing in the soprano-mezzo duet "Zion spreadeth her hands" and quartet "Cast thy burden upon the Lord".

By far the largest role went to bass James Geidt as the prophet himself. Accustomed to operatic performance, he learnt much of his part by heart, so when singing he could look to the audience or the other performers. He brought a voice that was rich and treacly and looked the part with a luxuriant Old-Testament beard. His acting skills led his character from pompous confidence through fear and weariness to final moments of joy.

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There was plenty of joy. Epsom Choral Society had learnt their parts well. They sang of rescue, perseverance and redemption, themes that were joyful enough, but they could also take pleasure in performing to high standard.

Nigel Williams belonged to St Martin's Church choir for almost twenty-five years alongside several Choral Society members, singing second bass and composing a handful of pieces for them to sing. His edition of Am Himmelsfahrtstage with English translation is available from the Choral Public Domain library.

23rd November 2023

14 December 2023

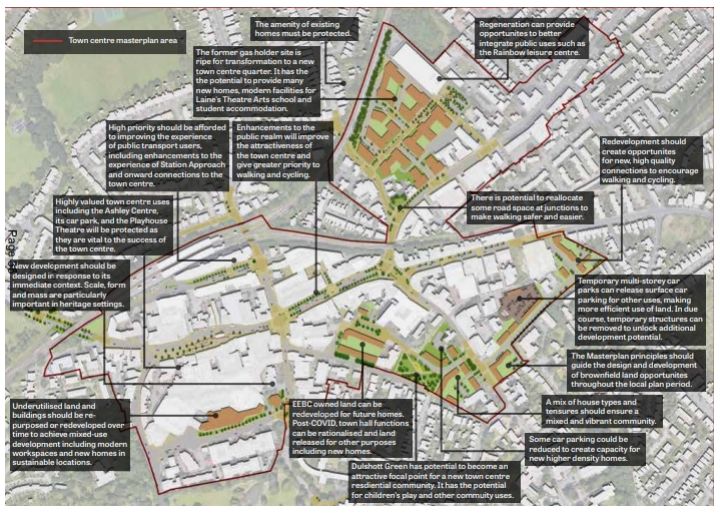


COUNCIL NEWS

Epsom's leader welcomes more power for Surrey County Council

23 November 2023

Following the Chancellor's announcement in the Autumn Statement regarding the extension of devolution and further County Deals, Surrey County Council is engaging in discussions with Government on a Level 2 … READ MORE



COUNCIL PLANNING

Epsom Town Centre Masterplan Unveiled

23 November 2023

Wednesday 22nd November the Licensing, Planning and Policy Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council approved a new iteration of a draft master plan for Epsom's town centre to go … READ MORE



COUNCIL FINANCES

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No way to discharge bankrupt Council

22 November 2023

Bankrupt Woking Borough Council is spending up to £148,000 a year on free charging for electric vehicles – about the same it would cost to save the “Bustler” community bus … READ MORE



COUNCIL EDUCATION

Kids takeover Ewell’s Bourne Hall

22 November 2023

On Friday 17 November Bourne Hall in Ewell collaborated with local college NESCOT as part of a national Kids in Museums Takeover Day event. This project sits within Epsom & … READ MORE



COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Local Council gets in the Christmas spirit for all

20 November 2023

The countdown to Christmas is here! Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and Bourne Hall are bringing Christmas cheer to winter days for residents and visitors. Festivities begin with the Christmas … READ MORE



COMMUNITY NEWS TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

Climate Justice. A generation thing?

20 November 2023

With Epsom Hospital Doctor and mother of four Kristine Damberg in the lead, Mothers’ Rebellion for Climate Justice, a global grassroots organization, orchestrated coordinated actions across the UK and 30 countries on … READ MORE



RUGBY SPORTS

Genuine victory on synthetic surface

20 November 2023

Cobham 16 Sutton & Epsom RFC 44. Saturday 18th November. Being the last league fixture in November the S&E squad had a rather Edwardian appearance as if they were members … READ MORE

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FOOTBALL OBITUARY

Stella servant to local football passes

20 November 2023

Stella Lamont, Club President of Epsom and Ewell FC, passed away on Armistice Day 2023 at the age of 95. Born on September 1, 1928, Stella's association with the club … READ MORE

FOOTBALL SPORTS

Salts succumb to athleticism

19 November 2023

Epsom & Ewell 2-4 AFC Croydon Athletic. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 18th November 2023. A rather harsh 4-2 home defeat to AFC Croydon Athletic in our latest … READ MORE



HEALTH NEWS

East Surrey Hospital Inspection

19 November 2023

Maternity services at East Surrey Hospital have been downgraded after inspectors flagged six key areas for improvement. A report following an inspection of the unit raised concerns with infection control, … READ MORE



COUNCIL FINANCES WESTMINSTER

Finance lessons for Parliament from Surrey Boroughs

19 November 2023

Surrey Heath Borough Council is burning through its reserves and eyeing up serious cuts to services, the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee was told. The Monday, November 13, cross-party panel of … READ MORE



NEWS WESTMINSTER

How Surrey MPs voted on ceasefire

19 November 2023

No Surrey MPs voted in Parliament for a ceasefire between Israel and Gaza. The vote took place on Wednesday (November 15) on an amendment to the King's Speech that was … READ MORE

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COMMUNITY CRIME POLICING

What are your priorities for community safety?

16 November 2023

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has launched a public consultation on the priorities for community safety in the borough and are asking residents, workers, visitors and businesses to have their … READ MORE



COMMUNITY SPORTS

Undiluted squash champions of Epsom

16 November 2023

Ebbisham Sports Club in Epsom is proud of its junior squash members, in particular several of its girls who regularly play in the Ladies Team competing against other clubs in … READ MORE



CRIME NEWS

Damning report on local prison

16 November 2023

The availability of drugs at one Surrey prison is a “critical threat to safety”, as inspectors said it had one of the highest positive test rates for illicit substances of all men’s … READ MORE



COUNCIL HOUSING PLANNING

The Plot in the thick of planning options

16 November 2023

At a meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Strategy and Resources Committee held on 13th July it was decided that various Council owned “brownfield” sites would not be offered … READ MORE

Stella servant to local football passes

14 December 2023

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Stella Lamont, Club President of **Epsom and Ewell FC**, passed away on Armistice Day 2023 at the age of 95. Born on September 1, 1928, Stella's association with the club spanned over fifty years. A devoted supporter since 1973, Stella initially joined the Committee in 1979, contributing significantly to the improvement of the Match Programme.

Throughout the '80s, she served as Press Secretary, and in 1993, under her guidance, the club won the prestigious "Special Category" programme award. Stella's dedication was further acknowledged in 1998 when she received a voluntary service award for 25 years of involvement with the Epsom and Ewell Boys League.

In 2003, Stella became the President of Epsom and Ewell FC, a position she held with pride. Despite facing health challenges, she remained actively engaged, taking on roles such as Membership Secretary and contributing to the match programme. Her lasting legacy includes her impact on local Boys football and the informative programmess she crafted with meticulous detail.

Stella's commitment endured, even as she faced declining health. In 2016, she received a long service award from the Surrey Football Association, a testament to her enduring influence. Stella's final years saw her contributing articles to the club's programme, showcasing her unwavering dedication.

Beyond her football involvement, a peculiar note in her history involved an appearance in a pop video, "We Stand Around" by I Ludicrous, filmed at the club's old ground. This charming anecdote reflects Stella's unexpected and lighthearted presence in the club's rich history.

As we bid farewell to Stella Lamont, her name will forever be remembered among those who shaped Epsom and Ewell FC into a close-knit family club. Rest in peace, Stella.

16th November 2023

14 December 2023

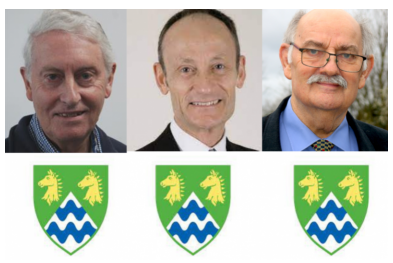


COUNCIL FINANCES

Council staff to get 6% pay increase?

15 November 2023

November 14th, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources Committee grappled with the decision of recommending a pay award for staff in the fiscal year 2024/25. The recommendation to … READ MORE



COUNCIL NEWS

Local Council stalwarts up for local honour

15 November 2023

In a proposal put to the Strategy and Resources Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council on 14th November, councillors were urged to consider bestowing the prestigious title of Honorary … READ MORE

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COUNCIL PLANNING

Flooding concerns defer Church St care home plan

15 November 2023

9th November Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Planning Committee considered once more the plan to build a care home on the sites of the Church Street police and ambulance stations. … READ MORE



COUNCIL PLANNING

Care home plan lacked the “wow” factor

15 November 2023

9th November Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Planning Committee debated the proposal for a care home on the site of the now demolished Organ and Dragon pub on the junction … READ MORE



ARTS COMMUNITY CULTURE

Ukrainians uplift all in Epsom evening of culture

12 November 2023

On Saturday 11th a choir of locally settled Ukrainians crowned an evening of their nation’s culture at Epsom Methodist Church. Several folk songs preceded a rousing rendition of the National … READ MORE



LOCAL HISTORY

Bonkers about bunkers in Epsom

12 November 2023

The Epsom and Ewell Times joined a group of bunker-busters to explore the little known World War 2 underground complex. Located in 5 acres of private woodland on the west … READ MORE



FOOTBALL SPORTS

Epsom & Ewell FC imperious victory in Imperial Fields

12 November 2023

Tooting & Mitcham 0-3 Epsom & Ewell. Combined Counties League – Premier Division. Saturday 11th November 2023. Cast your mind back to the 4th March 2003. Some young lad by … READ MORE

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BUSINESS COUNCIL

Surrey set for the first ever Festival of Skills

10 November 2023

Hundreds of young people are set to be fired up about their futures at Surrey's first ever Festival of Skills. The free one-day careers event will provide local students with … READ MORE



HEALTH NEWS

Local NHS Trust slow to respond to complaint

10 November 2023

A complaint lodged against Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust regarding the care provided to the late Doreen Pepper, a Parkinson's patient, has raised concerns about medication management … READ MORE

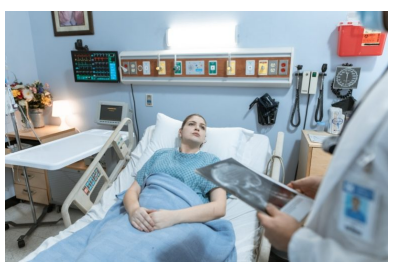


COMMUNITY LOCAL HISTORY

Veteran lives celebrated at Epsom's Comrades Club

10 November 2023

With funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, Surrey County Council has captured the life stories of four veterans and presented the booklets to them and their families in … READ MORE

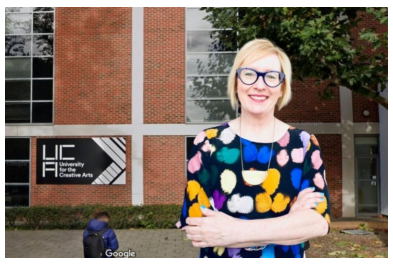


HEALTH NEWS

Staying in bed problems for local NHS

10 November 2023

Hospitals in Epsom And St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust unable to discharge almost two thirds of patients. This is according to a national data collection exercise conducted by the … READ MORE



EDUCATION NEWS

Epsom's University of the Creative Arts new boss

10 November 2023

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The University for the Creative Arts (UCA) has begun a new chapter in its illustrious history, with the appointment of Professor Jane Roscoe as its incoming President & Vice-Chancellor. With a campus … READ MORE

V

FOOTBALL SPORTS

Epsom Derby football cup defeat

10 November 2023

Epsom & Ewell 1-2 Sutton United. Surrey Senior Cup – Second Round. Tuesday 7th November 2023. Our first match back in the Surrey Senior Cup for five years, coupled with … READ MORE

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