



Epsom & Ewell Community Fund Seeks New Chair

The *Epsom & Ewell Community Fund* is a philanthropic fund that provides financial support to local charities and projects across the borough.

As Chair, your role is to lead a Fund Panel made up of individuals with experience in serving the local community. The Fund is an 'area fund' under the umbrella of the Community Foundation for Surrey.

The Epsom & Ewell Community Fund maintains and builds assets in two parts:

1. **Grants Fund** - for immediate grant giving.
2. **Endowment Fund** - an investment fund for future generations, with the investment income used for making grants.

Responsibilities of the Fund Panel:

- Raising philanthropic donations from local high-net-worth individuals, businesses, and other sources.
- Deciding which local charitable organisations or projects should receive grants.
- Managing the strategic development and growth of the Fund.

Ideal candidates will bring:

- Experience of leading a team of volunteers.
- A passion to improve the lives of local people, especially those experiencing disadvantage.
- An understanding and/or experience of the voluntary sector.
- Experience in fundraising, philanthropic giving, or event organisation.
- A strategic vision.
- Strong networking skills across the local community.
- Professional experience in areas such as marketing, communications, fundraising, events, or business networking.

There are currently eight members of the Fund Panel. Meetings are held approximately four times a year, either in person or online. A representative from the Community Foundation usually attends to provide advice and support.

While this is an unpaid, voluntary position, the opportunity to help improve the lives of individuals and communities across the borough is deeply rewarding.

You can find out more about the Epsom & Ewell Community Fund at:

Epsom and Ewell Community Fund — Community Foundation for Surrey

For more information, contact **Chris Frost** at
chrisfrost810@btinternet.com or **07516 024999**

The deadline for applications is 5pm, Friday 19th September 2025.

7th August 2025

Community News



Asylum hotel tension mounts in Surrey

6 August 2025

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Horse racing Sports

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News



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Water voles return to Ewell

Once extinct in the county, the much-loved water vole has today (30th July) made an historic return to the Upper Hogsmill in Epsom & Ewell. This milestone is the result of a pioneering wetland restoration project led by the South East Rivers Trust (SERT) and reintroduction project by rewilding organisation Citizen Zoo, with support from Wildwood Trust, Natural England Species Recovery Programme, Thames Water and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.

Around 50 water voles were released onto the Hogsmill river and Chamber Meads wetland this morning at a celebratory event. This was the culmination of many years of work by the South East Rivers Trust, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Citizen Zoo, and partners to restore the river and create the new wetland habitat. The return of this endangered species marks a major milestone for Surrey's biodiversity and one of the most exciting rewilding projects in the region.

"Water voles were once a familiar sight on the Hogsmill, but due to habitat loss and invasive predators, they died out. Now, after years of dedicated river restoration work, and the creation of the flagship wetland at Chamber Mead, as well as extensive monitoring by a band of dedicated local volunteers-, we're thrilled to have brought them back to the upper Hogsmill in Surrey," said **Dr Bella Davies**, CEO of the South East Rivers Trust.

The **Wildwood Trust**, based in Kent and Devon, is one of the UK's leading centres for conservation breeding, and bred 50 water



voles through its expert captive breeding programme for release on the upper Hogsmill river. Wildwood has played a key role in restoring water vole populations across the UK.

"The UK's biodiversity is facing a critical decline - putting our ecosystems, food security, and climate resilience at risk," said **Tyrone Capel**, Conservation Officer at Wildwood Trust. "Ambitious rewilding projects like this are central to our mission: returning nature to the places it once thrived. We're proud to support this initiative by breeding water voles for release along the Hogsmill and ultimately reversing the near 20 year extinction of Water voles in Surrey."

The creation of the **Chamber Mead wetlands** and river restoration work undertaken by SERT has improved conditions on the Hogsmill and transformed the area into an ideal habitat for water voles. This work forms part of SERT's broader vision to revive this rare urban chalk stream and inspire nature recovery in towns and cities.

Citizen Zoo, a rewilding organisation that has delivered a previous successful water vole release along the Hogsmill further downstream in Kingston, led on the reintroduction. The team is now calling for local volunteers to support ongoing monitoring of the population.

"This is not just a win for water voles—it's a flagship moment for urban river restoration across the UK," said **Elliot Newton**, -Director of Rewilding at Citizen Zoo. "With the help of local people, we're giving this species a real chance to thrive again."

"We are deeply committed to protecting and nurturing habitats that help biodiversity flourish, and we are honoured that the Upper Hogsmill River in our borough has been chosen as the second release site for the reintroduction of water voles," said **Councillor Liz Frost**, Chair of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's Environment Committee. "They will be the first water voles living in the wild in Surrey for over 20 years. This milestone reflects the strength of our partnerships to create the right conditions for these once-extinct animals to thrive and reflects our borough's dedication to managing biodiversity and creating resilient ecosystems that play a role in tackling climate change."

Water voles—made famous as Ratty in *The Wind in the Willows*—are one of the UK's fastest-declining mammals, having disappeared from 94% of their former range. Their return to Surrey is both a symbolic and ecological milestone.

Wild Wood Trust

Today's Epsom racing tips

Epsom Racecourse presents its latest race meeting on Thursday evening, with a total of six races; five handicaps and a juveniles' novice race.

*Read on for a full preview of and tips from the Epsom card, courtesy of Racing TV, who provide all of the latest **free bets** offers.*

Kicking off the evening's action is an apprentice handicap over a mile and two furlongs (5.50). Etretat won last time out at Newcastle just five days ago and carries a penalty as a result, although is given three pounds back by his claiming rider. He is more of an all-weather specialist, however, having never won a race on turf, and is easy to look past. Despite carrying top weight, Carnival Day looks capable of winning this due to remaining on the same mark as when running well for fourth of 12 at Yarmouth last time, and has good form at this track, which is a big positive.

Next is a two-year-olds' novice run over seven furlongs (6.25). Of the six runners, Dylan Cunha's Champagne Dream is the only newcomer here; a colt by Oasis Dream who is probably best watched this term, looking on paper to be more a next-season sort. William Knight's horses are running well at present, and his colt Norfolk Blue looks to have a solid chance. This son of A'Ali placed a close second last time out at Lingfield, and is given a handy three pounds by his rider, Brandon Wilkie.

Race three is a mile and a half handicap (7.00). King's Castle seeks a hat-trick, having won his last two starts at Ffos Las and Sandown under the same rider; seven-pound claimer Taryn Langley. He wears a first time hood, and shouldn't have too much standing in his way here at a track that he likes. Chips And Rice ought to be in with a big chance here, fit from a hurdling campaign and now on a very workable Flat mark for today. Jockey Pat Cosgrave is in good form, and Robert Stephens' horses are running well at present too.

Following is an extended mile fillies' handicap (7.30). We have only four runners here, all of which have won at least one race this term. Pink Azalea seeks a hat-trick, having won her last two starts at Ripon and Carlisle, and has Jack Dace's seven pounds in hand. Both Brielle and Revelance won their last starts, but Brielle's win was more applicable to this race. She does have a lot of weight to shoulder now though, hence it might be better to side with Revelance today, whose form is of a very promising level.



Penultimately we have a seven-furlong handicap for three-year-olds (8.00). With nine runners, this is a competitive affair. Miakoda won his last start under Pat Cosgrave, who rides again today, and though this will be a tougher ask, this gelding may prove to suit this track quite well and could make a good show of himself. That said, he might not appreciate any rain that falls, so it may be safer to side with the likes of Uncle Simon, who can handle ground with some give and comes here in good form having been a very close second last time at Redcar, and represents a trainer in form.

Last of all is a six-furlong handicap of eight runners (8.30). Twirler carries a five-pound penalty, having won her last start at Windsor five days ago, but is given the weight straight back by her claiming rider, so could easily be in contention once again. David O'Meara's veteran, the 11-year-old Musicka, is a course and distance winner who was last seen finishing third of eight at this track, so could also be a player despite carrying top weight.

Epsom selections - Thursday:

5.50 - Carnival Day

6.25 - Norfolk Blue

7.00 - Chips And Rice

7.30 - Revelance

8.00 - Uncle Simon

8.30 - Musicka

Horses racing Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

31st July 2025

Council News

Busy Epsom and Ewell Borough Council next meets December



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Community Education

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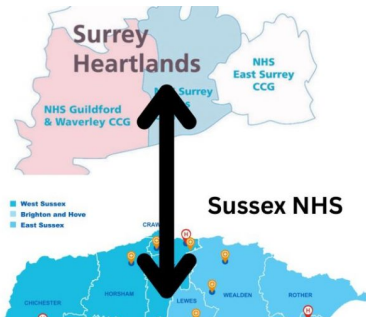


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Health News

Surrey and Sussex NHS Boards to merge



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Hundreds of jobs are at risk as two key NHS boards for Sussex and Surrey prepare to merge as part of a money-saving drive by the government. NHS Sussex and ... [Read More](#)



Health News



Doctors' strike to hit Epsom Hospital

24 July 2025

Hospitals across South West London are bracing for disruption this week as resident doctors begin a five-day strike on Friday, 25 July. The week-long strike action by British Medical Association ... [Read More](#)

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Big housing development proposed NW of Epsom and Ewell



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Public meet tonight on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council future



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Surrey and Sussex NHS Boards to merge

Hundreds of jobs are at risk as two key NHS boards for Sussex and Surrey prepare to merge as part of a money-saving drive by the government. NHS Sussex and NHS Surrey Heartlands – two integrated care boards (ICBs) – are expected to have merged by next April, shedding many of the 1,350 staff who currently work at the two organisations. The changes are part of the latest round of NHS reforms which include the abolition of NHS England and the scrapping of independent patient voice watchdogs known as Healthwatch. Sussex ICB chair Stephen Lightfoot spoke about the forthcoming changes at Brighton and Hove City Council's Health and Wellbeing Board at Hove Town Hall on Tuesday (22 July).



ICBs bring together NHS organisations, councils and others to plan and commission health services in their area, with the aim of improving health and reducing inequalities. Mr Lightfoot, who will stand down in September, said that ICBs were told in March to halve their running costs – from £39.83 to £18.76 per head of population – by December. Further bad news followed when an analysis of national funding allocations suggested that Sussex was overfunded by £186 million. Mr Lightfoot said that NHS Sussex had a £4.5 billion budget for NHS services in Sussex but the analysis indicated that it should be £4.3 billion and was 4 per cent overfunded. Mr Lightfoot said: “That doesn’t sound a lot on a percentage basis but £200 million is a significant sum of money. Over the next three years, when our demand continues to increase, we’re going to have to reduce our expenditure. We’re going to have to work very hard to make better use of the money that we have.”

He said that this would not affect the budget for delivering healthcare throughout the area – but, he said, combining Sussex and Surrey was the only safe and reliable way to deliver sustainable services. Mr Lightfoot spoke about “the massive scale of this task (and) the huge impact it’s having on our staff ... 1,350 people are worried if they’ve got a job. And of course a significant number of them will not have a job in the coming year.” He added: “We’re not alone. The government also confirmed it’s going to rationalise all patient safety regulators. That involves Healthwatch organisations which are going to be closed, not immediately, but over the next 18 months to two years.”

It would be the first time since 1974 that patients would be without a statutory independent voice, the meeting was told.

Sarah Booker-Lewis LDRS

Doctors’ strike to hit Epsom Hospital

Hospitals across South West London are bracing for disruption this week as resident doctors begin a five-day strike on Friday, 25 July. The week-long strike action by British Medical Association (BMA) members comes as the NHS faces one of its busiest summers in recent years, with a spike in emergency admissions driven by heatwaves and increasingly complex patient needs. Resident doctors – those who have completed their initial medical degree and are now in postgraduate training or gaining experience in non-training positions – were awarded an average 5.4% pay rise for this financial year, following a 22% increase over the previous two years. However, the BMA says wages are still around 20% lower in real terms than in 2008 and has committed to strike action in demand of “pay restoration.”

The walkout will affect hospitals across England, including St George’s, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group (GESH). GESH medical professionals are warning the public to expect delays and to take preventative steps to avoid overwhelming already stretched services. “While we’re doing everything we can to prepare, these strikes will cause huge disruption,” warned Dr Richard Jennings, Chief Medical Officer for GESH. “Patients coming to an emergency department when it’s not an emergency will be waiting longer, or even directed to another service,” he added. Common reasons for hospital admissions during the heatwave have included respiratory issues, chest pain, shortness of breath and falls. Over 800 more people have attended emergency departments this summer compared to the same period last year. Between 1 June and 14 July, emergency department attendances at GESH rose to 37,167 – up from 36,328 in 2024 and 35,460 in 2023.

To maintain emergency services, consultants and other staff will be redeployed from routine care to cover A&E, operating theatres and hospital wards, resulting in many planned procedures being cancelled or delayed. Patients and staff at St Helier have already faced significant disruption this year, partly due to the hospital’s ageing infrastructure. In January, a roof collapse in the phlebotomy unit forced the last-minute cancellation of several urgent blood tests. Despite the strike action, patients are urged to attend appointments unless contacted otherwise, and to continue seeking help in emergencies. The NHS is also asking the public to consider other services first, such as NHS 111 online, pharmacies or GPs, which are unaffected by the strike. “We have a difficult week coming up and we need members of the public to help us – whether that’s using the most appropriate service for their health need or taking steps to prevent becoming unwell,” Dr Jennings said.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting has criticised the strike, calling it “completely unjustified” and showing “complete disdain” for patients. However, BMA resident doctors committee co-chairs Dr Melissa Ryan and Dr Ross Nieuwoudt said they had tried to compromise with the government during talks, and that strike action was a last resort. They said: “We have always said that no doctor wants to strike, and all it would take to avoid it is a credible path to pay restoration offered by the government. We came to talks in good faith, keen to explore real solutions to the problems facing resident doctors today. Unfortunately, we did not receive an offer that would meet the scale of those challenges. While we were happy to discuss non-pay issues that affect doctors’ finances, we have always been upfront that this is at its core a pay dispute.”

The strike will run from 7am on Friday 25 July, until 7am on Wednesday 30 July.



Harrison Galliven – LDRS

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Plea ahead of doctors' strikes round 5

24th July 2025

Health News Transport

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Council Council constitution

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20 July 2025

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Council Council constitution



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19 July 2025



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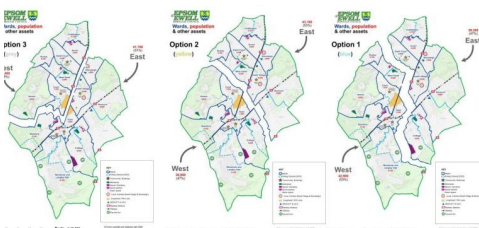


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Council Letters

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19 July 2025

Dear Editor, Your excellent article on the Council's decision to appoint a new operator for the Rainbow Leisure Centre raises important questions about what residents can expect. One crucial point ... [Read More](#)

Public meet tonight on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council future

A public debate **TONIGHT** will ask whether Epsom and Ewell Borough Council could soon be abolished — and whether such a decision might happen without any vote or public consultation.

The event, titled *"Here Today, Gone Tomorrow? Devolution Explained"*, will take place at 7.00pm TONIGHT Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at St Joseph's Catholic Church St Margaret Dr, Epsom KT18 7JQ. It is free to attend and open to all residents and businesses.

The meeting is organised by **Rotary Connections**, a local initiative of the Rotary Club aiming to bring together businesses, civic groups, and the wider community.

The panel will include local councillors:

Eber Kingston - Residents Association and Surrey County Council and former long-serving Councillor on EEBC.

Bernie Muir, deputy chair of Surrey County Council, Conservative, who also serves on Epsom and Ewell Borough.

Steven McCormick - Residents Association serving both EEBC and Surrey County Council.

Julian Freeman, Liberal Democrat Councillor for EEBC

The discussion will be chaired by **Lionel Blackman**, local solicitor and a director of the Epsom and Ewell Times.

The debate comes amid growing speculation over local government reorganisation in Surrey. Proposals in recent years have raised the prospect of scrapping all district and borough councils in favour of one or more large unitary authorities. Such a move would end the independence of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, which has served the community since 1937.

Supporters of unitary reform claim it could bring savings and efficiency. Opponents argue it risks reducing local accountability and weakening the borough's unique identity.

After initial addresses from each speaker organisers say the meeting will follow a "Question Time" format, allowing the public to pose questions directly to councillors on what these changes might mean for services, representation, and the future shape of local democracy.

Entry is free.

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Epsom and Ewell Considers New Community Councils as Local Government Shake-Up Looms

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council out – Community Council's in?

and many more – search “local government reorganisation”.

Top-Down Power, Bottom-Up Pain: How Central Control is Killing Local Communities

When I was a child growing up in rural Surrey, I could never imagine why anyone wouldn't want to preserve the wondrous landscapes of Britain, only to replace them with concrete and tarmac for roads, houses, and airports. As I've gotten older, this disbelief has only grown stronger.

Take Ashted, for example — a small town not far from where I live. The local council wants to build 270 new homes on green belt land, despite furious local opposition. Even the council themselves are divided on the issue, pushing it through due to fear of top-down reprisal. In nearby Langley Vale Village, there's talk of potentially 110 homes being developed on equally green agricultural land that has been part of the local farming area for generations.

These are just two examples of dozens from my area alone. These plans are unpopular and have sparked fierce backlash and debate in the community. People wonder: Why do we have so little say in decisions that transform our neighbourhoods? Why do we often feel powerless against developers and top-down mandates?

Now, as I did then, I believe that Britain is still (at least for now) a beautiful country. However, my view of our island has matured to balance what I feel we have lost alongside what we've gained.

At 29 years old, many assume my generation is full of pro-modernist, latte-sipping, avocado toast-eating, Netflix-bingeing apathetics who don't value the past and would bulldoze anything if it meant lowering house prices. This stereotype is not just wrong — it's dangerous. Many of us care about more than just house prices; we care about landscape, beauty, nature and history. We want to preserve what was, and we think seriously about what is to come.

Many young people hear the mood of the nation and agree that things are broken. But I don't believe that a centralised, managerial approach with top-down policies is the way to fix this or make the country happier.

A big reason why Brits feel broken is that they have no control over their futures. Stagnant wages, rising living costs, and soaring house prices force many to delay milestones like having children, marriage, or retirement. But I believe the problem runs deeper. This apathy — and misery — comes from a lack of local agency, community, and belonging. Money is necessary, but the soul of a community comes from local decision-making, not cash.

Nowhere is this absence of local control clearer than in the planning system. Central London Starmerites (and many others before them) claim that communities, especially in the Home Counties, are just NIMBYs blocking progress to boost the economy. But it's far more complicated than this.

Today's planning process is little more than a tick-box exercise. Communities are asked for input, then routinely ignored. When a local council rejects a development, it's often overturned on appeal by higher authorities. Councillors face political backlash but have little real power to protect their communities. What looks like democracy is, in practice, centralisation.

This suppression of local democracy breeds apathy and resentment. People feel decisions are imposed on them, not made for them.

So here's an alternative — one I doubt either major national party would support, but let's dream.

In Switzerland, local communities decide their fate through direct democracy, sometimes gathering in town squares to vote on



local issues. Local infrastructure, zoning, education, and some taxation are set at the local level. The central government only plays a guiding role in essential services and national taxes.

You might ask: won't richer areas just set tax rates low to outcompete poorer ones, increasing inequality? Two mechanisms prevent this. First, Swiss local tax rates operate within regulated bands, maintaining rough parity. Second, a redistributive model transfers wealth from richer to poorer areas, ensuring local empowerment without worsening inequality.

I would love to see this model brought to Britain. It would shake up the old, sclerotic national parties and restore real power to local people. Local councillors represent diverse parties and interests but are currently toothless. A Swiss-style local democracy would change that.

"But what if they don't build enough houses? What if businesses move to areas with better tax rates?" Then communities will respond accordingly. Challenges would remain, but at least people would be deciding their own trade-offs and paths forward.

Unfortunately, the UK is moving away from local democracy. Surrey provides a stark example. Our 11 boroughs are slated to merge into 2 or 3 "super authorities," with a directly elected mayor gaining sweeping powers over the county. How is this real devolution? It centralises power into a system locals had no say in creating — allowing the government to push through top-down housing targets, often against local wishes.

In a Swiss or similar system, we'd live in a country truly made for the people, by the people — with agency, dignity, and hope for the future. I believe that Brits are capable of running their own communities, and it is patronising to suggest otherwise.

I wait with bated breath to see the fallout that is yet to come from this government's drive towards centralisation, continuing a tradition in this country that has hollowed out local communities for decades.

I can only hope we the people see the light before it's too late.

Matthew P. Dunn