

# An Epsom Christmas poem

13 December 2022



Christmas comes early in the month of December  
But preparations start as early as September  
Toys appear in the shop and the store  
And children's expectations start to soar

Adverts appear in the News and TV  
Of miraculous games for all to see  
Visions of food and decorations so high  
Make us all wish that the time was nigh

But leaves have not fallen from the trees  
And flowers are still buzzing with the bees  
Why are we tempted in this way?  
When the Christ child's birthday is still far away

Have they forgotten that the presents we bring  
Are only reminders of the presents for Him  
Of frankincense and myrrh and gold  
Foretelling the scriptures story of old

And when finally the great day is here  
Let us remember, amidst our good cheer  
As we celebrate around the table,  
The baby Christ child, born in a stable

**Michael Barber** (first published in 2012)



Michael moved to the Wells Estate in 1966 for his first family home. He continues to live there to this day. He has lived in the Borough for all of his 87 years as his parents lived in Stoneleigh. His connections with Epsom have been as President of the Epsom Cycling Club from 1981 to 1991, and he joined the Epsom Male Voice Choir in 2010 and continues to be a keen and popular member of the choir. He started writing poetry seriously when he became treasurer of the Headley Poetry Group. This group meets monthly to read and share poetry - Michael has had poetry published in the Epsom United Reformed Church Newsletter, the Mickleham Parish Magazine and the Brooklands Museum Volunteers Newsletter.

Notes authored by Audrey Ardern-Jones

Epsom Clock Tower image source: Clive Darra - <https://www.flickr.com/photos/osde-info/4252252710/>

# Do good intentions square with homeless savings?

13 December 2022



**Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** has launched its **Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy**, setting out how it intends to meet the needs of residents who are homeless or at risk of homelessness over the next five years.

The Strategy details the Council's strategic vision and key objectives to address homelessness within the borough. It focuses on a commitment to preventing homelessness at an earlier stage, and the importance of working with partners across all sectors to develop an integrated approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping.

A detailed review of homelessness in Epsom & Ewell was undertaken to inform the strategy, which helped to establish the extent of homelessness in the area, identify future trends and any gaps in the service currently being provided.

The Strategy identifies six key objectives which emphasise the importance of early intervention and prevention, as well as the development of new affordable housing in helping to meet the need of homeless people:

1. The early identification, intervention & prevention of homelessness
2. Reduce Rough Sleeping
3. Increase accommodation options including social rented, private rented, supported and move on accommodation and in-borough temporary accommodation
4. Improve the Health & Wellbeing of homeless people
5. Ensuring sufficient support is available for homeless people
6. Partnership working



Cllr Coley

Cllr **Alex Coley**, (Residents Association - Ruxley Ward) Chair of the **Community and Wellbeing Committee**, said: "The impact of homelessness cannot be underestimated. A home keeps you warm and safe, but it is so much more than just a roof. Homelessness leads to a significant reduction in emotional wellbeing, self-identity, social inclusion and life opportunities. Reducing homelessness in Epsom & Ewell will benefit everyone who lives in the borough.

"Over the past year we have expanded the Private Sector Leasing scheme, acquired an additional 14 emergency accommodation placements, and secured additional funding to enhance the East Surrey Outreach Service, who work with rough sleepers, but there is much more to be done. This Strategy will allow us to build on this progress to fully address the challenges local homeless people are facing, and ensure better outcomes for all."

Commenting on the strategy **Cllr Julie Morris** (LibDem College Ward) said "We are particularly concerned with the increase in single people with mental health issues who require homes, so the integrated approach is really key here. There's a shortage of homes for families with children and private landlords can help here. There are some incredibly dedicated council officers who are charged with implementing this strategy and councillors will support them as much as they can."

- The Homelessness Act 2002 places a duty on every local authority to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy, setting out how the local authority intends to tackle and prevent homelessness in their area.
- The strategy must be based on a review of all forms of homelessness within that local authority's area and should be reviewed at least every five years. The Council carried out six weeks consultation between 12 July and 23 August 2022 with a range of stakeholders, service users, staff and residents.



- Central to reducing homelessness within the borough is increasing the amount of affordable housing available. The Council is currently developing a Draft Local Plan which is due to go out for public consultation on 1 February 2023, and proposals for affordable housing in the borough will form part of the Plan.
- In Epsom & Ewell and nationally the 3 main causes of homelessness are:
  - Asked to leave by family and friends
  - Termination of Assured Shorthold tenancies
  - Domestic Abuse
- The full strategy can be found here:

<https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/housing/homelessness>

Information provided by Epsom and Ewell Council. Cllr Morris quote obtained by Epsom and Ewell Times. Other parties were invited to comment.

Related reports:

## Council targeting the homeless

Simone Pellegrino 31 July 2022

In a vote dominated by abstentionism, a service-specific savings target of £243k to offset this year's potential overspending for homelessness, was approved by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council last Tuesday. ... [READ MORE](#)

## Body found in Ewell house fire

13 December 2022



An investigation is underway following the discovery of a body at an address in Thorndon Gardens, Ewell, in the early hours today (12 December).

Police were called to the address around 1.50am following reports of a fire at the address.

A 44-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the incident and remains in custody.

A search of the property is underway and the investigation remains ongoing.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Commander Inspector Jon Vale, said: "A number of people called emergency services to report the fire and we would like to thank them for their prompt action. We realise that this incident would have caused a great deal of distress and concern in the local community and we would like to reassure you that an investigation is underway to establish exactly what happened.

Anyone with any information is asked to contact Surrey Police quoting PR/45220134346.



## Dogs in frost and snow

13 December 2022



Dog ownership in Epsom and Ewell saw a big rise during the pandemic, especially among young families. Poodle mixtures being evidently the most popular varieties purchased. And sometimes for £1000 or more. The Epsom and Ewell Times invites you to submit photos of your dog in any of the open spaces we and our canine friends enjoy in the Borough. Please send in new photos taken outdoors during the cold spell.

Image: Freddie, a 9 year old male Labradoodle on Epsom Common on Sunday 11th December.

Send your photo with your name (let us know if you want anonymity or not), name, type, age and sex of dog and where and when the photo was taken.

Email to

[admin@epsomandewelltimes.com](mailto:admin@epsomandewelltimes.com)

We will publish a gallery in the early New Year.

Thank you.

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## Surrey inspiration for writing and photography

13 December 2022



**Fanny Burney** (1752-1840) lived and wrote in Surrey and was inspired by the area's beautiful countryside and gardens in the Mole Valley area, particularly around Bookham, Mickleham and Box Hill. To celebrate Fanny Burney and the area she loved, Surrey Libraries and Surrey Heritage are pleased to announce our Photography Competition 'Frances Burney's Surrey'.

SHC would love to receive your photographs of places or buildings around Surrey, especially in the Mole Valley area, which were associated with Fanny Burney, or which inspire you today.

The competition is open from now until Sunday 22 January 2023. Submissions should be made online and emailed to [leatherhead.library@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:leatherhead.library@surreycc.gov.uk) and should have been taken during the competition period only.

We would also be pleased to receive printed entries, together with your contact information, at Leatherhead Library.

The winning entry will be announced in February 2023. The winner will receive an Amazon voucher for £50. Two runners-up will each receive an Amazon voucher for £25.

A selection of entries will be on display in Leatherhead Library from December 2022 onwards.

For full details please go to the Surrey History Centre's December newsletter [HERE](#)

Text courtesy of the Surrey History Centre

## Coining it in Surrey

13 December 2022



Over the last 20 years the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) has allowed finds made by metal detectorists in Surrey to be added both to the national database and the county's Historic Environment Record (HER). Any groups of coins, groups of prehistoric metal objects or individual precious metal objects over 300 years old have also been required to be reported to the Coroner under the 1996 Treasure Act. This reporting process is undertaken by the county's Finds Liaison Officer (FLO). The purpose of the Treasure Act is to provide museums with the chance to save important finds before they are lost to commercial auctions and to preserve them for local communities and public collections. Finders and landowners receive full financial reward for everything acquired as part of this process.

One recent discovery from Surrey which has been reported under this law, is a hoard of 28 silver Roman coins (denarii), found dispersed across a small area of equestrian pasture in the Elstead area (recorded as SUR-EA4D41 and SUR-0E4DC2). The coins were most likely originally buried in a bag or box which has long decayed and released its contents to be scattered by ploughing. These coins represent an unusual and significant find for the county and after being declared Treasure at Coroner's Inquest were acquired by Godalming Museum, with financial assistance from Surrey Archaeological Society, Council for British Archaeology South-East and the V&A Purchase Grant Fund

For full details please go to the Surrey History Centre's December newsletter [HERE](#)

Images and text courtesy of the Surrey History Centre

## Council help for cost of living

13 December 2022



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) is raising awareness of the range of support available to residents struggling with the cost of living crisis. The Council have created a dedicated page on the EEBC website, which pulls together information on what the Council and other local and national organisations can do to help in one place at [www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/cost-of-living](http://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/cost-of-living) .



Residents will find advice in a wide range of areas, including energy and housing payments, health costs, food, applying

for benefits, employment support and local places to go to keep warm. There are also specific areas for families with children and older residents.

The Council will also be sharing information and money-saving tips through social media and other material out in the Borough to reach as many people as possible with the help available.



Councillor **Alex Coley**, (Residents Association- Ruxley Ward) Chair of the **Community and Wellbeing Committee**, “We are aware of the significant effects rising costs in all areas are having on people’s everyday lives in the Borough. We want to ensure that those who need help are aware of what support is available and are able to access it.”

“This campaign is an opportunity for the residents, charities, the Council and Councillors to work together to help each other through the current crisis. If you are affected by the cost of living crisis, please visit the Council’s webpage, look out for and engage with the advice on its social media and across the Borough or contact your ward Councillor to share your concerns. We’re all here to help.”

Ward councillors’ details can be found here - <https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx>

The webpage covers the following:

- What we’re doing in Epsom & Ewell
- Applying for benefits and paying your council tax
- Difficulty paying your rent or mortgage
- Employments, skills and training support
- Help for families with children
- Help with food
- Help with health costs
- Help for older residents
- Help with your broadband and phone packages
- Independent advice
- Paying for your gas, electricity and water
- Warm Hubs

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Communications.

## Local Plan Battle: early skirmishes on Downs Farm

13 December 2022



As **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** is expected to publish a draft **Local Plan** in February 2023 **Epsom and Ewell Times** carries below an opinion piece authored by the **Keep Epsom & Ewell Green Belt Group**. We cannot confirm these campaigners’ contentions but we are happy to stimulate public discussion and interest through our pages. The Local Plan will shape for several years to come the decisions on new housing development locations in the Borough.

*Opinion Piece:*

Alarmed by well-sourced leaks, residents have decided to come out fighting early against joint landowner and developer discussions with Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) to build hundreds of homes on the 110-acre Downs Farm, destroying forever one of the closest Green Belt sites to London.

Other Green Belt sites near Epsom’s Hook Arena and Horton Farm are also believed to be earmarked housing in the Local Plan process, and it is even feared that other areas within Epsom’s 42% of Green Belt land could also have been offered up and included.

Residents in Surrey’s already highest populated borough are so concerned that they are not waiting for what they say could be a flawed consultation process, expected in February.

Under Government pressure to deliver nearly 700 homes for each of the next 20 years, planning officers and councillors should instead be prioritising developer partnerships for an imaginative alternative “brownfield” core scheme, claims the

residents' campaign group.

*However, following much-publicized Government climbdown guidelines announced this week by Secretary of State, Michael Gove, that top-down housing targets were to be "advisory only" and could be challenged by local authorities if the character of their area would be irrevocably changed, EEBC should be in no doubt, say residents, that Green Belt sites should be now removed from its Draft Local Plan.*

By redeveloping the Kiln Lane/Longmead area closer to town centre facilities, "more starter and lower cost young family homes could be built - and bring much needed rejuvenation and job opportunity benefits. Yet there is little sign that the planners are engaging with developers on this opportunity, preferring the easier, but devastating, option of building higher end housing on Green Belt fields."

The borough-wide residents' campaign, "Keep Epsom and Ewell Green Belt" involves social media, mass leaflet drops, a new petition (<https://www.change.org/EpsomGreenBelt>) and its own website(<https://epsomgreenbelt.org/>). Some residents may well stand as independent Green Belt candidates in the May elections.

'Our advice is that once a site has been publicly designated as suitable by the Council in the Local Plan, public consultations rarely change what are perceived as "done deals" - and we are not simply prepared to stand by and let that happen. In 2019, EEBC listed Downs Farm as a Green Belt site not suitable for development, yet it now appears to conveniently ignore this just because the site has been offered up to them' said Yufan Si, campaigner of Keep Epsom and Ewell Green Belt.

Downs Farm is a rare chalk grassland habitat for protected species such as skylarks and bats, with regular sightings of deer, redkite and pheasant.

"Destroying forever high quality Green Belt sites will result in mainly luxury houses. We are deeply disappointed that the Residents Association controlled EEBC appear set to prefer Green Belt desecration over redeveloping a core brownfield scheme in central Epsom. Properly phased, this could be promoted as a creative industries hub, focussed on the town's University of Creative Arts centre for excellence. As well as a much better mix of around 5,000 affordable starter and rented homes for young families, this would provide job opportunities in a much-needed Epsom rejuvenation."

*The campaign group also points out keeping Green Belt spaces also helps sustainability and the UK commitment to net zero by 2030.*

The Elmbridge Council Local Plan is cited as an example where the council and residents challenged unrealistic top-down government housing targets. It proposes redeveloped brownfield sites without any Green Belt destruction - despite having a greater proportion of Green Belt land (57%) than Epsom.

The residents' campaign urges EEBC planners to quickly engage with brownfield developers using a £75,000 grant recently announced by the Government. Given its overriding remit to only prefer Green Belt development in "exceptional circumstances", and the recent Government policy rethink on housing, this should be done before the draft Epsom Local Plan is issued in February, say residents.

*"Keep Epsom and Ewell Green Belt" Campaign Group - for further information contact [epsomgreenbelt@gmail.com](mailto:epsomgreenbelt@gmail.com)*

Related articles:

## **MP's housing solution for Epsom and Ewell**

November 30, 2022

Epsom and Ewell and indeed the whole country has a real shortage of homes. We cannot go on with a generation of young people who aspire to home ownership but ... [READ MORE](#)

Epsom and Ewell last in Local Planning

Ellie Ames November 26, 2022

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) has approved a delayed timeframe for the development of its new Local Plan, putting it behind both government targets and other Surrey councils, amid ... [READ MORE](#)

## **Local Planning Matters**

Tim Murphy November 4, 2022

Tim Murphy's opinion piece on Epsom and Ewell's Local Plan. An up-to-date Local Plan is a necessity. It indicates to those proposing new developments or conversions to properties just what ... [READ MORE](#)

## **The Local Plan to plan The Local Plan**

Special Correspondent June 7, 2022

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Licensing and Planning Policy Committee (LLPC) met on the 26th of May 2022 to agree on a timetable for consultation on drafting "The Local Plan". ... [READ MORE](#)

# 8th December 2022

13 December 2022



COUNCIL TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

## Council elastic on plastic?

December 8, 2022

In March 2019 Epsom and Ewell Council agreed to phase out its use of single-use plastics. How is it getting along? Judge for yourself from the reply of Councillor John ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL HOUSING

## Labour Councillor moves on housing

December 7, 2022

An affordable housing commitment was put off at yesterday's meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. A motion proposed by Labour's Court Ward Councillor Kate Chinn read: "We as the ... [READ MORE](#)



CRIME NEWS

## Alcohol reading on duty very non-PC

December 7, 2022

A former Surrey Police Constable has been barred from the profession after turning up to work still smelling of alcohol from the night before. The force's chief constable found that ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL HOUSING PLANNING

## Auriol school field for golden years?

December 6, 2022

Auriol School sports field in Cuddington is earmarked by Surrey County Council for 50 elderly care housing units. According to SCC: "The Cuddington site is ideally situated for Extra Care ... [READ MORE](#)



COMMUNITY SPORTS

## Tennis at 95 is the norm.

December 6, 2022

Epsom's own Norman Healey celebrates his 95th birthday on December 11th . He is a member of The Epsom Lawn Tennis Club where he is admired and respected. His serve ... [READ MORE](#)



RUGBY SPORTS

## Kinsella Hat trick The Highlight

December 6, 2022

Sutton & Epsom RFC Women 39 - Medway Women 7 - Saturday 3rd December - The Sutton & Epsom Women's XV have enjoyed much success in recent years. The impressive ... [READ MORE](#)



RUGBY SPORTS

## Sutton and Epsom RFC denied at the death

December 6, 2022

BANBURY 12 SUTTON & EPSOM RFC 12 - Saturday 3rd December - saw the start of the reverse fixtures and for both clubs, who are struggling at the bottom of the ... [READ MORE](#)



COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS

## Are you listening?

December 6, 2022

Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper, established in 1974, give three cheers for long-serving Volunteers! 'In recognition of long service and invaluable contribution to volunteering for the Epsom & Ewell Talking ... [READ MORE](#)



NATURE TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

## Mole Patrol captures pollution

December 6, 2022

River Wey and River Mole fail to meet acceptable criteria for four out of five pollutants monitored in new report. In one of the largest national people-powered scientific studies of ... [READ MORE](#)



FOOTBALL SPORTS

## World Cup injury time knocks Epsom and Ewell out of local cup

December 4, 2022

Dorking Wanderers B 2-1 Epsom & Ewell FC - Southern Combination League Division One Cup - Second Round - Saturday 3rd December 2022. A controversial 97th minute winner from Ben ... [READ MORE](#)



NEWS

## Fight fires in Surrey from home

December 3, 2022

Marking the retirement of Surrey's first female firefighter the Fire and Rescue Service is recruiting firefighters who can respond from home. Paula Hartwell joined Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL ELECTIONS

## Low turnouts see political changes in Surrey

December 3, 2022

The Liberal Democrats have taken two seats off the Conservatives in Surrey County Council by-elections. Winning by just 15 votes, a vote in the Sunbury Common and Ashford Common division ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL EDUCATION

## Surrey schools energy hikes

December 3, 2022

Surrey schools are being advised to plan for increases in gas prices of more than 129 per cent. Along with this, council finance teams are telling schools to plan for a ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL FOOD

## Twisting out a little more for Xmas?

December 3, 2022

Surrey children on free school meals will receive food vouchers over Christmas in what one councillor described as "an absolute lifeline" for some families. The scheme, which will give families a ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL

## Great expectations on Surrey's tax?

December 3, 2022

Surrey County Council's leader says he has "no expectation at all" that council tax will be put up by the full amount allowed despite a £14.4million budget gap at the ... [READ MORE](#)



COMMUNITY EDUCATION NATURE

## Any more trees please?

November 30, 2022

The Woodland Trust is urging schools and community groups across the south east of England to get their free tree-pack applications in quickly with just over a month left until ... [READ MORE](#)

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## More affordable housing now. Cllr Kate Chinn

13 December 2022

The Local Plan of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council should specify a minimum requirement of 40% of affordable housing in each new housing development of 10 or more units (Use Class C3) of which at least 25% will be reserved for social rent and comply with the vacant building credit.

Labour are asking that the Local Plan specifies a minimum amount of both affordable housing and social housing for rent. Our targets are quite low with many councils providing more however, other councils don't have such a low bar as their starting point. Epsom and Ewell have the lowest percentage of social housing in the county.

In the last 3 years the affordable homes built in the borough were: -

2019-2020 15%

2020-2021 3%

2021-2022 6%

If Covid was a factor in this its even more important for even more homes to be rapidly built in the borough to catch up and, it's very clear indeed, many more affordable homes must be built to make the strategy deliverable.

I think that the Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy, for those who don't have much homelessness in their ward, clearly explains the cost of homelessness for an individual, a family and society. There's also the financial cost to the borough of just under £2m and to society as the health and well being impact of homelessness increases the demand for health and social care resources.

I hear of individuals living in overcrowded accommodation. I have families who live separately during the week, often with grandparents, so the children can attend schools which meet their need. Many people are living out of borough losing contact with their known and trusted support networks.

Building affordable homes - I recall just two units, as part of a development, coming to planning recently and they were not of a good standard space or amenity wise and affordable housing should not be substandard housing so on the advice of the officers it was rightly refused.

I constantly hear that providing affordable homes as part of a development is unviable. Well, why not tell developers to open their books as they must do in Brighton and the council can check their calculations.

I see application after application being refused or deferred and Epsom needs to be building homes of a good standard that residents can afford to live in, settle in and raise their families.

The Homeless and Rough Sleeping Strategy recognises that residents are unable to access affordable homes, and this is a main causal factor for homelessness in the borough.

At the briefing on the Homeless and Rough sleeping Strategy some of us attended a graph showed a clear dip in homeless numbers which was when the Hollymoor Lane development became occupied. A development of affordable and social housing, environmentally friendly, with solar panels and EV points, and built to a good standard.

The borough needs more developments like this

The Labour group welcomes the action plan to increase availability of affordable accommodation and welcomes the action to build homes and identify appropriate council owned sites.

However with soaring rents, S21 evictions happening again coupled with the lack of social housing we do fear numbers of homeless people will increase.

Epsom and Ewell council needs to ensure and facilitate building affordable homes. Currently it is changing from a NIMBY borough to a BANANA borough. Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone.

It needs to change. The council should identify appropriate sites and continue to engage with Housing Association and responsible developers to get homes built.

Affordable Homes for residents need to be built and they need to be built now.

**Councillor Kate Chinn - Labour Court Ward**

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## Are you listening?

13 December 2022



**Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper**, established in 1974, give three cheers for long-serving Volunteers! 'In recognition of long service and invaluable contribution to volunteering for the Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper and the visually impaired community within the Borough of Epsom & Ewell.'

Time flies when you are enjoying what you do in life and it has certainly flown, say many of the wonderful people who have volunteered their services to help produce the Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper for a decade or more -some of them for up to an incredible 25 years!

On Thursday 1st December EETN's Chairman **Judy** was delighted to welcome the Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** and the Mayoress, Mrs. Mary Woodbridge, to Bradbury Lodge in the grounds of **Swail House**, for a very special Long Service Award Presentation, organised by Volunteers including News Editors **Tricia** and **Julie** and EETN Office Manager Heather. "We are giving long overdue recognition to the fifteen volunteers who have been committed to this special charity for ten years or more," Judy began. "Two of those wonderful people, Gabrielle and Heather, have been with us for over 21 years and Penny has given 25 years of service."

Judy raised much laughter when she explained that in the early days of EETN, which started in 1974, cassette recordings were made in a corridor outside a kitchen in Epsom's Swail House. One of the long- serving Volunteers, she said, still remembered the smell of cabbage as she was recording. "The recording 'venues' changed several times over the years, but in 1997 our current bespoke studio here at Swail House was opened -and here we are 2341 issues of EETN later," she said.

In a brief resume of how the Talking Newspaper operates, Judy explained that many skill sets were required to deliver a quality service to the Listeners. These, she said, included Sound Recordists, News, Magazine and Supplement Editors, Readers with clear voices, the all-important Backroom Team- and our essential Social Media Manager who spreads the word so effectively about our fantastic service. "Without the whole team of Volunteers, EETN would not exist. Everyone plays an integral role in delivering this Free service to visually impaired people."

Among the invited guests and volunteers were **Robert Lahai**, Swail House Manager, who organised the room for the presentation, **Eamonn McNamee**, Manager for Central Surrey Voluntary Action, who kindly read the citations and **Serena Powis**, from EEBC Community and Voluntary Sector Liaison Officer.

The Mayor, Councillor Clive Woodbridge welcomed hearing the background history of EETN, saying "The fact that the 15 volunteers we have honoured today have amassed a staggering total of over 200 years of volunteering is truly humbling. I am tremendously honoured to be the President of the organisation, continuing a tradition going back to 1991."

After listening to the citations, which gave a brief insight into the role each volunteer had played over the years, the Mayor expressed his thanks, saying 'We are truly blessed to have so many selfless, good people who give up their time freely in the community.'

Photos with the Mayor marked the occasion as certificates were presented, but the wonderful group shot perfectly captured the warmth and sincerity of the team with their Chairman Judy, herself visually impaired, and husband Amer. Amer's vital contribution to EETN was also warmly recognised for the invaluable support he has given Judy in her role as Chairman for the last 11 years.

With formalities successfully completed, Judy then invited all the guests and Volunteers to enjoy some light refreshments while having a catch-up with each other and a jolly get-together.

The Epsom & Ewell Talking Newspaper is a free, regular audio service presenting local news, magazine articles and general features which are recorded and distributed on a memory stick to local residents who are blind, visually impaired or have difficulty reading smaller text.

For more information about this free service visit: <https://eetn.org.uk>

To contact EETN about becoming a Listener or a Volunteer email [admin@eetn.org.uk](mailto:admin@eetn.org.uk)

Or call: 01372 721519 and leave a message with your name and phone number.

**Jan Collier**

Ed: In accordance with “For the community, by the community”, Epsom and Ewell Times shares its content for free with EETN.

## Mole Patrol captures pollution

13 December 2022



River Wey and River Mole fail to meet acceptable criteria for four out of five pollutants monitored in new report.

In one of the largest national people-powered scientific studies of its kind six different pollutants – nitrate, nitrite, phosphate, total coliform, pH, heavy metals – have been monitored across 48 sites in England and Scotland. At a national level, **all sites but one (98%) failed to meet acceptable criteria for at least one of five pollutants monitored, while over half, 52%, of sites failed on three or more parameters**, according to Planet Patrol’s *What Lies Beneath Report 2022*.

Image: River Mole near Box Hill Dorking. Credit: Johan J.Ingles-Le Nobel

**River Wey near Sutton Green and River Mole near Dorking** were amongst the worst for water quality, both failing to meet acceptable levels of nitrate, phosphate, total coliform and pH levels. River Dart in Devon is the only site tested to pass across five parameters.

The report highlights the devastating outlook of the state of UK waterways and urgently warns the Government and polluting industries to take transformative action to reverse the destruction of our freshwater environments.

The *What Lies Beneath Report 2022* is one of the biggest datasets yet, with 57 citizen volunteers having conducted 1,229 water quality readings and 1,178 metal concentration readings.

Additional insights from the report include:

- Nearly half, 46%, of sites showed unacceptable levels of nitrates
- 69% of sites failed to meet acceptable concentration of phosphate
- Over 90% of sites tested positive for total coliform bacteria
- **Over a quarter, 26%, of sites failed to meet recommended PH range due to high levels of acidity.**

The causes of these pollutants are many and go beyond sewage contamination. From growing urban development to farming practices, increased diversity of chemicals and pharmaceuticals used by society, and pollution pressure from transport, addressing the UK’s invisible water quality crisis needs a whole systems approach.

The launch of this report follows the latest data from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), which shows that no progress has been made on a key water pollution pledge made four years ago to ensure that 75% of rivers and other bodies of water achieve a “good” ecological status by 2027. The figure remained at 16% in 2021, unchanged since 2017. In response to the Environment Agency’s plans to ‘amend’ this target, Planet Patrol has launched a petition calling on the Rt Hon Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Thérèse Coffey, to reject plans to weaken the legislation.

**Lizzie Carr MBE, founder of Planet Patrol**, says: “Through our growing community of citizen scientists we’ve started to uncover what lies beneath to highlight a stark reality: the widespread, poor condition of our freshwater environments. The results have been disturbing and distressing but only by building evidence to illustrate the true scale and extent of a problem, can it be accurately understood, communicated and acted upon.

“We urge the Government to honour its pledge to ensure that 75% of rivers and other bodies of water achieve a good ecological status by 2027. This target is both a major driver of public and private investment into cleaning up our waterways and a vital tool to hold industries with permits to pollute – which include much more than just water companies – to account over water pollution.”

As well as rejecting plans to amend this pledge, Planet Patrol, the environmental non-profit, is highlighting four other key policy recommendations:

- DEFRA to bring forward the enforcement date for the increase in Variable Monetary Penalties for polluting water companies to 1st February 2023
- DEFRA to strengthen the effectiveness of the Storm Overflows Discharge Reduction Plan (SODRP) – specifically, reduce the maximum achievement date on all SODRP targets to 2035 versus 2050, and prohibit water companies from increasing water bills to fund the critical infrastructure investment required
- The Environmental Agency to accelerate the speed at which citizen science is integrated into formal data

collection activities for developing evidenced-based policies

- Use funds raised from the increase in Variable Monetary Penalties for polluting water companies to increase the criminal prosecution rates of those who damage water quality.

**Dr Thomas Stanton, a freshwater scientist from Loughborough University** who analysed the data, says: “UK waterways are vulnerable to a number of societal pressures, including pollution, water abstraction, and modifications to river courses. But they are also compromised by weak policy and legislation. Despite its political greenwashing, the environment continues to be an issue that the UK government does not take seriously. Nature is in crisis, but current efforts to fully understand the extent of this are shackled by politicians whose short-sighted priorities lie elsewhere, and who fail to recognise the significance of environmental action today for the lives of those who will outlive their political tenure.”

**Read the full report here: <https://planetpatrol.co/water-quality-report/>**

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## Fight fires in Surrey from home

13 December 2022



Marking the retirement of Surrey's first female firefighter the Fire and Rescue Service is recruiting firefighters who can respond from home.

**Paula Hartwell** joined Surrey Fire and Rescue Service in January 1993 as the services first female firefighter, and after 30 years she's hanging up her helmet.

Since joining the service as a firefighter at Chertsey Fire Station, Paula went on to become a Leading Firefighter, followed by a Watch Commander in fire stations as well as fire safety and prevention departments. She then became a Station Commander at Woking Fire Station. After a short time within the Operations Assurance Team followed by Community Intelligence, Paula returned to Woking to finish her career.

**Paula spoke of her career, she said:** “I have enjoyed being part of the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service team - helping the communities which we serve and every day trying to make a difference.

“It has been both challenging and rewarding, I have learned many skills over the years and have great memories. I have loved my career immensely and hope that many more women take on the role.

Since joining the service, Paula has also welcomed three daughters with her other half Tony.

**Dan Quin, Chief Fire Officer, said:** “What a fantastic legacy Paula leaves behind here in Surrey - our first female firefighter paving the way for many more females after her, showing fire and rescue as being a successful career option. I am privileged to have worked with Paula for over 20 years and I know she will be greatly missed. Thank you, Paula.”

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service is currently recruiting on-call firefighters and Joint Fire Control operators. On-call firefighters respond via pager from their home or work. Joint Fire Control operators take emergency calls and mobilising for Surrey, West and East Sussex - the first person residents speak to in an emergency. Join a life-saving service and find out more by visiting [www.surreycc.gov.uk/firecareers](http://www.surreycc.gov.uk/firecareers).

Surrey County Council News

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## Any more trees please?

13 December 2022



**The Woodland Trust is urging schools and community groups across the south east of England to get their free tree-pack applications in quickly with just over a month left until the spring delivery closes.**

Applications for spring, for delivery in March 2023, are currently open, but only until 11 January.

The last round of the ever-popular free tree-packs scheme was the Woodland Trust's biggest-ever single send-out, with 4,625 organisations across the UK taking advantage of the scheme.

A total of 643 schools and community groups in London, Greater London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex took delivery of their trees from the end of October to 11 November.

**In the south east of England, 88,155 trees were sent out to 643 organisations:**

- 16,380 Trees to 168 organisations in London
- 9,690 trees to 87 organisations in Greater London
- 26,535 trees to 157 organisations Kent
- 14,070 trees to 101 organisations in Surrey
- 21,480 trees to 130 organisations in Sussex

The figures for the south east of England were part of a bumper autumn delivery which saw 740,970 saplings finding homes the length and breadth of the UK, bringing the annual total to a record-breaking 1.3m trees for 2022.

Woodland Trust senior project lead Vicki Baddeley said there is no time like the present to sign up and take advantage of the scheme.

"With Christmas looming and National Tree Week upon us, now really is a good time to get those applications in and ensure you don't miss out," she added.

"We still have lots of trees available but with schools breaking up before you know it, and the hectic holiday period around the corner, it makes sense to get organised nice and early and avoid a last-minute rush in early January.

"Planting trees is such a simple action, but the collective impact can make a huge difference. It's a great way for schoolchildren and community groups to learn about nature and the environment and, at the same time, embrace a "Green Christmas".

"Planting trees has so many benefits, from combatting the effects of climate change, helping support wildlife, to greening up local spaces and boosting well-being.

"The desire to plant trees is growing all the time and I fully expect demand to reflect that in the coming weeks, so I would advise any interested groups to apply sooner rather than later.

"The application process to secure your saplings is quite straightforward, just visit <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/schools-and-communities/> to get started."

The Trust's tree packs have been generously funded by lead partners: Sainsbury's, Lloyds Bank, OVO Energy, Bank of Scotland and Sofology.

Baddeley added: "As ever, the support and generosity of our funders is invaluable and we simply couldn't do this without them.

"The help each and every one of them provides is hugely appreciated and helps to ensure we can provide and deliver our saplings in such huge numbers."

**The Woodland Trust's autumn delivery:**

- England: 615,720 trees to 3,982 schools and community groups
- Scotland: 77,940 trees to 428 schools and community groups
- Wales: 47,310 trees to 215 schools and community groups

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

For more information please contact the Woodland Trust press office on 01476 602993, Owen Phillips on 07958 066 766, or email [media@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:media@woodlandtrust.org.uk) or [owenphillips@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:owenphillips@woodlandtrust.org.uk)

**The Woodland Trust**

The Woodland Trust is the largest woodland conservation charity in the UK with more than 500,000 supporters. It wants to see a UK rich in native woods and trees for people and wildlife.

The Trust has three key aims:

1. protect ancient woodland, which is rare, unique and irreplaceable
2. restoration of damaged ancient woodland, bringing precious pieces of our natural history back to life
3. establish native trees and woods with the aim of creating resilient landscapes for people and wildlife

Established in 1972, the Woodland Trust now has over 1,000 sites in its care covering approximately 29,000 hectares. Access to its woods is free so everyone can benefit from woods and trees.

[www.woodlandtrust.org.uk](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk)

### **Free trees for schools and communities**

The Woodland Trust is giving away hundreds of thousands of trees to schools and communities to make sure everybody in the UK has the chance to plant a tree. To apply, or see terms and conditions, visit: [www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees](http://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/freetrees)

### **National Tree Week**

National Tree Week takes place from 26 November to December 2022. It is the UK's largest annual tree celebration. Each year, the country's conservation sector, volunteer groups and tree-lovers come together to plant thousands of trees to mark the start of the annual tree planting season.

*Courtesy: The Woodland Trust*

Images: **The Woodland Trust** | **Flickr & People Planting** | **Flickr**

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## 1st December 2022

13 December 2022



CHRIS GRAYLING PLANNING WESTMINSTER

### **MP's housing solution for Epsom and Ewell**

November 30, 2022

Epsom and Ewell and indeed the whole country has a real shortage of homes. We cannot go on with a generation of young people who aspire to home ownership but ... [READ MORE](#)



HELEN MAGUIRE WESTMINSTER

### **Hard-hitting critique from new LibDem PPC**

November 28, 2022

On 17th November, we saw the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, give his Autumn Statement. We waited with bated breath to see how it might help us and our families as we ... [READ MORE](#)



COMMUNITY FOODBANK VOLUNTEERS

## Will Epsom's Foodbank ever end?

November 28, 2022

A Gala fundraising dinner was held recently to recognise 10 years of Epsom & Ewell Foodbank, with guests encouraged to sign up to the new 'End Poverty Pledge'. Nearly 200 ... [READ MORE](#)



GINA MILLER WESTMINSTER

## True and Fair View?

November 28, 2022

Gina Miller, Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom and Ewell, Leader of the True & Fair Party, writes for the Epsom and Ewell Times: The typical property price in Epsom and Ewell ... [READ MORE](#)



FOOTBALL SPORTS

## Top teams level at the end

November 28, 2022

Epsom & Ewell 1-1 Shoreham Southern Combination League - Division One Saturday 26th November 2022. Two very late goals after 85 minutes of attritional combat ensured that the best two ... [READ MORE](#)



RUGBY SPORTS

## Mighty Maids Run Riot

November 28, 2022

MAIDENHEAD 61 - SUTTON & EPSOM 24 - Saturday 26th November. Maidenhead started this season with four extremely impressive wins as they surged to the top of the table by ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL PLANNING

## Epsom and Ewell last in Local Planning

November 26, 2022

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) has approved a delayed timeframe for the development of its new Local Plan, putting it behind both government targets and other Surrey councils, amid ... [READ MORE](#)



COUNCIL TRANSPORT AND ENVIRONMENT

## Will Epsom think on the same lines?

November 25, 2022

Trams into Surrey have been raised as one “very possible solution” to improving public transport with the expansion of the capital’s Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). The zone’s expansion was ... [READ MORE](#)



EDUCATION NEWS PLANNING

## Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes..?\*

November 25, 2022

Battle for school gets classical with fears of a Trojan Horse. Kingswood House School in Epsom is asking local people to join hundreds of residents in opposing plans to evict the ... [READ MORE](#)



CRIME

## Dogs against knife crime

November 25, 2022

Officers have visited 14 schools and colleges across Surrey over the past week to raise awareness and tackle the grass-root causes of knife crime as part of national police campaign, ... [READ MORE](#)

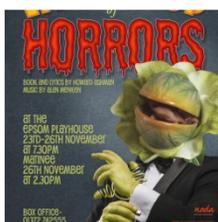


NATURE

## Winter walks in the Surrey wilds

November 25, 2022

The darker mornings have closed in, and the clocks have gone back, so it’s fair to say summer is officially over, and the cold season has begun. While the cosy ... [READ MORE](#)



ARTS

## Epsom Playhouse hosts a little horror.

November 24, 2022

Leatherhead Operatic Society left the audience laughing and cheering with its production of Little Shop of Horrors at Epsom Playhouse, a musical comedy directed by John Harries, choreographed by Louise ... [READ MORE](#)



BUSINESS COMMUNITY HEALTH

## Cycling for Motor Neurone Disease

November 24, 2022

Greg Culshaw of Toyota's Epsom Head Office (GB), has completed a gruelling 24-hour static bike ride, putting him on course to raise more than £40,000 for the Motor Neurone Disease ... [READ MORE](#)

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## Hard-hitting critique from new LibDem PPC

13 December 2022



On 17th November, we saw the Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, give his Autumn Statement. We waited with bated breath to see how it might help us and our families as we try to work out how we're going to pay the bills. The catastrophic verdict was plain to see in newspaper headlines the following day: 'Carnage' - the Mirror; 'Years of tax pain ahead' - The Times; 'From Bad to Worse' - the Guardian. Even the usual Tory safe haven, the Mail, couldn't hold back their view: 'Tories Soak the Strivers'. It was never going to be an easy statement to make after Liz Truss dug a £30 billion hole in the public finances after her disastrous mini budget, but now the Treasury puts the fiscal hole at an eye-watering £60 billion!

This blistering verdict confirms the British public's worst fears. We are being made to suffer increases in tax, bills, and mortgage payments because of this Conservative government's mistakes. Living standards are falling off a cliff and public services are suffocating under the weight of this Conservative chaos and incompetence.

What is the cost to you, the hard-working residents of Epsom and Ewell? Two million more people will move into the 40% tax bracket, families paying the price for Tory incompetence. Struggling families who have worked hard for years have had their security stolen. Hunt's Statement confirmed the Bank Surcharge cut from 8% to 3% from April 2023, while increasing taxes on millions of struggling families by extending the freeze in the Income Tax personal allowance and higher-rate threshold. While non-doms and big banks got off lightly, the already squeezed middle are being pushed to the brink, having to choose between food or heating, mortgage payments or fuel for their car.

The squeezed middle will continue to work as hard as before, but their efforts will be worth significantly less as disposable income shrinks. Every single Conservative MP should be ashamed of this cost of chaos budget, which will leave a legacy of economic turmoil and tax misery as mortgage rates spiral.

OBR Budget documents forecast that mortgage interest payments will double over the next year, rising by 100.5% in the year to September 2023. Lib Dem analysis shows that a typical household with an outstanding mortgage of £236,000 will see their interest payments double to £5,689, or an increase of £2,851 a year. We're calling for a Mortgage Protection Fund for homeowners seeing payments skyrocket now!

In addition, reform of adult social care has once again been kicked into the long grass. Bedding blockages will continue in the unresolved chaos of the understaffed, under-resourced NHS. Boris Johnson came to power on a mandate to reform social care. Where is it? The dementia tax is back!

Other horrors you may not have seen in the budget are:

1. Police cuts: Home Office spending is set to be slashed by £100m in real terms by

2024-25.

2. Crumbling schools: There will be a £1 billion (14%) real terms cut in capital spending on education in 2024-25.
3. Social Housing: New stealth tax on social housing providers will mean lower investment in existing and new social housing.

Hunt is hoping economic growth will save his bacon but the shortage of workers, trading challenges because of Brexit and the lack of investment in renewable energy may not make this a reality. Hunt talks now about investment in green infrastructure and education and skills yet where has this been for 12 years? Schools are on their knees; parents are having to pay for books and children are going hungry.

We have now entered a recession, a spiralling cost-of-living crisis, the biggest decline in living standards in history. The gulf between rich and poor is growing, foodbanks have more demand than supply for the first time ever, nurses have voted to strike, barristers have been on strike, we have the highest rates of taxation in 70 years and a longer recession than we will likely have ever seen.

Since September, we have had three Prime Ministers, and four Chancellors. The Conservatives say they provide stability and continuity. The people are calling for CHANGE! Stability and continuity from this government has delivered a broken economy and made us poorer. Our crumbling hospitals and run-down classrooms are facing savage cuts because the Conservative party crashed the economy to fund tax cuts for the richest companies. The country will never forgive them for this.

This government is putting off tough decisions with a general election around the corner. This isn't leadership! We are reaping the costs of a long-term failure to grow the economy and a lack of long-term strategy. We all just got a lot poorer and we're in for a long and unpleasant journey on the way back to a sound and stable economy.

**Helen Maguire-** Liberal Democrat Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Epsom and Ewell