

Look to your own party's dictatorship

24 April 2025



Sir,

I reply to Cllr Ames' letter attacking Residents Association councillors in general and me in particular.

It is a pity that he chose to quote me selectively. I did say that the RA Group could put through anything it wished - that is a simple fact as we hold 25 of the 35 seats. However I went on to say that we value the contributions of members from other parties. .

A council may use either the cabinet or committee system of government. We use the committee system under which all councillors may partake in all decision making, as Cllr Ames has done. Unlike many other councils, all councillors are involved.

It is also a pity that Cllr Ames did not mention the subsequent meeting of the Standards and Constitution Committee on 16 April of which he is a member. This was a long but amicable meeting where much of the two and half hours was spent dealing with suggestions from Liberal Democrat leader Cllr James Lawrence. Some of his proposals were accepted. On all the motions, James was congratulated on the effort he had put in to serve the council and the constructive way he worked with RA members. This is hardly the attitude of a dictatorial ruling group.

In contrast, let us look at the Labour government of his party. Last year in the general election it got about a third of votes on a 60% turnout. This means that only one in five electors voted Labour. Another two voted for other parties, and the remaining two did not vote at all. Subsequent opinion polls suggest that Labour has lost support since the election.

On the basis of getting just 20% support from the electorate, the Labour government has dictatorially decreed that the borough should provide more than 800 new homes each year building on Green Belt, and that the borough council should be abolished in 2027. On neither of these issues has the government consulted anyone to ask if they want all this extra housing or if they want the council abolished. I have yet to meet any resident who supports either policy. The Labour government does not listen to any voices other than its own, and sometimes does not even listen to its own voices.

I like Cllr Ames as a person, and I respect his right to criticise me and RA councillors. However I believe that this should be done fairly, and not by selective quotation wrapped up in bluster. If Cllr Ames does not like dictatorial government, he would be better advised to direct such views to his own party.

Cllr Robert Leach

RA councillor

Nonsuch Ward

24th April 2025

24 April 2025

News Policing

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23 April 2025

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Labour decries Residents' Associations' unfettered power on Epsom & Ewell Council



23 April 2025

Dear Editor, Thank you for your excellent reporting of last week's meeting of Epsom and Ewell Council's Standards and Constitution Committee, which highlighted some important and contentious issues about how ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Faces Scrutiny Over Constitutional Reforms



19 April 2025

The Standards and Constitution Committee meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council on 16th April was marked by heated exchanges and concerns over transparency, democratic participation, and officer-councillor relations. The ... [Read More](#)

Council Planning

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19 April 2025

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Labour decries Residents' Associations' unfettered power on Epsom & Ewell Council

24 April 2025



Dear Editor,

Thank you for your excellent reporting of last week's meeting of Epsom and Ewell Council's Standards and Constitution Committee, which highlighted some important and contentious issues about how councillors represent our residents.

Your analysis that public trust and democratic scrutiny hang in the balance is spot-on. In my two years so far as a councillor, I have frequently sought to highlight these issues, often in conjunction with other opposition councillors and sometimes with the support of more independent-minded Residents Association (RA) councillors.

In this light, I would like to highlight Cllr Robert Leach's comment concerning the committees that decide the bulk of what the council does, that "The RA group can put through anything it likes".

This shocking comment goes to the heart of issues of democratic scrutiny and appears to reflect the approach of the ruling party and many RA councillors to a situation where it has two-thirds of councillors. Despite its councillors purporting to represent residents at a very local level, the RA can often operate as a monolithic block.

One major change that the RA administration has attempted to implement is to neuter the Audit and Scrutiny Committee, of which I am also a member, which should play a key role in scrutinising what the council does in the name of residents.

Despite, or perhaps because of this, the administration has proposed to remove the committee's scrutiny function, on the grounds that scrutiny should take place on the committees that make policy and spending decisions.

Cllr Leach's blunt assessment that "The RA group can put through anything it likes" on such committees should represent the death knell for this proposal, which the administration has already had to "pause" in the face of fierce opposition.

While Cllr Leach's words represent the numerical reality, they neglect the role that opposition councillors can play in raising questions and challenges and, on occasion, influencing how other committee members vote.

Last month, for the second year running, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee amended its own annual report, as drafted by the administration, to record that it had carried out "limited scrutiny" over the past year.

While this is an unfortunate situation, to say the least, it does show that some RA councillors have an appetite for a stronger scrutiny role and, despite what Cllr Leach says, can vote according to their own individual judgement.

Democratic scrutiny of what the council does in the name of residents is essential to maintain the public's trust in it. We need more of it - and less of a ruling party that thinks it can put through anything it likes.

Councillor Chris Ames - Labour - Court Ward

17th April 2025

24 April 2025

Business Food Planning

Global fast-food giant targets Surrey village



16 April 2025

A global fast food giant could be coming to a Surrey village as a new McDonald's restaurant and takeaway might get the go ahead. Despite being famed for its 'Happy ... Read More

Community Faith News

Volunteers Join Forces with Councillor to Give Epsom a Spring Clean



15 April 2025

Epsom Town Centre was treated to a thorough spring clean on Sunday 6th April, as a team of around 40 volunteers from the international youth group ASEZ WAO UK joined ... [Read More](#)

Community Housing Planning

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14 April 2025

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Arts Culture

Epsom Choral Society Bids Farewell to Long-Serving Pianist Marion Lea



14 April 2025

Epsom Choral Society (ECS) has said a heartfelt goodbye to their much-loved accompanist, Marion Lea, who is retiring after an extraordinary 50 years. At a special farewell party held in ... [Read More](#)

Business News Planning

Paintball plans to entertain Epsom's youth



12 April 2025

Plans for a new paintball and laser tag centre have been put forward in a former farm building. The new play shooting centre could be launched at The Paddock on ... [Read More](#)

Council Planning

Pedestrian visions of Mole Valley



11 April 2025

Masterplans for Dorking and Bookham are set to be signed off by Mole Valley District Council's executive committee on April 16. These set out a bank of projects the council ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution Finances

The cost of saving the cost of local government



11 April 2025

As of April 2025, Epsom and Ewell is actively engaged in Surrey's significant local government reorganisation, aiming to transition from the existing two-tier system to a unitary authority model. The ... [Read More](#)

Environment News Transport

On the Buses - Surrey going Green



11 April 2025

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Arts Culture

Epsom celebrates romance and revolution!



10 April 2025

Another great concert from Epsom Symphony Orchestra, directed and conducted by Darrell Davison with Christos Fountos the piano soloist. The theme was Romance & Revolution. The concert began with Tchaikovsky's ... [Read More](#)

Epsom Choral Society Bids Farewell to Long-Serving Pianist Marion Lea

24 April 2025



Epsom Choral Society (ECS) has said a heartfelt goodbye to their much-loved accompanist, Marion Lea, who is retiring after an extraordinary 50 years.

At a special farewell party held in her honour, choir members gathered to celebrate Marion's remarkable contribution to

ECS since she first joined in 1975. In a warm and emotional tribute, ECS President Jon Pullinger shared the story of Marion's involvement with the choir, remarking, "What amazing good fortune for us" - her musicianship, support and professionalism have been a cornerstone of ECS for half a century.

In recognition of her long-standing dedication, Marion was presented with a series of personal gifts: a facsimile of Mozart's C minor Piano Concerto (K491), a subscription for a monthly bouquet of flowers for the next year, and a set of four handmade, music-themed coasters. She also received a beautiful bouquet of flowers and a magnificent, personalised cake in the shape of a piano.

Members past and present paid tribute to Marion's extraordinary skills, her quiet professionalism, and the musicianship she brought to every rehearsal and performance. As Jon Pullinger said of Marion: "The accompanist will pick out weaknesses in one part or another and come to their rescue with appropriately judged emphases. We have been so fortunate in having Marion with us as both fine soloist and consummate accompanist."

ECS looks back with gratitude for all Marion has brought to the choir and with warm wishes for her retirement.

Nina Kaye

Epsom celebrates romance and revolution!

24 April 2025



Another great concert from Epsom Symphony Orchestra, directed and conducted by Darrell Davison with Christos Fountos the piano soloist. The theme was *Romance & Revolution*.

The concert began with Tchaikovsky's **Romeo & Juliet Overture (Fantasy)** - inspired by Shakespeare. The dramatic and forbidding opening, depicting doom and gloom, moved to a mood of lightness - a faster pace with dancing notes from the flutes - before reverting to solemn chords. The music captured the feud between the Montagues and Capulets. The love theme was special - lyrical notes first heard on the Cor Anglais, then the flautists' melody rang through, and finally the distinctive notes of the harp. Flowing and haunting chords of the ending metamorphosized from hints of happiness to one of pessimism and death, demonstrated so convincingly by the timpani.

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini by Rachmaninov was amazing. Christos Fountos played the piano with aplomb, his fingers racing up and down the keyboard. There were contrasting moments of lightness and solemn intensity. The lyrical melody on the piano was joined by flowing chords from the strings and then the wind, finally ending at a diminished pace on the piano.

Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5 was a wonderfully deep symphony. A menacing theme from the cellos and double basses contrasted with the haunting notes of the violins. Spiky and unsettling chords added intensity, creating an ominous atmosphere. The serene notes of the flautists changed the mood - reinforced by the calming notes of the lower strings. Other sections were fast, with an atmosphere of expectancy and individual solo parts. The Largo movement was introduced by strings with moments of pathos. As the intensity built up, the mood changed. Was it anger? Or determination to overcome adversity? It resolved serenely. The final movement had a strident atmosphere which moved on to more tranquil waters. Unsettling chords and a melody with almost full orchestration concluded with triumphant notes, the timpani resounding through the hall at the finale.

Sue Haines

10th April 2025

24 April 2025

Crime News

QR Code Scams Surge in Surrey



9 April 2025

A 667% Rise Since 2019 as Criminals Target Public Spaces. QR code-related scams in Surrey have surged by more than sixfold since 2019, new figures reveal — mirroring a dramatic ... [Read More](#)

Education Environment News

Surrey in race to capture carbon



9 April 2025

A unique carbon capture technology developed by researchers at the University of Surrey could offer a more cost-effective way to remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the air and turn it ... [Read More](#)

Business Council

New funding to boost Surrey's businesses and economy



9 April 2025

Funding worth millions is now available from Surrey County Council for innovative ideas to drive growth across Surrey. Businesses, employer representative groups and partner organisations are all invited to apply ... [Read More](#)

Business Environment News

Thames Water hopes £37m investment will end record sewer flooding



9 April 2025

Thames Water has said it will spend £37m upgrading its Mole Valley network raising hopes it could spell the end of homes, gardens and rivers being flooded with sewage waste. ... [Read More](#)

News Policing

New Surrey police division HQ plans



9 April 2025

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News Policing

New priorities for Surrey Police?



8 April 2025

Going “back to basics” is the key part of Surrey Police’s priorities under new plans announced by the county’s Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). Surrey’s new Police and Crime plan ... [Read More](#)

Local History News

News and events from Surrey History Centre



5 April 2025

Surrey Photographers: A Day of Talks Join the Surrey Local History Committee for a fascinating day of illustrated talks on the history of photography in Surrey. Experts will explore a ... [Read More](#)

News and events from Surrey History Centre

24 April 2025



Surrey Photographers: A Day of Talks

Join the **Surrey Local History Committee** for a fascinating day of illustrated talks on the history of photography in Surrey. Experts will explore a variety of themes:

- **Keith Harding:** *Victorian Dorking in photographs by Walter Rose & John Chaplin*
- **Nigel Balchin:** *Picture postcards and local history*
- **Jane Lewis and Jill Hyams** (Surrey History Centre): *Portrait of a Surrey town between the wars: the*

photographic archive of Sidney Francis

- **Julian Pooley** (Surrey History Centre): *Patient Portraits from Surrey Hospitals, 1850-1980*
- **Chris Shephard**: *Farnham's war caught by the camera? Photographs that avoided the censor*

There will also be a display of Surrey photographs from the archive for attendees to explore.

Event Details

Location: Surrey History Centre, 130 Goldsworth Road, Woking GU21 6ND

Date and Time: Saturday 26 April, 9.55am to 4.15pm

Tickets: £18 if booked online via the Surrey Archaeological Society website. £20 on the day (cash only).

[Sign up »](#)

VE Day 80 Display

Visit our foyer display from early May to commemorate the **80th anniversary of VE Day**. Featuring photographs, records, and stories from Surrey's VE Day celebrations in **1945, 1995, 2005, 2015, and 2020**, the display highlights personal memories from those who experienced the historic day.

You can also discover records to help trace family members who served in WWII.

All the latest news from the Surrey History Centre [HERE](#)

3rd April 2025

24 April 2025

Arts Culture

Baroque to Modern concert by Epsom Chamber Choir



1 April 2025

Epsom & Ewell is fortunate to have many excellent music and drama groups to join, learn and perform with, and for audiences to enjoy old favourites or explore something unfamiliar ... [Read More](#)

Football Sports

Miller hat-trick saves Epsom and Ewell FC



1 April 2025

Spelthorne Sports 1-4 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 29th March. It's like London buses; you wait eight matches for a win and then ... [Read More](#)

Education Environment News

Surrey Uni leads microbe recycling of lithium batteries



1 April 2025

A microbial electrochemical technology capable of recovering 90-95% of lithium from spent lithium-ion batteries has been developed by scientists at the University of Surrey. The breakthrough offers a more sustainable ... [Read More](#)

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Notice regarding RAWLINSON & HUNTER LIFE & ASSURANCE PENSION FUND

1 April 2025

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 27 TRUSTEE ACT 1925 To members and others claiming a right to benefits under the Rawlinson & Hunter Life & Assurance Pension Fund (the Scheme). Notice ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution

RA councillor replaces Independent member as scrutiny row erupts at Epsom Town Hall



30 March 2025

A stormy Audit and Scrutiny Committee meeting at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council on Thursday 27 March has ignited a political row, as Councillor Robert Leach (RA Nonsuch) controversially replaced ... [Read More](#)

Athletics Local History Sports

Epsom & Ewell athletics legend remembered



28 March 2025

Remembering Don Turner: A Legend in Local Athletics Epsom and Ewell's athletics community is mourning the loss of Don Turner, who passed away on Sunday, 9 March. A dedicated member ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

Surrey company wins award for solar installation at Ewell's Bourne Hall



28 March 2025

Ewell's largest landmark, Bourne Hall, is known for its distinctive modernist architecture and striking glass dome, making it a uniquely challenging site for the integration of renewable technology. A new solar installation, ... [Read More](#)

Education Health News

Surrey Uni Study: long Covid patients proving their illness is real challenges



28 March 2025

People living with Long Covid often feel dismissed, disbelieved and unsupported by their healthcare providers, according to a new study from the University of Surrey. The study, which was published ... [Read More](#)

Business Community Health

Epsom based Toyota raises £1/2m for MND



28 March 2025

Toyota has raised more than £500,000 to support people living with and affected by motor neurone disease (MND). It has also extended its partnership with MND Association for a further ... [Read More](#)

Community Volunteers

Epsom Charity Celebrates Project Milestone with a BBC Radio Takeover



28 March 2025

The Sunnybank Trust is celebrating a major milestone - five years of Sunny Sessions, its inclusive radio show dedicated to amplifying the voices of the learning disability community. Founded during ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances

Woking Council private school loan scandal



28 March 2025

A private school loaned millions of pounds at favourable rates by bankrupt Woking Borough Council has still to pay its overdue debts – with the local authority saying it is ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution

Surrey Councils launch Local Government Reorganisation engagement



28 March 2025

Surrey residents can have their say on the future of local government in the county, in a new survey launched by eight of Surrey's district and borough councils. An initial ... [Read More](#)

Community News

Godstone “Sink-hole” residents to return



28 March 2025

After a long wait, good news may finally be coming to some who were forced to evacuate after a massive sinkhole opened up in a Surrey town. Families living on ... [Read More](#)

Community News

Banstead Dog licensing scheme deemed ‘foul’



28 March 2025

Professional dog walkers say they were told “if you don't like what we're doing, take your dog somewhere else” at a public meeting about a new licensing scheme being introduced ... [Read More](#)

Education Environment News

Surrey leads lateral thinking about vertical farming



28 March 2025

Can vertical farming be the key to improving and safeguarding the United Kingdom's food system? This is the central question behind a new research project led by the University that ... [Read More](#)

Housing News

Will sale of Dorking offices compromise housing plans?



28 March 2025

Dorking's former Aviva building has been put up for sale. The offices in Pixham Lane are being marketed by Savills - with the asking price only available on application. Currently ... [Read More](#)

Community Health

The Hidden Link Between Metabolic Syndrome and Joint Pain



28 March 2025

Many people have heard of metabolic syndrome as a risk factor for heart disease, stroke, and diabetes — but it's now becoming clear that it also takes a serious toll ... [Read More](#)

Baroque to Modern concert by Epsom Chamber Choir

24 April 2025



Epsom & Ewell is fortunate to have many excellent music and drama groups to join, learn and perform with, and for audiences to enjoy old favourites or explore something unfamiliar and perhaps a bit challenging.

This lovely concert by Epsom Chamber Choir gave us contrasting styles from the 17th, 18th, 20th and 21st centuries, all with a meditative quality. Good programme notes were helpful.

In the fantastic acoustic of St. Martin's Church one was immersed in the spacious depths of the sounds; the intensity produced several spine-tingling moments for me.

The choir opened with *I was glad when they said unto me* - not the familiar setting used at King Charles' coronation in 2023 (which is by Parry) but one written by Henry Purcell for the coronation of James II in 1685. It sets off in a joyful dance. The top part floated over the others in a plea for peace and it drew to an exultant finish in a wish for *world without end*.

Purcell's style is perhaps less familiar to us today than Bach's, so it was great to hear three more pieces which showed his skill in dramatic and plangent composition, and the choir's skill in their performance. My notes on *Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts* and *Hear my prayer, O Lord say sublime and understated intense anguish* - sounds which produced more delightful shivers up the spine.

Then to compare them with Bach across four pieces - in these there were stately dance rhythms and delicacy as befitted some of the words. *Fürchte dich nicht* (Do not fear, I am near you), probably written for a funeral (it's a pity we don't know who commissioned the work), seemed to demonstrate all the complexities which Bach could write in a short piece. I hadn't heard this before, but it did not sound an easy sing!

In Arvo Pärt's *The Deer's Cry*, written in 2008, the dynamics, sonority and breath were beautifully controlled in some very exposed writing, then the very long lines of John Tavener's *Funeral Ikos* were effortlessly phrased.

Three short modern pieces followed - John Tavener's *A Hymn to the Mother of God*, James Macmillan's *A Child's Prayer* (dedicated to the 16 children and their teacher who were killed at Dunblane in March 1996), and Eric Whitacre's *Lux Aurumque (Light and Gold*, which was introduced as representing light falling through stained glass) - they were full of space, profound, resonant and uplifting.

In the baroque pieces the choir of just over 30 singers had a light accompaniment on chamber organ and cello. Poppy Walshaw, the cellist, also played three movements from the Bach cello suites. This was more music to get lost inside, the two dances leading us into a celebration of life in the joyous *Der Geist hilft unser Schwachheit auf (The spirit comes to help our weakness)* to conclude a most enjoyable evening.

Upcoming Events

The choir is holding a **Come & Sing! Haydn's *The Creation* on Saturday 10th May, 1.30-5pm**, at **St. Martin's Junior School, Ashley Road KT18 7AD** (**£10, students £5, under 18s free** - includes music hire and light refreshments).

Their next concert, '**The Food of Love**', is a choral tapestry ranging from 16th-century fun, through *West Side Story*, *I Got Rhythm* and *Summertime*, to Billy Joel - **Saturday 28th June, 7.30pm, St. Martin's Church, Epsom KT17 4PX.**

Anita Littler

Notice regarding RAWLINSON & HUNTER LIFE & ASSURANCE PENSION FUND

24 April 2025

NOTICE UNDER SECTION 27 TRUSTEE ACT 1925

To members and others claiming a right to benefits under the Rawlinson & Hunter Life & Assurance Pension Fund (the Scheme).

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 27 of the Trustee Act 1925 that the Trustees of the Scheme have commenced the process of winding-up the Scheme (commenced wind up on 1 April 2025).

The Trustees wish to trace anyone, including former employees (whether full-time or part-time) of Rawlinson & Hunter LLP ("the Firm") or their spouse or dependant who believe that they have a claim against the Scheme or an entitlement or interest in the Scheme and have not heard from the Trustees recently.

If you think that you have a claim, entitlement or interest in the Scheme please write with full details of your claim, interest or entitlement including your full name, address, National Insurance Number, date of birth, dates of employment with either of the Companies and any relevant papers to:

The Trustees of the Rawlinson & Hunter Life & Assurance Pension Fund

c/o Claire Petzer

Cartwright Benefit Consultants Limited

Marlborough House

Victoria Road South Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1LN

Email: claire.petzer@cartwright.co.uk

All claims must be made by 1 June 2025 so they may be considered by the Trustees before the Scheme is wound up.

After that date, the Trustees will commence the distribution of the Scheme's assets process, as part of the winding-up of the Scheme, to provide benefits for its members and beneficiaries, having regard only to the claims, entitlements and interests of which they have prior notice. The Trustees will not be liable to or in respect of any person whose claim, entitlement or interest have not been notified.

Any individuals who have already been contacted by the Trustees about the matters above should not respond to this notice as the Trustees already have details of their claims and entitlements.

For and on behalf of the Trustees of the Rawlinson & Hunter Life & Assurance Pension Fund 1 April 2025

Surrey company wins award for solar installation at Ewell's Bourne Hall

24 April 2025



Ewell's largest landmark, **Bourne Hall**, is known for its distinctive modernist architecture and striking glass dome, making it a uniquely challenging site for the integration of renewable technology. A new solar installation, commissioned by **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** to reduce carbon emissions and lower energy costs, has since earned **Titan Eco** the **Small Scale Project (<£250k) Award** at the **London Energy Efficiency Regional Awards 2025**.

Cllr **Liz Frost** (RA Woodocote and Langley), Chair of the Council's Environment Committee, described it as:

"Part of a series of works that will make this picturesque and historical landmark more sustainable for future generations."

Key outcomes:

- ~45,000 kWh generated annually
- Estimated £15,000 yearly savings
- Over 9 tonnes of CO₂ saved each year

Surrey-based **Titan Eco** delivered the installation in collaboration with **WC Evans & Sons Ltd**, who designed and installed the bespoke steel framework supporting **116 DMEGC all-black bifacial solar panels**. As Titan Eco's preferred supplier, **DMEGC** is known for the consistent quality of its panels and its transparent, responsibly sourced supply chain - aligning with Titan Eco's commitment to ethical procurement.

Sam Tilley, Managing Director of Titan Eco, said:

"Bourne Hall is a great example of how solar can be integrated into a historic site without compromising its character... Knowing the system is in place and making a real difference is particularly meaningful."

Titan Eco has also delivered solar installations at several other notable community sites, including the **Rainbow Leisure Centre**, **Epsom Playhouse**, **St Giles & St George's Church**, and **Ashted Peace Memorial Hall** - demonstrating an ongoing commitment to supporting public and community buildings on their journey to net zero.

Tita Eco

Related report:

Epsom and Ewell's solar powered spaceship

Epsom based Toyota raises £1/2m for MND

24 April 2025



Toyota has raised more than £500,000 to support people living with and affected by motor neurone disease (MND). It has also extended its partnership with MND Association for a further two years, into 2027.

Toyota joined forces with MND Association in 2021. The charity was chosen by the company's staff in memory of a much-loved colleague, Rachel Rollason, who suffered from MND, a terminal neurological condition that affects up to 5,000 people in the UK at any one time.

Since then, colleagues from Toyota (GB), Toyota Financial Services, Toyota Insurance Services and KINTO UK, have pushed themselves to the limits in a variety of fund-raising activities including taking part in marathons, a cycling challenge from Portsmouth to Newcastle, a Tough Mudder and a 100km walk along the River Thames which raised more than £120,000 in just two days.

Tanya Curry, MND Association's Chief Executive, said: "We are delighted that Toyota has chosen to extend its partnership with us. We are so grateful for everything they have done to support our work over the past four years, whether that's by volunteering, training to take part in an event, or fundraising. Thanks to Toyota, we have been able to provide support grants for life-changing wheelchair adaptations, while pushing forward with ground-breaking research into potential new treatments for this terrible disease. Over the next two years, the strong partnership between our organisations will continue to grow and allow us to accelerate progress in the fight against MND."

Scott Thompson, Toyota (GB) President and Managing Director, said: "I'd like to thank our staff for their efforts in helping us reach our fundraising target of £500,000. We already have plans for further fundraising, for example next month four senior team members: Jason Milton, Rob McKendrick, Carla Henson and Dariusz Mikolajczak, will take part in the London Marathon."

For more information, or to donate, visit <https://donate.giveasyoulive.com/campaign/toyota-london-marathon>

For more information about MND Association please visit www.mndassociation.org

Toyota GB

Image: From L to R: Charlotte Taylor, Senior Corporate Partnerships Executive, MND Association, Pete Collins, Senior Corporate Partnerships Development Executive, MND Association, Kish Laungani, Specialist Sustainability Programmes, Toyota GB, Isla Thomson, Assistant, CSR, Sustainability and ESG, Toyota GB and Rosemary Parkin, Assistant Press and PR, Toyota GB

Epsom Charity Celebrates Project Milestone with a BBC Radio Takeover

24 April 2025



The Sunnybank Trust is celebrating a major milestone - five years of **Sunny Sessions**, its inclusive radio show dedicated to amplifying the voices of the learning disability community.

Founded during the lockdown by CEO **Dorothy Watson** and Futures Manager **Claire Dawson**, the show began with the goal of keeping the community connected during a difficult and isolating time. *Sunny Sessions* aimed to provide comfort, connection, and positivity through buzzing music, exercise segments, and relevant news updates.

Dorothy Watson, CEO of The Sunnybank Trust, said:

"We are proud to be celebrating five years of Sunny Sessions. What started as a way to connect people has become a vibrant platform run by and for the learning disability community. Congratulations to Jon Andrews, our dedicated producer, and many thanks to Surrey Hills Community Radio for hosting our show."

To mark this milestone, The Sunnybank Trust is pleased to announce that the **BBC Breakfast Show** will host the anniversary celebration on **28 March 2025**, between **7 - 9 am** on **BBC Radio Surrey & Sussex**.

As part of the celebration, the show will feature an interview between **Emma Blackmore**, a Sunnybank reporter based in Bristol, and the consultants from **Understand Us**, a consultancy founded by The Sunnybank Trust in 2019.

Understand Us is a learning disability-led consultancy based in Epsom, offering services such as training, workshops, and audits to help businesses become more accessible to people with learning disabilities. For more information, visit understandus.co.uk.

During the interview, the consultants will share insights into their roles, discuss how businesses can benefit from Understand Us, and reflect on their favourite projects.

James Cannon, BBC Producer, said:

"We are incredibly proud of the journey Sunny Sessions has taken over the past five years. This anniversary and the feature on BBC Breakfast provide an opportunity to share the voices and stories of the individuals who have been part of the show's success. Our mission has always been to amplify these voices and promote inclusion, and we are excited to take this next step in reaching an even wider audience."

Today, *Sunny Sessions* is presented by **Jon Andrews**, who brings his passion and energy to the show as it continues to grow. The programme has expanded to cover a wide variety of topics, providing a platform for people to share their stories, engage in meaningful discussions, and raise awareness about issues that matter to them.

Jon Andrews said:

"I'm incredibly proud of what we have achieved with the radio show and excited to see where the next five years will take us."

The Sunnybank Trust

Photo: **Jon Andrews from The Sunnybank Trust**, and **James Fieldus, a Sunnybank Reporter**. Photo by The Sunnybank Trust.

27th March 2025

24 April 2025

Editorial News

Keep Epsom and Ewell Times alive - donate now



26 March 2025

Many many thanks to those readers who have responded to our appeal for a small donation to keep our service going. Some of you have been very generous and we ... [Read More](#)

Arts Council Culture

Surrey Arts Gala went live in Guildford



25 March 2025

Surrey Arts held its latest Gala concert on Saturday, 15 March, at G Live in Guildford, showcasing the incredible talent of over 300 young musicians from 15 different ensembles. The ... [Read More](#)

Council Sports

Anyone for free Summer tennis in Epsom and Ewell?



25 March 2025

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will provide free morning tennis sessions in all council-owned tennis courts across the

borough this summer, between 22 July and 29 August 2025. The decision, ... [Read More](#)

Council Environment

Surrey County new land management framework



25 March 2025

Surrey County Council has launched a new Land Management Framework, setting out best practice guidelines for managing its own land as well as striving to aspire other landowners and stakeholders ... [Read More](#)

Rugby Sports

Epsom break Weybridge Reeds



24 March 2025

Reeds Weybridge 28 Sutton & Epsom RFC 33. Saturday 22nd March. The denouement of the campaign is rather lacking in a crescendo this season. This was the penultimate Saturday and ... [Read More](#)

Council News

Local Epsom LibDem leader leaves her Party



21 March 2025

An Epsom councillor who has been a leading Liberal Democrat in the area for over 20 years has defected to become an independent member. After several changes, including upcoming local ... [Read More](#)

News Transport

Guidance to consumers impacted by Heathrow Airport incident



21 March 2025

Selina Chadha, Group Director for Consumers at the UK Civil Aviation Authority, said: "Passengers are advised not to travel to Heathrow at this time and should contact their airlines for ... [Read More](#)

Environment News Transport

Expanding London airports “not an environmental trade off” - Minister claims



21 March 2025

Expanding Heathrow and Gatwick is “crucial” for this government after years of people sticking “their heads in the sand” over plans for new runways at south east airports, the Secretary ... [Read More](#)

Business Westminster

Drowning in Debt: Epsom MP Demands Thames Water Takeover

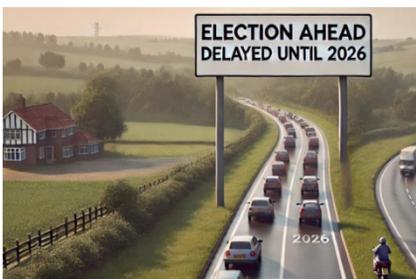


21 March 2025

Thames Water should be put into “special administration” rather than given a £3billion bailout, Epsom and Ewell’s MP said after the utility company won a major court battle to stave ... [Read More](#)

Council Elections

Parliament motion to reinstate Surrey County May elections



20 March 2025

Surrey elections could still go ahead if a “fatal motion” (*see below) to overturn the decision to cancel the May 2025 ballot wins out. This year’s local elections were postponed ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution Finances

Surrey’s BIG debt question in local government reorganisation



20 March 2025

Plans for what Surrey could look like in local government reorganisation have been agreed but questions remain over looming debt. Councillors demanded to know how debt would be managed before the ... [Read More](#)

Council Planning

Epsom & Ewell's Local Plan under the Green microscope



19 March 2025

Epsom Green Belt Group Lodges Formal Complaint Against Borough Council Over Local Plan Submission The Epsom Green Belt Group (EGBG) has submitted a formal complaint to Epsom and Ewell Borough ... [Read More](#)

Council Finances

Surrey ratches up record fines for education failures



19 March 2025

Surrey County Council is on pace to be hit with more than £1 million in fines and redress payments due to its repeated failures within its education service over the ... [Read More](#)

Council Council constitution

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has no choice but to vote for its own demise



19 March 2025

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Divided Over Local Government Reorganisation An extraordinary meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council was held on 18th March 2025, where councillors engaged in an ... [Read More](#)

Football Sports

A comedy of errors - but it wasn't funny as Epsom & Ewell FC lose again



19 March 2025

Tadley Calleva 5-2 Epsom and Ewell FC. Combined Counties League - Premier Division South. Saturday 15th March. "We are right in the s**t now" stated our Manager Warren Burton after ... [Read More](#)

Keep Epsom and Ewell Times alive - donate now

24 April 2025



Many many thanks to those readers who have responded to our appeal for a small donation to keep our service going. Some of you have been very generous and we thank you. We are very grateful but need a higher proportion of our readers to help. We are seeking a very modest £5 annual donation to balance the books.

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