Residents' complaints about anti-protester measures ahead of Derby

Epsom Derby organisers faced an "awful lot of complaints" from residents as they put up fencing and closed footpaths to minimise disruption caused by Animal Rising protesters. The activists had made clear before the event they planned to disrupt this year's Derby, and one did make it to the track.

The Jockey Club, which owns **Epsom racecourse** among others, applied for an injunction ahead of the event on Saturday, June 3

It also asked a special meeting of the **Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators**, held behind closed doors just days before the event, for permission to put up 4,000 metres of fencing across the Downs and suspend footpaths.

Simon Durrant, representing the Jockey Club at a meeting of the Conservators held on Monday (June 19), spoke of his "disappointment" at the fencing having to go up and that organisers were "constantly fearing the worst". But he said due to the "unique" nature of the Epsom Downs, organisers quickly realised "it wasn't about avoidance it was about how we were going to react to it".

Mr Durrant set out the challenges ahead of this year's event and addressed "frustrations" residents may have had. Adding that he knew there would be councillors at the meeting who had heard from residents about their "frustrations and disappointment" he called it a "different and difficult" event this year.

He said: "It was made even more difficult because, for obvious reasons, we didn't want to communicate why we were putting fencing up, why we were suspending the footpaths. We didn't want to give the protesters too much information before that Saturday morning. We've had comments in from residents as well."

He told the meeting that the Jockey Club had seen what the protesters were capable of when they disrupted the Grand National at Aintree in April. He said there were three types of protesters, the "really pleasant" peaceful protesters outside the grounds, those "intent on causing a scene in and around the racecourse" and then those who were trying to gain access to the racetrack.

Councillor **Bernice Froud** (Residents' Association, Woodcote and Langley Vale) thanked Mr Durrant for the explanation of the security issues. She said: "I did have an awful lot of complaints where I think people just didn't quite understand what was happening. I fully understand that none of us in this room that knew about it could really publicise that. So I think it's really helpful that you've actually explained in detail what the reasoning was, and I hope that goes some way to actually reassuring the residents."

At the meeting it was also confirmed that no working royals attended the Derby, and that as the late Queen Elizabeth II used to attend in a private capacity, it was not something that was "naturally be passed along" through the family.

Mr Durrant pointed to other complications across the weekend, including train strikes, and the FA Cup final between Manchester United and Manchester City that was played at Wembley on the same day.

He told the meeting: "Two Manchester clubs, playing in London. It was great for the Manchester United fans because most of them live in London."

With an event that he said gets "better and better every year", Mr Durrant said of the Derby weekend: "As ever, in general, a fantastic, iconic event that puts Epsom on the map again."

 $Image: Preparations \ for \ the \ Queen \ 's \ Jubilee \ celebrations \ underway \ on \ the \ Hill \ seen \ from \ the \ Epsom \ Downs \ Race course. \ Credit: \ LDR \ Emily \ Coady-Stemp \ Preparations \ for \ the \ Preparations \ for$

Epsom less flat after more flats approved

Two new blocks of flats will be built next to **Epsom Railway Station** after planners gave the go-ahead.

Planning applications for 16 new homes on the corner of East Street and Kiln Lane and for 20 flats where West Street and Station Approach meet were approved by councillors on Thursday (June 8).

With just two affordable homes over the two developments, both will be subject to a review before completion, to determine if the schemes could provide more than are currently proposed.

Councillors at the **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** planning committee meeting raised concerns about the "dreadful design" and "ruined" entrances to the town regarding the West Street development. But an attempt to refuse the application failed, when a motion put forward by Councillor **Neil Dallen** (Residents' Association, Town) was lost and the application was approved with six votes in favour and three against.

The development of 20 homes, over five and six storeys, is planned for the former corn and coal merchants which was previously the home of Gillespies Bakery.

The 1905 building will be demolished for a development that was put forward by the developer as a sustainable location for homes that would benefit businesses in the town centre as well as creating jobs during construction.

Councillor **Bernie Muir** (Conservative, Horton Ward), who has spoken out about previous plans for the site, said the site was within the town centre conservation area and within view of multiple listed buildings. She said she wasn't against something going on the site but worried the conservation area was "meaningless" with no reference to the surrounding buildings in the plans.

Had the designs had "some nod" to the look of that part of the town, Cllr Muir said she would be saying something different. She added: "If we don't embrace our conservation areas and what that actually means, then we're just another urban sprawl. And if we want to be another destination high street, this is the beginning of it. This is the one entrance to the town that hasn't been ruined so far, and that matters to the economic life of the town."

She and other councillors recognised the need for more housing in the borough, with the council in March having put a pause on the process to develop its plan for homes in the area.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge** (Residents' Association, Ewell Village Ward) pointed out that developers had responded to comments and designed a smaller building than plans that had been previously refused on the site. He said you "couldn't get more sustainable" than a block of flats built next door to the train station and within walking distance of the town centre.

The East Street application, like the one on West Street, had also had previous applications refused and been amended before being approved at Thursday's meeting.

The development of 16 flats, none of which will be affordable because the scheme would otherwise be deemed non-viable, will be allowed to go ahead after changes to previous plans.

Government inspectors had dismissed an appeal on a previous application because of concerns about pedestrians crossing the access road to the block, off Kiln Lane towards Sainsbury's.

But after four year's work on the proposal, which now includes pitched roofs and is of a lower height, plans had been changed and a new footpath had been added to give direct access to the site, avoiding blind corners that had been a concern.

With 18 parking spaces, a suggested condition put forward by Councillor **Jan Mason** (Residents' Association, Ruxley Ward) was agreed by the committee, to allocate the spaces per flat. Cllr Mason said she wanted to avoid "fisticuffs" as there were at similar developments in her area when residents did not have allocated spaces.

She questioned the "viability" claims of developers, saying houses in Epsom sold "at a premium", while Cllr **Kate Chin** (Labour, Court) called for a briefing for councillors on affordable housing and what the council could do to ensure more was built.

The scheme of eight one-bed, five two-bed and three three-bed flats was unanimously approved by the committee.

With a decision yet to be made on plans to turn the former Epsom police station into a 96-bed care home, which was due to come to a cancelled committee meeting in April, the committee's next meeting is due to be on July 20.

Image: Before and after - West Street.

Related reports:

West Street developers climbing down enough?

Two Epsom brownfield developments?

Anonymity for Surrey policeman

A serving **Surrey Police officer** accused of a "series of acts of harassment" against three female officers will not be named by the force throughout his gross misconduct hearing. A five-day hearing will take place at the force's Guildford headquarters, but the chair of proceedings will not disclose the name of the serving officer for his welfare.

[Image is illustration only - it is not the officer in question.]

The BBC's LDRS (Epsom and Ewell Times' news partner - Local Democracy Reporting Service) asked the legally qualified chair, **Eileen Herlihy**, why the officer was not being named, particularly in light of nationwide public concerns about misogyny across multiple police forces, in the wake of Sarah Everard's murder, the actions of David Carrick and more.

Sarah Everard was murdered by serving Metropolitan Police Officer Wayne Couzens in 2021, when he kidnapped her from the streets of south London, having identified himself as a police officer. He was jailed for life after pleading guilty to her murder. Carrick pleaded guilty to 85 serious offences including 48 rapes over a 17-year period as a Met Police Officer.

But despite the public interest in identifying the Surrey officer accused of harassment, the chair said not naming him "outweighed the public interest in identifying the officer". The LDRS put to Ms Herlihy that the officer should be named, and asked for the documents relating to the decision to keep his name out of proceedings.

Ms Herlihy said she had weighed up guidance from the Home Office and from police conduct regulations, which said there may be circumstances in which an officer should not be named. Stating that the Home Office Guidance, police conduct regulations and case law all identified that the "default position is one of open justice", Ms Herlihy said the presumption was that the hearing "must be held in public open to both the public and media to attend".

She would not provide the evidence on which she based her decision to keep Officer X anonymous, including a written statement and medical evidence from him, and written submissions on behalf of the police force.

Ms Herlihy said she could not provide the documents because they contained "sensitive and confidential information relating to Officer X's medical condition".

What's more, not only does Ms Herlihy's response mean that the LDRS cannot name the officer, we also cannot detail the reasons the name cannot be revealed. The LDRS put it to the chair that a police officer should not be given a greater standard of anonymity than would be given to a member of the public, and that in order to do this there should be significant evidence to justify the departure from the open justice principle.

She said looking at the documents provided, it was "necessary and proportionate, having weighed up the need for open justice and transparency as against the officer's welfare, to anonymise the officer".

The hearing, due to take place between June 12 and 16, will hear allegations that the officer, "carried out a series of acts of harassment against three female police officers".

If proven, the allegations could amount to gross misconduct because they would be a breach of the authority, respect and courtesy and equality and diversity standards of the Police's Standards of Professional Behaviour, according to the Surrey Police site.

A Surrey Police spokesperson says: "We expect the highest personal and professional standards of our officers and any allegations of behaviour which does not meet these standards are rigorously investigated in accordance with Police Conduct Regulations and procedures, set nationally by the Government.

"For cases of gross misconduct, these are chaired by a Legally Qualified Chair (LQC) appointed by the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. "LQCs are selected from a list of independent, legally qualified persons to conduct police misconduct hearings, and are governed by Police Conduct Regulations. "It is their responsibility alone to determine whether a hearing is held in public or in private, and whether any participant should be anonymised.

"In the case of Officer X, legal representations in relation to anonymity were made to the LQC before the hearing and this was granted. Where an LQC directs that anonymity is granted, Surrey Police must abide by this decision and therefore, as per regulations, we are unable to confirm details relating to the individuals involved without the explicit direction of the LQC."

The hearing will take place at Surrey Police's Mount Browne headquarters from 10am from Monday 12 to Friday 16 June.

Birds dropping trees?

The fate of trees which a **Surrey golf club** wanted to cut down because of bird poo falling on its clubhouse patio is still unclear. The beech trees outside Guildford Golf Club's clubhouse, in Merrow, were scheduled to be cut down in May, before a last-minute tree preservation order (TPO) was put in place. Guildford Borough Council's officers put the TPO in place on Friday (May 12) just days before the trees were due to be felled, on the following Monday.

Residents and councillors had spoken out against the plans to fell the trees, which are within the **Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**, and officers will decide in the next six months if they should be permanently protected.

People can write to the council to give their views on protecting the trees, though the council's former leader made clear this was not a subjective exercise, but one based on the expert opinions of the council's tree officers.

Councillor **Joss Bigmore** (Residents for Guildford and Villages, Merrow) said he thought they were "beautiful" trees, but there had to be expert analysis rather than people saying: "I just like the tree."

He told the LDRS: "They should be assessed. If they're dangerous, then something needs to be done with them. If they're not, then they should be protected because they're stunning trees. But we should let the experts opine as to whether there is any real danger from them or whether they should be protected."

The golf club set out reasons for wanting to fell the trees in a newsletter to members, seen by the LDRS, which outlined "key reasons" for wanting to fell the trees, including regarding insurance and after storms in January 2022 had brought down one tree at the club.

The newsletter also outlined the "unacceptable" problem of bird droppings falling from the trees and landing on patio seating and tables.

Residents have until June 8 to write to the council to outline their views on if the TPO should be made permanent.

Katherine Atkinson, the independent chair of the Board of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), said cutting down the trees "would have a significant negative impact on the local environment and the public's enjoyment of it". She wrote to the borough council regarding the TPO, pointing out the trees' location in the nationally protected AONB and that they provided a "natural screen" for the clubhouse buildings, conserving and enhancing the "scenic beauty of the landscape".

She added: "The trees provide shade for those using the public footpath (especially in the areas with benches) and because they are mature trees they provide important habitat for a wide range of species. The trees stand as a highly visible and highly valued feature within this part of the AONB, from a distance forming a natural green skyline around the clubhouse and contributing to the sweep of landscape up from the bottom of Merrow Downs."

She said the response to the initial plans to fell the trees was "immediate and clear" and that the "amenity value" of the trees to the public was clear.

Councillor **George Potter**, (Lib Dem, Burpham), who sits on the district and the borough council, said the door was "always open" for the golf club to have a discussion about the plans for the trees. He added: "The borough council will make a decision based on the merits of the case, and considering comments made by any and all parties, but public support for making the TPOs permanent would certainly be welcome."

Maggie Mamen lives in Canada, but regularly visits Guildford, and wrote to the council to call for the TPO to be made permanent. She said: "It is one of the major joys of these visits to walk up to Merrow Downs and admire the beautiful beech trees outside the club house in all the seasons. It is appalling that they are under any kind of threat."

A **Guildford Borough Council** spokesperson said: "A Provisional Tree Preservation Order was served on Guildford Golf Club on 11 May 2023. Interested parties have at least 28 days to comment on, object to, or support the Order. The Provisional Order will remain in force for up to six months. During this time, but only after the first 28 days, we will consider the responses and decide whether the order will be confirmed."

Guildford Golf Club was contacted for comment.

Surrey safeguarding slip-up

Surrey authorities publicly named a five-month-old baby who died and his mother in a safeguarding review due to "human error".

The LDRS can exclusively reveal Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership breached the anonymity of three family members by revealing their names, including the baby who died, in a document that was publicly available for nine months.

It outlined the tragic events leading up to the death of baby Acer (not his real name), a twin who was found lifeless in his baby bouncer in January 2021, after social services had been involved with his family for 14 years.

Simon Hart, independent chair of the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership, said the breach was "totally unacceptable" and that the partnership "sincerely apologises to those impacted by this error". He said the family had been informed, and were being supported.

The publicly-available review pointed to "a short-sighted decision", "a lost opportunity" and "a lack of a coordinated approach by professionals" at various points in the family's history. Near the end of the 32-page document, an appendix outlining the terms of reference broke the anonymity of the family and named the mother, the father and the baby.

LDRS found mother's public Facebook profile from safeguarding report. The LDRS alerted Surrey County Council, one of three statutory safeguarding partners along with Surrey Police and NHS Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care Board, to the breach, leading to an urgent review of all other published reports.

The document had a date of August 2022, meaning the family's details could have been in the public domain for as long as nine months by the time the breach was identified.

Mr Hart added an investigation had identified that despite going through a "thorough review process", human error meant identifiable information was missed in the document appendices.

The LDRS was able to find a public Facebook profile appearing to belong to the mother in the family, in which she named her children, shared pictures of the twins and shared posts comparing social workers to snakes.

On alerting the county council to the breach, the LDRS made clear that no article would be published while the report was still in the public domain, in order to protect the identity of the family.

The partnership confirmed no other breaches had been found in published reports, and that staff were working "at pace" to add more steps to the review process for such documents before publication. Mr Hart also confirmed the partnership had referred itself to the Information Commissioner's Office.

'No other identifiable information in published reports'

Mr Hart's full statement to the LDRS said: "On 26 May, we were notified of a data breach within a Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review report. Regrettably, the report – which should have been entirely anonymous – named three individuals in its appendices. This is totally unacceptable and the partnership sincerely apologises to those impacted by this error.

"As soon as we became aware of the data breach, we informed the affected family and will continue to provide them with appropriate support. We have urgently reviewed the SSCP website and can confirm that we have not found any other identifiable information in published reports. We have also referred ourselves to the Information Commissioner's Office as per due process.

"We take this matter extremely seriously and a thorough investigation has identified that, although the document went through a thorough review process, human error resulted in identifiable information being missed in the document appendices. We are working at pace to add additional steps to our review processes to prevent this happening again."

*[Epsom and Ewell's BBC Partner - Local Democracy Reporting Service]

The full background story is HERE Child victim of Co-Vid constraints?

Child victim of Co-Vid constraints?

A five-month-old who died in his baby bouncer could have been part of a "systemic failure" of social services that were there to get the "best outcomes" for the children in his family.

"Baby Acer", a twin who was described as a "a loved and happy child", died in January 2021. His death came after social services had been involved with his family for 14 years, with his siblings having been on three child protection plans and three child in need plans, all under the category of neglect.

A Safeguarding practice review carried out by the Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership into the baby's death said the covid pandemic impacted on his monitoring at home, and set out the history of "dangerous behaviours", substance abuse and social services involvement with the family.

Moira Murray, the lead reviewer, pointed to "a short-sighted decision" in closing the family's case and removing the children from child protection and child in need plans, as well as "a lost opportunity" to look at the safeguarding risks to the unborn twins by not convening a pre-birth assessment for the mother.

What does the review say?

The review said: "Similarly, after their birth, consideration should have been given to convening a pre-discharge meeting in order to consider the risks presented to premature, low-weight babies returning home to parents where chronic neglect of their children had been a consistent feature of their parenting."

Ms Murray said the 14 years of involvement should be seen in the context of "the absence of a multi-agency systemic approach to assessing the impact on the children" of being exposed to "chronic neglect and the consequences of their parents' dangerous behaviours".

She also said it "could be construed" that despite the known risk factors to Acer and his twin, "there was a lack of a coordinated approach by professionals" to address the safeguarding risks presented to the twins' health and wellbeing.

Councillor **Sinead Mooney**, cabinet member for children and families at Surrey County Council, described Acer's death as tragic and said the review highlighted "some areas where safeguarding practice at that time should have been better". She added that the partnership took the safeguarding of children "extremely seriously" and would continue to ensure "all the necessary changes were made and lessons were learned".

According to Ms Murray's review, Acer's mother had woken up on the morning of January 15, 2021 and found him lifeless in his baby bouncer in the living room where she, Acer and his twin sibling were sleeping.

She called an ambulance, and Acer was taken to hospital having suffered a cardiac arrest. Despite attempts to resuscitate him, Acer died aged five months old.

Acer was known as 'Little Man' because he was the smaller twin, and the review described both parents as "deeply distressed at the loss of their child". In his family at the time of Acer's death was his mother, father, twin brother and five-year-old sibling, as well as siblings aged 14 and eight, who had a different father from the mother's previous relationship.

The family had been known to police and social services since 2006, because of domestic abuse against the mother by her then partner, according to the report. Child protection and child in need plans followed, until the mother was arrested in January 2019 for alleged assault and criminal damage, followed by a week when the children were cared for by their respective fathers.

Ms Murray said neither father want to take formal responsibility of caring for the children, despite each having raised concerns about the mother's mental health and substance abuse, and that the children returned to their mother when a number of the charges did not proceed.

'Acer was a loved and happy child'. According to the review: "The tragic death of Acer severely affected his parents and siblings, as well as those professionals who knew him. That it happened at a time of an unprecedented pandemic meant that the period prior to his death was one in which there was less interaction with frontline practitioners than may have normally been the case."

Acer and his twin were born at 32 weeks in August 2020, spent two weeks in a hospital neo-natal unit and then were sent home. Both had tested negative on a toxicology test, with neither showing symptoms of withdrawal, checked because of the mother's history of substance misuse.

The review shows a health visitor allocated to the family made five home visits before Acer's death, and had "stressed the dangers" of sleeping on the sofa in the sitting room with the twins, as well as sleeping in bed with them. It also said that the mother's medication and drug use "was known to impact on her ability to stay awake and alert to the babies' needs".

When the health visitor had raised concerns about co-sleeping and propping a bottle to feed the babies, the mother had said she was "confident in knowing how to care for the twins", given that she had three older children.

But the review also said that the mother had told Ms Murray she was dyslexic and had difficulty reading, and that the mother's "level of understanding of what was being explained to her may appear to be greater than it was in reality". She would sometimes

look to the father for help on what was being said.

Ms Murray's review said of the meeting: "It was when the named nurse for child death reviews explained in simple language that babies can die if they are not laid on their backs in a cot that mother said she now understood how dangerous it was to sleep with the babies on the sofa and in bed, and how she wished she had never placed Acer in the baby bouncing chair."

The mother told the lead reviewer she was "shocked" to have had her children removed from her care after Acer's death, blaming it on "a faulty baby bouncing chair". The review said: "The tragic loss of their baby son was devastatingly apparent when the lead reviewer met the parents.

"That Acer was a loved and happy child was evident from the way mother and father spoke about him and from the many photographs on display." Closing case in March 2020 was 'unwise decision' ut Ms Murray said: "Given that from 2008 onwards until 2021, when Acer died, the children had been on a total of three child protection plans and three child in need plans, all under the category of neglect, it can be said that there was a systemic failure to achieve the best outcomes for the children of this family."

Closing the case in March 2020, when the mother's pregnancy with twins known, was an "unwise decision" according to the review, "given the history of chronic neglect of the children and the dangerous, risktaking behaviours of mother and father".

It went on to say: "If the case had remained open there would have been the opportunity to continue to monitor the children and risk assess mother's behaviour during her pregnancy and after the birth of the twins."

Cllr Mooney said: "The report outlines the need to ensure appropriate pre-birth risk assessments are carried out, although it is noted that steps have already been taken to improve practice in this area.

"The report also highlights the continued need to remind carers about the risks associated with co-sleeping, and stresses the importance of effective multi-agency communication and practice throughout, particularly when assessing the impact on chronically neglected children. The report also recognises the significant impact the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic had on this case, particularly on the delivery of training to practitioners, and steps have since been taken to make training programmes more accessible online.

"As a partnership, we take the safeguarding of children extremely seriously and will continue to ensure all the necessary changes are made and lessons are learned. The Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership has shared the recommendations of this report with all relevant agencies in Surrey."

Politics or personality puzzles Claygate voters

It's a grey day in Claygate but the mood among the Lib Dems who have gathered at a micro pub next to the village station is anything but gloomy.

In a bright yellow jacket she said was a "hand me down" via one of her sons, the party's parliamentary candidate for Esher and Walton reacted to the news that **Dominic Raab** had resigned from the cabinet.

Monica Harding called for Mr Raab to resign as the area's MP, and said residents "deserved better".

Mr Raab said he had set out his position, and appreciated the "hundreds of messages of support" he had received. He added: "My overriding focus now is on delivering for the people of Esher and Walton, with our economic plan and support with energy bills."

In the 2019 general election, Ms Harding took 45 per cent of the vote in Esher and Walton, cutting the Conservative MP's majority from 23,298 in 2017, to 2,743. It is therefore a key seat the Lib Dems have their eye on for the next general election, which must be called before January 2025.

But with local elections taking place in Elmbridge on May 4, could Mr Raab's resignation in the wake of an investigation into bullying also impact on those voters?

The Lib Dem leader, **Ed Davey**, also the MP for neighbouring Kingston and Surbiton, told the LDRS that in parliamentary constituencies across Surrey, including Esher and Walton, Guildford, Woking and Mole Valley, the party was sensing a "real opportunity". He added: "This chaos and indecency in the Conservatives is what's putting off a lot of life-long Tories."

The village of Claygate has around 7,000 people, an average house price of more than £1.1million and three Liberal Democrat councillors. Elmbridge Borough Council, the area's local authority, is run by the Residents Associations' 18 councillors, in coalition with the 13 Lib Dem councillors.

The Conservatives are the second largest party, with 15 councillors, five of which hold seats that are up for election on May 4 when a third of the members are up for election.

Current Lib Dem councillor **Alex Coomes** is up for election, standing against **John Charles Burns** for the Conservatives and Sue Cope for the Labour Party.

One voter told the LDRS Mr Raab's resignation would not impact on how she would vote in the borough council elections.

An investigation into Mr Raab by **Adam Tolley** KC looked at eight formal complaints against the MP from his work in three separate government departments.

In his resignation letter, Mr Raab said all but two of the claims had been dismissed in the report and raised concerns the inquiry would "encourage spurious complaints" against ministers.

Peter Szanto, chairman of Esher & Walton Conservative Association, said: "Dominic has continually worked to support our constituency and all those that live here. He has always been professional, kind, thoughtful and tenacious in his work.I, and the Esher & Walton Conservative Association, fully support him."

Ann Hennings, who said she had met Mr Raab "several times at various functions", had found him to be "very kind" and said she didn't have "a bad thing to say about him". She said she was glad she was not at work anymore, and asked: "What is bullying? Getting somebody's job done, is that bullying? I think anybody who's in charge of anything might be accused of that sometimes." She said that the local Liberal Democrats, who run the council in a coalition with Residents' Association councillors, "seem to get things done" but added that her voting habits were not the same on national and local ballots.

"If you have parents that are a certain party, I think a lot of people tend to be the same, it goes down with families," she said. "My family were staunch Conservatives. I've always voted Conservative but never locally. I've only ever voted liberal."

Another resident said Mr Raab's resignation from his roles as Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary was "good riddance", but said it would not change how she would vote locally.

While the Liberal Democrat leader on Elmbridge Borough Council, and Claygate councillor, Cllr **Bruce McDonald**, said on the doorstep the constituency's MP came up "from time to time" he didn't think Mr Raab was "at the front of their minds". Cllr McDonald said: "I and my colleagues are much more interested in talking about our positive vision for Elmbridge, what we're getting on with doing because, ultimately, that's what people want from us."

But the national picture isn't far from some people's minds on the doorstep. **Lynne Murray** opened her front door to find Ed Davey, Monica Harding and a raft of journalists on her doorstep. She told Mr Davey there was a "very high chance" the Lib Dems may be lucky and get her vote in the future elections.

With issues including the country's economic prosperity, a "holistic, long term" look at the NHS needed and wanting people to feel "hope again" she said she thought that aspiring to "have a great life" was "so far away from so many people at the moment." She added: "I'm looking back at 12 years of Conservative government and I can't think of a single aspect of life in the UK that's been better."

Polls apart - from the norm?

The Epsom Playhouse is listed as one of Surrey's "quirky" polling stations in the report below from the BBC's LDRS (Epsom and Ewell Times' official news partner). A full list of the polling stations for the Borough of Epsom and Ewell Council's upcoming 4th May elections can be FOUND HERE.

When many Surrey voters head out to cast their ballot in local elections on May 4 they will go to the village halls, community centres and schools that are often used as polling stations.

But some will visit more unusual locations, including a pub, a theatre and a former home for "vagrants and casual workers" all being used as polling stations.

Local elections are being held in all 11 districts and boroughs across the county, though not all residents will go to the polls.

Some councils, including Elmbridge, Tandridge and Woking, elect their councillors "by thirds", meaning one third of council seats

are up for election each time.

Others, including Guildford and Epsom and Ewell, hold "all out" elections every four years.

At the Bull Inn, in Warlingham, people voting in Tandridge District Council elections will be able to grab a pint once they are done and drink it in the pub's garden. It is the third time the pub has been used as a polling station, and tea and coffee will be served in the morning with alcohol available from midday.

While voters in Esher, within Dominic Raab's parliamentary ward, will tread the boards of the Esher theatre to cast their vote. A production of City Of Dreams will run at the theatre until April 29, and there is a performance the day after the vote of Cool Britannia Cabaret.

It's not the only theatre to be used as a polling station on May 4, with the **Epsom Playhouse** also being used as a polling station for voters in Epsom and Ewell's Town ward.

Some voters in Guildford will have the opportunity to cast their ballot at the Spike in the borough's Castle ward. The purpose-built home for vagrants and casual workers, which opened in 1906, was built to separate vagrant workers from those within the main workhouse. In 2005, the Charlotteville Jubilee Trust fundraised to rescue the building, after a period of it being used by St Luke's Hospital before its relocation to the Royal Surrey site, and after it was listed as a Grade II building. The Community Centre and Heritage Centre now on the site opened in 2008.

Polling stations on May 4 will be open from 7am until 10pm, and voters should receive a polling card from their district council to let them know which polling station to attend.

It is also the first local elections where voters nationwide will need to show ID in order to be able to vote.

A full list of accepted forms of voter ID is available on the gov.uk website and the deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate is 5pm on Tuesday, April 25.

Related Reports:

Epsom and Ewell Local Elections general

Beginning to line up for local elections

Register to vote deadline for elections

4th May Surrey goes to the polls

Turn up to turn downturn in turnout!

Worrying about voter ID law

No photo - no vote!

Two Epsom brownfield developments?

With local controversies about the draft **Local Plan** eyeing up **Green Belt**, **Epsom and Ewell Borough Council** soon decides on two Town proposals. LDRS reports:

Plans for a care home on the site of the former Epsom police station and ambulance station are set for refusal by councillors. The planned building, a 96-bed care in Church Street in Epsom, would be over three to five storeys, but council officers have raised concern about its "overly-domineering" impact on the surrounding area.

A meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's planning committee on Thursday (April 20) will make a decision on the application.

The 96 bedrooms in the proposed home would provide nursing, residential and dedicated dementia care, and would have en suite wet rooms.

There are 20 listed buildings in the The Church Street Conservation Area, which wraps around the south and west ends of the site. Officers said the scale, form, design and materials of the plans would cause "cause less than substantial harm" to the nearby

listed buildings including Hermitage (Grade II Listed), Ashley Cottages (Grade II Listed) and The Cedars (Grade II* Listed).

A council report into the care home said the building would "represent an overly domineering and incongruous addition that would fail to integrate with the prevailing character and appearance of the area".

Concerns were also raised about the future of trees on the site including a cedar and a lime tree during excavation works for the development.

At the same meeting, councillors should make a decision on a plan for 20 homes in a five- and six-storey development on the corner of West Street and Station Approach in the town.

The plans, which would include just two affordable homes and five parking spaces, received 51 letters of objection raising concerns about the impact on the character of the town, and the loss of the existing building.

Officers have recommended the plans be approved, which would include the demolition of the current 1905 building which was originally a corn and coal merchants.

The redevelopment of the former Gillespie's Bakery building has been objected to by the county council's highways authority, because of the need to reduce the width of the existing pavement and cycle path.

Under a previous application, the highways authority had not objected to plans, but since then a stronger policy had been adopted to improve travel methods for pedestrians and cyclists, leading to the objection.

Despite the five car parking spaces not meeting the council's guidelines for parking, an officers' report said: "The site is in a highly sustainable location with access to a number of public transport modes and the displaced parking can be accommodated in adjacent public car parks and via on street parking."

The two affordable homes in the plans also fall below the council's affordable housing recommendations, but a 40 per cent provision would "substantially affect the overall viability of the scheme", according to council documents.

The meeting will take place on Thursday, April 20 at 7.30pm.

Related reports:

West Street developers climbing down enough?

From custody to caring - new plans for Epsom's old nick.

Full list of candidates for Epsom and Ewell Council

Epsom and Ewell residents will go to the polls on May 4 to elect their councillors for the next four years.

All 35 seats on the council are up for election in Surrey's smallest borough, and elections are taking place at the other ten lower-tier authorities in the county as well.

The election at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council comes just six weeks after members voted for a pause to the plan for homes in the borough in order to re-consider the inclusion of green belt sites such as Horton Farm being used for homes.

The council is currently led by Residents' Association councillors and has been since it was founded in 1938. Residents will elect councillors to 14 wards this year, with a new ward added in Horton.

Below we list all the candidates standing across the borough:

Auriol

Hannah Mireille Jackson Abrahams - Conservative
John Richard Beckett - Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association
Garrick Bigwood - Labour Party
Caleb Michael Philip Heather - Conservative
Julia Karen Lucas - Labour
Oliver Schuster - Liberal Democrat
Darren William Talbot - Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association
Dorothee Katarina Wilbs - Liberal Democrat

Local Elections 4th May 2023 - Times coverage

HUSTINGS:

Wednesday 26th April:

3rd Scout Hall, Epsom Methodist Church, Ashley Road. Epsom, KT18 5AQ

6.15pm Stamford Ward

7.15pm Court Ward

8.15pm College Ward

Tuesday 2nd May at 7pm:

Southfield Park Primary School, Long Grove Rd, Epsom KT19 8TF, one hustings will be held for the new Ward of Horton.

College

Kate Emily Brooks - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Nigel Kenneth Benno Sippel Collin - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Charlotte Mary Day - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Julian Peter Freeman - Liberal Democrat Focus Team

James John Lawrence - Liberal Democrat Focus Team

Helen Lewis - Labour Party

Julie Anne Morris - Liberal Democrat Focus Team

Christopher Charles Muller - Conservative

Tom Peer - Conservative

Michael John Ware - Conservative

Court

Chris Ames - Labour Party

Christine Rosemary Beams - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Kate Chinn - Labour Party

Rob Geleit - Labour Party

David Erwin Lyndsay - Conservative

Geoffrey Christopher Pope - Conservative

Karen Seidel - Liberal Democrat

Sandy Smyth - Conservative

Mary Catherine Sullivan - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

David Michael Triggs - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Cuddington

Caroline Barretto - Labour Party

Dan Brown - Liberal Democrat

Kevin Rhys Davies - Labour Party

Garrett Michael Doran - Conservative

Alex Paul Hawkes Cole - Conservative

Graham Owen Jones - Residents' Association of Cuddington

Phil Neale - Residents' Association of Cuddington

Arun Matyjas Saini - Liberal Democrat

Rajesh Saini - Liberal Democrat

Kim Spickett - Residents' Association of Cuddington

Lynn Walker - Conservative

Ewell Court

Tamas Balog - Liberal Democrat

Tom Chaloner - Conservative

Oliver Nathaniel Clement - Conservative

Dan Edwards - Labour Party

David Walter Gulland - Liberal Democrat

Debbie Monksfield - Labour Party

Peter William O'donovan - Ewell Court Residents' Association

Christopher Robin John Watson - Ewell Court Residents' Association

Ewell Village

Christine Gladys Cleveland - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

andrew Nicholas Cook - Conservative

Sandra Noel Hatfield - Labour Party

Kenneth John Kimber - Liberal Democrat

andrej Kubicek - Liberal Democrat

David Anthony Lee - Green Party

Graham Rapier - Conservative

Clive David Woodbridge - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Horton

Ros Godson - Labour Party

Eber Alan Kington - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Henal Vinod Ladwa - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Philip Mclauchlan - Liberal Democrat

Bernie Muir - Conservative

Kieran Persand - Conservative

Mark Christian Todd - Labour Party

Paul Stephen Vagg - Liberal Democrat

Nonsuch

Jamie Abrahams - Conservative

Janice Baker - Green Party

Stephen William Dixon - Liberal Democrat

Shanice Goldman - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Gaye Hadfield - Labour Party

Christine Anne Howells - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Robert Leach - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Steven Liu - Conservative

Gary Derek Peters - Liberal Democrat

Sharon Marie Stead - Liberal Democrat

Ajay Kumar Uppal - Conservative

Ian Leslie Ward - Labour Party

Ruxlev

Rob Adnitt - Labour Party

Joseph Ojo Alawo - Conservative

Catherine Anne Carver-Hill - Labour Party

Alex Coley - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

David Raymond John Collins - Conservative

David Michael Kidd - Green Party

Jan Mason - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Marian Paula Morrison - Liberal Democrat

Stamford

Andrew Darren Bailey - Green Party

Steve Bridger - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

David Colleton Buxton - Liberal Democrat Focus Team

Richard William Chinn - Labour Party

Alison Kelly - Liberal Democrat Focus Team

Karen Landles - Labour Party

Martin Olney - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Aaron Persand - Conservative

Stephen Pontin - Conservative

Stoneleigh

Rusmat Roland Arthur Ahmed - Liberal Democrat

Charlotte Ann Angus - Conservative

Hannah Charlotte Emily Dalton - Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association

Brian William Fisher - Liberal Democrat

Anthony John Froud - Stoneleigh and Auriol Residents' Association

Sue Hoyle - Labour Party

Tracy Margaret Muller - Conservative Ragu Raymond - Labour Party

Town

Arthur Abdulin - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell Neil andrew Dallen - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Danny Leonard Fullilove - Conservative

John Stuart Gosling - Labour Party

Yvonne Caroline Grunwald - Green Party

Sarah Louise Kenyon - Labour Party

Rachel Sarah King - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Gillian Miles - Liberal Democrat

Jamie Joseph O'sullivan - Conservative

Philip Victor Pavey - Liberal Democrat

Meera Persand - Conservative

Sarah Louise Charlotte Whitworth - Liberal Democrat

West Ewell

Jason George anderson - Labour Party

Patrick Christopher Campion - Conservative

andrew John Casey - Liberal Democrat

Linda Martha Chmiel - Liberal Democrat

Tony Foster - Green Party

Lisa Zahra Haghir - Liberal Democrat

Nafiz Hug - Conservative

Lucie Kimberley Mcintyre - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

O'sullivan Kitty - Conservative

Humphrey Reynolds - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Alan Keith Williamson - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Woodcote and Langley Vale

Abbey Bloom - Labour Party

Liz Frost - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Bernice Froud - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Daniel Charles Martyr - Liberal Democrat

Emily Lucia Cottam Martyr - Liberal Democrat

Steven John Mccormick - Residents' Associations of Epsom and Ewell

Jonathan Neil Parkinson - Green Party

John Michael Payne - Liberal Democrat

Fiona Peer - Conservative

Henry Strausser - Conservative

Emma Charlotte Ware - Conservative

Mike Westbrook - Labour and Co-Operative Party

Related reports:

Beginning to line up for local elections

Register to vote deadline for elections

4th May Surrey goes to the polls

Turn up to turn downturn in turnout!

Worrying about voter ID law

No photo - no vote!