

# Epsom Pantry has a sister in Banstead

10 October 2024



Sat bang in the middle between M&S and Waitrose on Banstead high street, a new community food store has opened to help people struggling to buy affordable groceries in Surrey.

Surrey's second pantry officially opened October 7, stocked with donations and surplus food from supermarkets which would otherwise be thrown away. For just £5 a week, members of the pantry can receive £30-35 worth of food and household items.

"We want shopping to be a dignified experience," said Project Manager Bex. She explained that everyone can access good quality food and members have the choice of what they want to buy, like in any shop.

After a soft launch in mid-September, the pantry already has about 75 members despite no advertising. "There is a really nice buzz when it opens up," Bex said. "People sometimes shop at the same times to meet people every week, or share recipes if buying the same ingredients."

Located on Banstead's high street, Pantry Manager Ashley said it was important for there "not to be any shame associated" with coming to the food store. "Living in Surrey is can be really difficult when you don't have a disposable income."

Although Banstead features low on the level of deprivation in Surrey, Ashley explained that there are pockets of hidden food poverty. "Sometimes where there is obvious need, there is obvious help," Ashley said. Banstead's pantry aims to address this issue in providing support for people who may be missed in areas more affluent.

Epsom Pantry first opened in July 2022, as the cost-of-living crisis was beginning to pinch. The typically leafy market town has been ranked in the top 10% of least deprived areas in the UK. Now, with around 400 members to the pantry, Epsom is now oversubscribed.

Bex, who used to work at Epsom Pantry, said there was a real community feel. "People used to come in at similar times, rely on each other and check-in how people were doing," Bex said.

The mission of the Pantry is to bridge the gap between food banks and commercial grocery stores. Some people may not be eligible for crisis support from Food banks but are still struggling to make ends meet in their weekly shop.

Fresh fruit and veg is free, with high value items like Kellogg's Crunchy Nut and Yorkshire Tea more restricted. Standard cupboard essential like pasta, tinned beans, herbs and biscuits are also on offer.

Customers can sign up to the Pantry and answer a few questions about their financial situation. Then, they will be invited in for an assessment to see if the Pantry is the right support for them or whether they need any other help.

Beyond the food store operations, the pantry is also looking at putting on cooking classes, sewing workshops, energy saving guides to help members save money and develop community.

The initiative is led by a partnership between Raven Housing Trust (RHT), Good Company Surrey, as well as Reigate and Banstead Borough Council. RHT's housing association and the council can point people in the direction of the service who may be eligible for support.

Link: <https://www.yourlocalpantry.co.uk/pantry-listings/banstead-pantry-surrey/>

Food bank locations: <https://epsomewell.foodbank.org.uk/locations/>

Image: Project Manager Bex and Pantry Manager Ashley outside Banstead Pantry. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

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## Surrey sorry for SEND shortcomings

10 October 2024



The leader of Surrey County Council (SCC) has apologised to families who have been ‘failed’ over the provision of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) services.

Parents have previously told the local democracy reporting service (LDRS) that they feel SCC is “blocking the process at every single stage” to get EHCPs and SEND provision. Families say that communication has often been confusing and panic-inducing, including adding new dates for parents to select school places.

Council Leader Tim Oliver said he does not, and will not, “defend the indefensible”, before quickly adding an independent review found good, but inconsistent progress in Surrey’s SEND provision. He also added that the Department of Education (DoE) and Ofsted endorsed the council’s improvement plan.

The Council leader said the local authority should recognise that “other partners need to step up” to deliver an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Cllr Oliver said he “recognises that not all parents agree with the assessments”, but the council cannot get away from the fact that qualified professionals decide the most appropriate support for children.

In a full council meeting on October 8, Cllr Oliver said Surrey was investing £240m in SEND, creating 6,000 specialist school places across the county in mainstream schools and in building new special schools. He said 260 places in specialist schools have also been added for the start of the 2024 new academic year.

“This is far from the first time we have heard things along these lines,” said Cllr George Potter, one of the many council members who responded to the leader’s statement with anecdotes of poor SEND provision in their ward.

Cllr Fiona Davidson, who chairs the council’s children, families, lifelong learning and culture select committee, agreed with the leader that the council is making progress, but “extraordinarily slow progress”. She said this meant the local authority is not addressing quickly enough the needs of parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities.

SCC currently has around 15,000 children with EHCPs compared to about 10,000 in 2017, according to the council leader. Although Mr Oliver said the “huge rise in demand” has made it difficult for the council to manage SEND provision, he accepted there are some “local Surrey issues” such as communication problems.

Cllr Davidson said she “cannot believe” the SCC is still having communication issues with parents that it had two years ago. She added there has been “little improvement in the quality of communication” with parents, impacting the trust and relationship families have with the council.

Recommendations looking at ways SCC could improve its communication with parents found the workforce needs to be bigger to cope with the demand, more personable to parents and easier to access as well as making the EHCP process less complicated. Cllr Jonathan Essex amongst other members appealed for Cllr Oliver to implement the recommendations immediately, with Cllr Oliver responding not all of the suggestions would be pragmatic to do so.

Cllr Oliver appealed to members of the council to “not politicise” the issue of SEND provision. He argued that it is the responsibility of all members, officers, MPs and the government to help the council “deliver the best service” possible.

Image: Council Leader Tim Oliver speaking at full council meeting October 8. (Credit: Surrey County Council live stream)

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[Council pays £3,900 to mother of SEND child](#)

[Surrey County failed SEND boy](#)

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## There’s always Buckland Park for winter swimmers

10 October 2024



Guildford Lido, in Stoke Park, used to be open 12 months a year from 2014, but that ended during the pandemic. This year's summer season ended on September 15.

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Nestled between Dorking and Reigate within the picturesque Surrey Hills, the Surrey Hills Activity Centre's (SHAC) private lagoon at Buckland Park offers a 400m loop and is the perfect setting for your open water swimming and cold water training needs.

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Outdoor swimming enthusiasts have called on Guildford Borough Council (GBC) and operator Freedom Leisure to reinstate all-year-round swimming in the contract when it is renewed in November.

Reaching over 1,600 signatures, a petition has said restoring the lido's 'off-season' (autumn to spring) will promote health, well-being, and athletic achievement throughout the year.

## **“Not a financially viable model”**

Councillors quizzed the Lead for Commercial Services about the lido at GBC Overview and Scrutiny Committee on September 30. Cllr James Walsh, referencing the petition, asked if a viable compromise could be made where winter swimmers can enjoy the pool without a financial loss.

“I don't know how many of those 1,600 people would like to swim in the winter,” said Cllr Catherine Houston, Lead for Commercial Services at GBC. She told the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on September 30, that she went down to the lido a week before it closed and there were only 12 people in the pool. “That is not a financially viable model,” Cllr Houston added.

Run at £140k loss in the summer, the lido is still able to operate because it is paired with the Spectrum centre, according to Cllr Houston. She described it as a 'loss leader' model: where the lido is sold at a loss to attract customers to the Spectrum.

Cllr Houston said the lido is “already not a profitable operation in the summer” but the council chooses to run it because “we all love it”. She added: “It's such a wonderful facility and it provides a really valuable asset to the residents, visitors and beyond.”

Questions were raised about where the money is coming from for the council to invest to keep the pool open. Although there are some super keen winter swimmers, there are not the other leisure swimmers that may spend the whole day in the lido.

Cllr Walsh asked whether letting the pool out to clubs would subsidise the running costs. Officers explained that once the pool is open, the filtration and heating will be on so it is “tough” to see how many clubs and extracurricular sports groups will be needed to offset the costs. GBC would have to pay extra for the staff, heating, energy and catering arrangements.

## **The “grand old lady” needs upkeep**

Around 91 years old, the 50m lido is a “grand old lady” in need of “tender loving care”, according to Cllr Houston. The off-season closure allows operators to have a safe area to operate the annual works without people in the pool.

Six new boilers will be installed this winter, as part of the lido's annual maintenance season. Three pool blankets, with an accompanying structure, will also be fitted on the lido to maintain the water's temperature.

GBC invested £2.1m into refurbishing the lido last year, including new changing rooms, improved drainage systems, environmental technologies to reduce energy and water usage, and updated poolside catering. Freedom Leisure also put in £1m towards the upgrade.

## **Contractual obligations**

The contract renewal in November creates a new opportunity for the operator and the council to see if a new out of season activity can be put on offer.

Cllr Houston speculated Freedom Leisure might be asked to extend its opening hours by Friends of Guildford Lido. But the operator would have to look at a financial model to see if it is worth it without the extra cash input.

Operators of the lido are contracted to keep it open for 20 weeks, so the council cannot force it to stay open unless there

is a big investment. "We're in financially challenging times so we have to make tough decisions," the Lead for Commercial Services said.

**NOTE: Friends of Guildford Lido and the petitioners were contacted for comment. Neither have got back in touch.**

Image courtesy SHAC

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## More or less Surrey Police challenge to Commissioner

10 October 2024



Staffing cuts at Surrey Police could be in the pipeline as the force attempts to fill a potential £23.4 million financial hole.

Surrey Police has to make the savings in the next four years and both government-agreed pay increases for police officers and staff and inflation have added to the difficult financial position.

Recognising the financial pressures on forces, the government has awarded a special grant of £175m in 2024/25 to fund the 4.75% officer pay award. Out of money set aside to cover the pay increases, Surrey has been awarded just £2.1m to cover the costs.

As Surrey gets a smaller slice of government funding, calculated by a formula, there is less money to go around. The police allocation formula (PAF) is worked out through various data sources, including population density and the relative need for policing in areas. The nature of the formula grant system means the annual money allocated to Surrey covers just 45% of the total budget whereas other areas such as Northumbria get 80%.

In a Police and Crime Panel meeting on September 26, Surrey Police's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Kelvin Menon, said "it is too early to say" exactly the savings that will need to be made and where.

The CFO said it is likely the government's funding will only cover pay increases for Surrey's police officers so the force will have to bridge the £2.4m gap to cover the costs of police staff itself. Police staff may be cut as the force has to keep a base number of 2,253 police officers in place.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Richard Wilson (Bagshot and North Windlesham/ Liberal Democrat) said: "Due to the government's penalty regime in place to ensure officer numbers are maintained, any reduction can only come from police staff. This means the people helping front-line officers in investigations and forensics."

The CFO told the panel that work was also being done into making savings by changing shift patterns, reducing overtime and forensics, looking at the benefits of upgrading administrative and data systems, potentially reducing vehicle numbers and a detailed budget review by area.

Modelling different scenarios, the CFO said Surrey Police might have to make up to £27.6m gap as a worst-case scenario, or £21.5m on an optimistic basis. Mr Menon added: "The Chief and the PCC are both committed to try and minimise any impact on residents."

If the savings cannot be reduced by the time the budget is set in February 2025, the CFO said Surrey Police will have to use some of its reserves.

### Uncertain future for officer numbers

In a national drive to increase police officers, the previous government set Surrey Police an 'uplift' target of 2,253 officers and awarded £48k for every officer recruited above the baseline. Although the force recruited an additional 22 officers it now remains uncertain whether the £48k bonus will be received every year, accounting for the extra officers.

Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend, said: "If [the bonus] ceases to be the case then officer numbers will have to be reduced." She added the reduction would happen through "natural wastage", meaning officers leaving the force for a new job or change in career.

Surrey currently loses an average of 17 officers a month, creating overall a 10% vacancy in the force.

A gloomy atmosphere took over the meeting as the PCC repeated there was a lot of "uncertainty" in the new government's policy going forward so the force is unable to forecast officer numbers beyond 24/25. She said that constables have been told not to expect any more funding.

Cllr Wilson criticised Mrs Townsend during the meeting, stating the PCC ballot paper for her re-election had the description. More police, safer streets'. He asked: "Shouldn't voters take that as a commitment that the number of officers is going to increase?"

Mrs Townsend said the number of officers has increased and is still increasing, and argued it was for the Chief Constable to decide where officers and staff are best deployed. She added: Both the Chief Constable and I have both made commitments to ensure that we have more officers out and about on the streets.”

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## Surrey Coroner’s bed safety concerns

10 October 2024



A frail, elderly man “cried for help for over an hour” before tragically dying after getting stuck in a gap between his care home bed extension, a Surrey coroner has found.

**Paul Batchelor** was found dead at The Red House, **Ashtead**, on 27 June 2023, after a mattress extension fell through his bed’s extension frame.

Assistant Coroner, **Susan Ridge**, raised concerns that Mr Bachelor’s “numerous cries for help” were not responded to and there is a “lack of awareness” about bed extensions which could put other lives at risk.

A spokesperson for the care home said the circumstances around Mr Batchelor’s death was “deeply distressing” and they “fully accept and respect” the assistant coroner’s findings.

Ms Ridge found that despite one carer hearing Mr Batchelor’s cries for help, she “did not open the door or go into his room as it was said she was frightened of him”. Even as he called out for help for over an hour, between 10:05pm-11:15pm, much of the staff were doing their night-time routine.

Mr Batchelor, who was under respite care, was put into bed around 9pm by care home staff. Later that night he had manoeuvred himself to the foot of the bed and was lying on the mattress extension.

But because there was no deck in place supporting the extension, Mr Batchelor fell through the bed extension frame and became wedged in the gap.

Ms Ridge also addressed her report to the governmental Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) regarding a possible “lack of awareness” of the support needed for a mattress extension or bolster on extended beds.

She said: “Without adequate support there is a risk of death in that the mattress extension can fall through the bed frame creating a sufficient gap for a person to become wedged or stuck.”

A Red House spokesperson said: “We strive to provide the highest level of personal care and support to all our residents.” They added the company had addressed the concerns raised with equipment and staff protocols as a “matter of priority”.

The member of staff no longer works for the company, the spokesperson said, stating the care home has “ensured that the wider team understands how best to manage challenging or stressful situations”. They added: “We have underlined the importance of seeking support from others to sustain responsive and appropriate care, which is our highest priority.”

Dr Danielle Middleton, Deputy Director in Benefit/Risk Evaluation at MHRA, said she is reviewing the report carefully. The government agency has 56 days to respond to the coroner’s concerns.

Dr Middleton said the MHRA issued a National Patient Safety Alert, after reports of “adverse incidents” involving bed rails, medical beds, trolleys, bed rails, bed grab handles and lateral turning devices, warning of the risk of entrapment.”

The Alert requires staff receive device training suitable to their roles. Organisations are also required to have an up-to-date medical device management system in place, with regular servicing and maintenance of medical devices in line with the manufacturer’s instructions.

She added: “It also requires regular risk assessments for patients using bed rails or handles, including entrapment risks.”

The prevention of future deaths report, issued on September 13, has also been sent to the interim chief executive of the Care Quality Commission and chairman of The Red House (Ashtead) Limited.

The Red House Care Home, Ashtead. (Credit: Google Street View)

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## Surrey child misses two years of education

10 October 2024



A child missed out on two years of education due to shortages in SEND school places. Surrey County Council (SCC) has been forced to pay a mum almost £11,000 after the social ombudsman ruled there had been “excessive delay” in providing full-time suitable academic tuition.

Even as the decision was issued on 24 June, the child – who is also disabled – was still without a specialist educational placement. The local authority was found to have made a “service failure” as the child has received no academic tuition since Autumn 2022. SCC said they accept the ombudsman’s findings and sincerely apologise for any distress caused.

The ombudsman’s damning statement said: “As well as the failure to provide a school place and special educational provision, the Council failed to provide the usual education that all children expect to receive.” The report added: “The fault has caused significant injustice to the whole family and loss of education to the child.”

The mum, named Ms X in the report, complained the child’s special educational needs and disability (SEND) requirements were not being met at school. Banned from school in autumn 2022 due to their behaviour, the child received 1.5 days of alternative provision for months. The education was centred on holistic development like building confidence and creativity rather than formal academic education, according to the report.

Ms X complained to the Council in Spring 2023 that her child was not receiving any academic tuition during this period. SCC responded in Summer 2023 that a full time school place was being funded but the Council recognised Ms X’s child was not attending. SCC recognised its education offer was inadequate and agreed to increase it, offering £2400 payment to acknowledge the loss of education from Autumn 2022 to June 2023.

Despite recognising the provision was unsuitable, the ombudsman said the council had “allowed the same fault and injustice to continue from June 2023 to date”. The ombudsman judged it should not have been necessary for Ms X to come to the Ombudsman as the council “should have fixed the problems upstream”.

Legal duty remained with the council so SCC should not have relied on sourcing alternative education to the specialist school. According to the report, SCC “failed” to provide the child with special education support during their time out of school. SCC was also found wanting in showing how it tried to eliminate discrimination and advance opportunities to support the disabled child.

SCC argued that the school staff knew Ms X’s child best, but accepted it should have monitored this more closely and the provision has a ‘lack of academic focus’. SCC will pay £8,800 to Ms X, on behalf of her child, to acknowledge the impact of the lost education, calculated at £1600 per term for 5.5 terms. If SCC’s previous compensation offer of £2,400 has been paid this will be deducted.

In Autumn 2022, SCC held an annual review of the child’s educational, health and care plan (EHCP) in autumn 2022. The final review was completed in Autumn 2023, a whole year after the annual review meeting. The legal timeline for the plan to be completed is 12 weeks, yet SCC delivered the plan in 12 months. The ombudsman found the delay “excessive” and a service failure from SCC. Ms X initially received £300 to compensate for the EHCP delay in 2023, and was granted a further £200 by the ombudsman.

Despite having a year to find a specialist school place, SCC did not name a school in its new EHCP and only listed the type of school as ‘specialist’. SCC was criticised for an “excessive delay” and “service failure” in failing its legal duty to find a school placement, as only five schools were contacted in fifteen months. According to the report, there were long gaps when no consultations were sent.

SCC tried to get a specialist school placement for the next academic year (2024/25), consulting four schools last winter and during spring 2024. But Ms X said there was “no expectation” for her child to return to school for the 2024 summer term. During this time the child was still only receiving 1.5hrs of education a week.

The ombudsman said it would “expect councils to make a sustained effort to find a place for a child”, expanding its search to a wider area and independent schools if no place could be found. Although it was appreciated the number of specialist places was a national problem, the ombudsman said SCC had failed in its service.

Ms X told the ombudsman that she tries to teach her child with academic workbooks, but she does not feel equipped to do so, and that sometimes it is difficult to get her child to cooperate. Due to the time her child has now been out of school and becoming “socially isolated”, the mum said there would need to be a gradual introduction of academic work with tutors taking time to build up her child’s trust.

Ms X added the situation has impacted her other child as they cannot attend clubs or activities due to caring demands of their sibling. Ms X said she had been unable to return to work as her child has been out of school for 5.5 terms and now her income is half what it was when both her children were in school.

The ombudsman ruled “the fault has caused significant injustice to the whole family and loss of education to the child.” The report said Ms X provided additional hours of unpaid care every week to her child, which she might have been eligible

for support. SCC will pay Ms X £1500 for the impact of her being unable to work, the additional caring demands, the uncertainty and frustration for the period her child has been without education.

SCC is unable to comment on any individual children specifically, but said it is “working hard to improve services”. The Leader of SCC, Tim Oliver highlighted that the most recent Local Area SEND Inspection noted progress is underway at the council.

Tim Oliver said: “We accept the findings from the Ombudsman report and sincerely apologise for any distress caused. I am aware that the Council has not always got things right for all families, that the support and service that some children with additional needs and disabilities and their families receive is not always of the standard that we would expect, and that our communication with parents and carers needs some improvement, and I am sorry about that.”

He added: “We know how important access to full time education is for all children to support their development and wellbeing, including when this must be provided outside of school”. Mr Oliver said SCC has been reviewing its arrangements for Alternative Provision in situations where young people are unable to attend school. SCC is also pursuing a multi-million capital programme to increase the availability of, and access to high quality specialist school provision across the county.

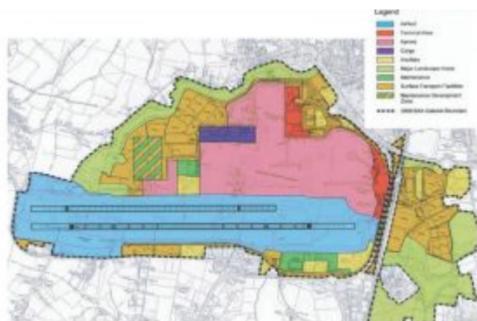
SCC said it is treating timeliness of EHCPs as a priority and has committed to spending £15m over three years to increase the capacity for key teams for EHCP. Mr Oliver said: “In line with our multi-agency EHCP Recovery Plan, we have been working hard to complete all delayed assessments and annual reviews alongside managing new applications.”

He added: “We are working closely with partners to ensure any support agreed in these plans is provided as quickly as possible, and we are committed to listening to the views of families in the completion of annual reviews and key transitions to improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs and disabilities so that they are happy, healthy, safe and confident about their future.”

Image: Surrey County Council headquarters. Credit: Emily Coady-Stemp

## Gatwick expansion update

10 October 2024



Local authorities have said they will not support Gatwick Airport’s plans to expand unless its growth is dependent on meeting environmental and noise targets.

According to legal documents, the impacted councils are concerned that there is currently a “lack of sanction” against Gatwick if the growth of the airport exceeds expected environmental guidelines without clear accountability.

Airport chiefs at Gatwick, the country’s second busiest airport, want to modify its northern runway so that it can increase passenger numbers to about 75 million a year on 386,000 flights. It says this will help minimise delays, bring in about £1 billion into the region’s economy every year, and create 14,000 jobs – all while staying within agreed noise levels. It also has a carbon action plan for how the airport will be net zero for its own emissions by 2030, with aviation emissions excluded.

Gatwick Airport has applied for a Development Consent Order (DCO), a legal document that allows the construction of major infrastructure projects. Part of the process requires the applicant to show the planning inspector how it will mitigate the impact of the development.

The airport’s current position is that the impact from the growth of the runways will be controlled by an air noise envelope (a way to limit sound) an annual cap of 386,000 commercial air transport movements, surface access commitments/SACs (55 per cent people accessing the airport by public transport by 2040) and a carbon action plan (to reduce carbon footprint).

Councils such as Crawley Borough, West Sussex County, Surrey County, Reigate and Banstead Borough, Mole Valley District and Tandridge (together the JLA) have been consulted on the proposals and have written to both Gatwick Airport and the planning inspector with recommendations.

The JLA say they are “concerned” that the current project “will impose unjustified adverse impacts on local communities, local businesses, and the receiving environment”. The group disagree with the Planning Inspectorate’s recommendations for the major development and believes it does not go far enough to address their concerns.

Instead, the JLA has put forward an approach where any increase in passenger numbers would be dependent on Gatwick Airport’s achievement of specific targets which would avoid, limit and reduce impacts of the project. The group said that if all their recommended measures were adopted, including the Environmentally Managed Growth framework (EMG), they would “not object”.

Under the JLAs' proposed approach, Gatwick Airport would be required to continually monitor and regularly report on the extent of the environmental effects associated with the airport in the four areas: noise, air quality, greenhouse gases and surface access. In each of the cases, the JLAs say they want to ensure Gatwick meet their specific targets and are held accountable, to prevent the airport expanding at any cost.

The group has proposed a tier system in which to monitor potential breaches in environmental commitments. For instance, if air quality or green gas emissions go above a certain point (level 1), Gatwick will review the current measures and work on mitigation. Then, if air quality gets increasingly poorer (level 2), Gatwick will review its pollutant contributions and introduce mitigation measures, perhaps preventing further capacity. If the limit for air pollution is breached, further mitigation would be required to solve the problem and no more aeroplane flight slots will be allocated.

The JLAs also want further clarity on the impacted areas exposed to higher levels of aircraft noise, especially areas where noise could wake people up. Measures should also be applied to give Gatwick Airport an incentive to transition to quieter aircraft and noise insulation as soon as possible, according to the JLA's statement. The JLAs also want to secure night time controls for flying.

The examination of the proposed DCO closed on August 27. The Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then make a final decision on or before February 27.

A London Gatwick spokesperson said: "We are fully committed to making sure the airport's growth is sustainable. London Gatwick has thoroughly assessed the environmental impacts of its growth plans, which include environmental mitigations related to noise, carbon emissions and surface access improvements.

"As part of our sustainability policy we are committed to reaching net zero for our own scope one and two admissions by 2030, as well as continuing to reduce overall energy use, invest in on-site renewable energy, and continuing to source 100% renewable electricity.

"London Gatwick is delighted with the strong support shown by many local people and businesses during the recent hearings, who all voiced their desire to see the airport grow for the economic benefit of the area. We thank them for their ongoing support."

Related reports:

[Gatwick Airport Expansion](#)

[Gatwick 2nd runway sneaking in?](#)

[Gatwick expansion plans revealed](#)

[Gatwick to get 2nd runway?](#)

Gatwick Plans (Image PINS / Gatwick)

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## Surrey Coroner calls for action over ambulance wait

10 October 2024



The death of a man who waited more than three hours for an ambulance has prompted calls from a coroner for quicker clinical assessments.

Philip Ross died at the Royal Surrey County Hospital on December 19 2023 after a fall in his home on December 3.

Surrey's assistant coroner Susan Ridge ruled that Mr Ross died of multiple organ failure after his accidental fall. Ms Ridge said she was concerned South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECamb) has not shown evidence that its timeline for clinical validation is being met, as in this case.

Clinical validation is when a case is sent to a clinician to decide the best response for the patient at the right time.

Mr Ross' wife called an ambulance at 11:25pm after her husband had a fall and was unable to move. Initially, Mr Ross' case was labelled by SECamb as Category 3, which would have a response time of 120 minutes, or two hours. Paramedics did not arrive until 2:30am, the Prevention of Future Death report stated.

During the wait, Mrs Ross made "a number of increasingly anxious calls to the ambulance service" about the urgency to help her deteriorating husband, according to the report.

Ms Ridge said Category 3 cases had a response time of 120 minutes and SECamb aimed to validate these calls with a clinician within 90 minutes. But the NHS Trust's target was not met in this case.

"No clinical validation of the calls took place until well over 2 hours from the initial call," Ms Ridge said. The court heard

the delays came from a “surge” in the number of calls as well as a lack of available clinical staff or “clinical hours”.

Categories 3 and 4 are judged as less serious cases and so have longer required response times from ambulances. However, this can become extended even longer at times of high demand.

The report stated: “Because of these potentially long response times, timely clinical validation is important to ensure correct categorisation and/or identify a deteriorating situation.”

The coroner said she is concerned that late or delayed assessment and sorting of these initially ‘less serious’ cases is “placing patients at risk of early death”.

The ambulance service has 56 days from 16 September to respond to the coroner’s report.

A SECAmb spokesperson said: “Our thoughts and condolences are with Mr Ross’s family. We are very sorry that we were not able to respond to him more quickly.

“We recognise that there are times when we are taking longer than we should to respond to some calls and are working hard to address this and improve performance across all categories of call. Having recently been written to by the coroner, we will respond in full to her within the requested timeframes.”

Image: South East Coast Ambulance vehicle example. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

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## Village divide on Parade

10 October 2024



Plans to demolish and rebuild a shopping parade in Oxshott, has been met with controversy among locals, with some residents decrying it as a “monstrosity” that would be “entirely out of place in a quaint Surrey village.”

Nearly 240 letters have been written to Elmbridge Borough Council (EBC) with around 190 against and 134 supporting the application. Oxshott locals agree the “tired, old and ugly” Heath Building could do with upgrading but they have opposing ideas about what the development should look like.

Built in the 1960s, the two-storey Heath Building is of a brick, modernist design with a flat roof. It currently hosts five operating retail units and five residential flats, three of which are occupied.

The application is seeking to replace the existing Heath Building parade with nine residential flats, four retail units with car parking and a gym. In redeveloping the site the applicant, Heath Buildings Ltd, hopes the “high quality buildings” will attract more footfall and “ensure the vitality and viability” of the High Street.

Locals support a development of sorts, but not at any cost. Residents argued the size of the building is “ridiculous” and would completely dominate and destroy the street scene, and look “entirely out of place in a quaint Surrey village”.

Comparing the development to the equivalent of a “Marriott Hotel being ‘dumped’ in our high street”, one man argued the development will have a profound impact on neighbouring residents living “in the shadow of this monstrosity”.

But a resident who was in favour said: “Oxshott High Street is the heart of the village but the buildings are ‘tatty’. [This development] would enhance the high street.”

Council officers have recommended the proposal for refusal due to the height, bulk and the architectural design being “incongruous” with the character of the area. They added the style of the development would result in a “harmful” loss of privacy, create an “unneighbourly and overbearing impact” to other properties.

A previous application was refused in December 2023. EBC also rejected the application because it did not fully show it could secure private refuse collection for the residential units or that there would be no loss of biodiversity like trees.

Planning documents detail the applicant’s vision of a “traditional” building which reflects the “imposing and often neo-classical/Georgian style houses” in the area. Responding to the previous refusal of the scheme, the applicant has designed a ‘pitched roof’ slanting from the centre, to lower the overall height of the building.

The three-storey development is proposed to be two metres taller than other buildings on the high street. But the applicant said there would be “no harm” in introducing a “slightly taller building” on the high street as there was not a consistent level.

But people have still taken opposition, one resident said: “The Real Voice of Oxshott has spoken and it’s a ‘NO’”. Others have voiced persistent concerns around the height and overall bulk of the proposal. One resident criticised the plans as “excessive and overwhelming” with “little architectural merit”.

Concerns were also raised about losing trees around the retail parade, some with tree protection orders (TPOs) like the walnut tree.

Although the council’s tree officer made no initial objections to the scheme, a late submission by Midgarth Residents’

Association (MRA) found the proposed development would result in a detrimental impact on protected trees. This is because it is claimed that the building's height would reduce growing space and harm the survival of the trees. Taking the report on board, officers have added the concerns around tree preservation as an additional reason for refusal.

Those supporting the plans argue the high street and the building is in "desperate" need for renovation and the investment will spur on economic and business opportunities in the village. A resident argued that "as one of the richest postcodes in the country", the "quality" upgrade plans was exactly what the residents of Oxshott "should expect".

Others say the building "needs to be updated" and they would rather have a company which has already invested in the community than an outside developer or a national chain. A resident claimed residents will "lose [the] high street" with all the independent shops if the application is not approved, as national retailers or large-scale development will take over.

Councillors debated the proposal at the south area planning sub-committee on September 11, but referred it to be decided at full planning committee later in the year.

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## Epsom murders advance police responses

10 October 2024



Surrey Police say its response to coercive and controlling behaviour in domestic abuse cases is "significantly more advanced" following the Epsom College murders.

Emma Pattison, 45, was found dead alongside her seven-year-old daughter, Lettie, in the grounds of the Surrey school in February 2023. Mrs Pattison's husband, George Pattison, 39, is believed to have shot them at their home before killing himself.

During the hearing, the court learned that Mr Pattison called the police over an alleged assault against Mrs Pattison in 2016. Mr Pattison's shotgun certificate was removed temporarily while the matter was being investigated.

Surrey Police said the case was investigated "thoroughly" at the time but the alleged assault was not progressed due to lack of evidence. The force said there was no reason not to return Mr Pattison's certificate and a renewal application in December 2016, and again in 2022, was granted.

But Chief Superintendent Clive Davies said: "Look[ing] through the lens of what ultimately happened, the incident in 2016 was clearly part of Mr Pattison's controlling behaviour". Although Mrs Pattison never made any allegations of domestic abuse or coercive controlling behaviour against her husband, Ch Supt Davies said the force's "understanding and response to CCB is significantly more advanced now".

He added Surrey Police officers and staff are trained to recognise the signs of CCB, the homicide timeline and high-risk factors. Coercive control uses manipulation, intimidation and various forms of emotional and psychological abuse to gain power and control over their partner.

Ch Supt Clive Davies said: "The tragic deaths of Emma and Lettie draw attention to the need to dispel and challenge myths and stereotypes around who may or may not be victims of domestic abuse, and who indeed may be capable of causing such harm." He added that if these misconceptions are not tackled "many victims will feel unable to reach out, and will continue to suffer in silence, while those causing harm in relationships are able to exist unchecked".

After a direct plea from Emma Pattison's family during the hearing, Coroner Richard Travers also raised concerns that controlling and coercive behaviour should be considered in gun licensing. Surrey Police said it has reviewed the concerns raised in the Prevention of Future Death report published by the coroner including medical records in firearms licensing and CCB.

Ch Supt Davies said: "Domestic abuse in its many forms, whether coercive, controlling, physical, sexual, financial or emotional, must not be tolerated and we will do everything we can to support those who are being abused and ensure that those perpetrating it are brought to justice."

The response builds from Ch Supt Davies' statement to the hearing where he pleaded to "challenge stereotypes around victims of domestic abuse". He highlighted children can also be victims of domestic abuse in their own right, and urged the public to help make sure they are seen, heard and supported.

He added: "I would urge anyone who believes they, or a friend or family member, may be experiencing abuse to report it. We know sometimes the signs that someone is suffering from domestic abuse can be subtle and difficult to spot. However, if you have any concerns at all for yourself, or a loved one, please contact the Surrey domestic abuse helpline which can provide access to independent advice and support in confidence."

**Contact Surrey domestic abuse helpline by calling 01483 776822 or**

visiting <https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/domestic-abuse/help>

**For anyone who feels they may be exhibiting harmful behaviour in their relationships, please contact the Surrey Steps to Change Hub via email: [Enquiries@surreystepstochange.com](mailto:Enquiries@surreystepstochange.com) or telephone 01483 900 905.**

Related reports:

Surrey Police help end abuse victim's ordeal

Surrey joining up to tackle violence against women

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## Epsom College murder inquest

10 October 2024



A coroner has called on the government to tighten gun-licensing laws after the former head of Epsom College and her daughter were murdered.

Emma Pattison, 45, was found dead alongside her seven-year-old daughter, Lettie, in the grounds of the Surrey school on 5 February 2023. Mrs Pattison's husband, George Pattison, 39, is believed to have shot them at their home before killing himself.

The inquest, which concluded in July, found that George Pattison was legally allowed a shotgun under a firearms licence, but he had lied about his medical history in renewing his application. Richard Travers, senior coroner for Surrey, warned in a Prevention of Future Deaths (PFD) report that "a risk of other deaths will continue to exist" unless gun ownership laws are tightened.

Between 2019 and 2021 George Pattison used an online service to prescribe him "significant amounts" of the drug propranolol to help him with symptoms of anxiety, according to the coroner's report. This was without the knowledge of his GP.

He was then able to lie to Surrey Police about his mental health condition during safeguarding checks on his gun-licence renewal application in 2022. When he was asked if he had been diagnosed or treated for medical conditions, which included 'Depression or anxiety', he responded 'No'. Although his GP's details were included in the form, they had no knowledge of George Pattison's use of online medical services.

Coroner Travers has raised the alarm that online doctors can be used as a loophole for those seeking a gun licence to avoid medical health checks which are meant to be safeguards. These medical checks followed from a PFD report in 2019 where a mother and daughter, Christine and Lucy Lee, were killed after police failed to assess the risk of returning guns back to John Lowe.

He also raised concerns that controlling and coercive behaviour should be considered in gun licensing after a direct plea from Emma Pattison's family during the hearing. Coroner Travers called for police leaders and the government to explore how licensing authorities could obtain details about an applicant's history of coercive controlling behaviour.

George Pattison had first gained a licence in 2012, which was then renewed in 2016 and finally 2022. Surrey Police were notified of a domestic violence incident in 2016, where it was alleged that Emma Pattison had assaulted her husband. The issue was investigated and, according to the PFD report, the shotgun certificate was temporarily removed, but later returned.

Coroner Travers highlighted it appeared there was no consideration by Surrey Police "whether this might have been an example of coercive controlling behaviour on the part of Mr Pattison". But, he added, there was evidence of later domestic abuse or coercive controlling behaviour. This evidence did not seem to be brought to the attention of the Licensing Officer when Mr Pattison applied to renew his licence.

Under current guidance, a GP has to confirm to the police whether an applicant has any relevant medical conditions, including mental health conditions. GPs often have digital markers on patient records if they have a gun licence to help monitor physical and mental health.

The PFD report has been sent to the Home Secretary, Yvette Cooper, the health secretary, Wes Streeting, and the chief constable of Surrey police, Tim De Meyer. Coroner Travers has called on the government departments to take action to prevent future deaths. He has also sent it to the National Police Chiefs' Council and British Medical Association. The authorities have a duty to respond to PFDs within 56 days.

Image - Epsom College: Naveed Barakzai/Maxal Photography. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license

## Leatherhead town on the way up?

10 October 2024



Artistic impression of the arrival square (SE corner)

Leatherhead could become a “destination town” with an updated shopping arcade and cinema screens, according to regeneration plans. The future project could also see a ‘new neighbourhood’ created with up to 11-storey apartment block and townhouses in Bull Hill.

The Swan Centre has been earmarked to be the “catalyst to revitalise the town” of Leatherhead. A new leisure area is set to be the “heart” of the Surrey town with four new restaurants, bars and cafes.

Plans include 14 retail units, four cinema screens for leisure and a new central market square for events. Retaining stores like Sainsbury’s, Boots, WHSmith and others is also being considered in the development proposals.

Demolishing Leret House, the former offices on Swan Street, is another key part of the proposal. Speaking at a webinar on July 30, project officers said they are looking to reuse as much of the fabric of the building as possible by retaining the concrete frame.

Locals could see apartment buildings up to 11 storeys popping up in the town centre, with houses ranging between three to four stories. Prospective plans for Bull Hill, the second part of the regeneration scheme, include apartment flats and townhouses, as well as parking facilities, offices, and a park. Officers are also looking at plans for a hotel with retail spaces on the ground floor.

Between one, two and three bedroom flats could be available in the new apartments, with the family houses being three to four bedrooms each. MVDC and Keir Property detail a mixture of open market and affordable homes for purchase and rent could be on the offer.

Councillor Keira Vyvyan-Robinson said: “We appreciate that building heights are a sensitive matter, and this is why the sketches and layouts in the masterplan show illustrative heights only at this stage.” The Cabinet Member for Projects stressed that “nothing has been decided” as the plans were still in the pre-application phase and “are likely to evolve based on [consultation] feedback”.

A Kier Property officer said the project is “looking to get the right balance” of housing heights, so it can “sit comfortably in its environment.” Upgrading the existing park in Bull Hill is also part of the initial proposals. Project officers said they wanted to make the park more accessible to people in Leatherhead by improving the play areas.

Launched on July 8 with five consultation events, people can give feedback to the prospective plans until September 26. Leigh Thomas, Group managing director, Kier Property said the consultation events so far had given him “much food for thought”. He added the team were looking to adapt the plans “according to the needs of the local community”.

MVDC and Keir Property has announced new consultation dates, including:

- Monday 19 August, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at St Mary’s Church Hall, 10A The Ridgeway, Fetcham, Leatherhead KT22 9AZ
- Thursday 5 September, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at Ashted Peace Memorial Hall (Ralli Room), Woodfield Lane, Ashted KT21 2BE
- Wednesday 11 September, 5:30pm to 7:30pm at The Old Barn Hall Bookham (Main Hall), 55 Church Road, Great Bookham, Leatherhead KT23 3PQ

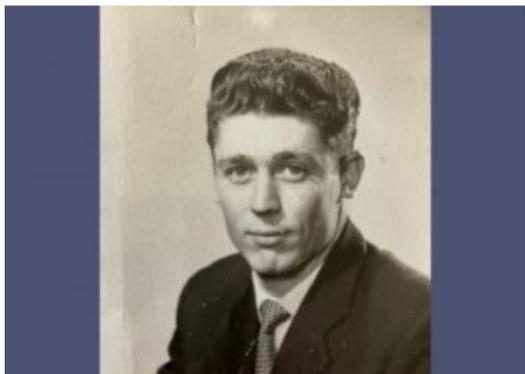
Keir Property and MVDC is looking at submitting a planning application in 2025 and, if approved, to start building by spring/summer 2026.

Artistic Impression Of The Arrival Square from North Street, south east corner. (Credit: Mole Valley District Council and Keir Property)

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## Epsom welder’s widow seeks help with cancer claim

10 October 2024



A woman who believed her incurable cancer may have been caused by washing her husband's work clothes is looking for information. Annette, who was married to a former welder in is appealing for information following her diagnosis with an incurable form of cancer linked to asbestos exposure.

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral composed of thin, needle-like fibres which was widely used in construction. Asbestos was completely banned in 1999 after research showed swallowing and breathing in the fibres trap them in the body, inflaming and scarring the lungs which can cause cancer.

Peter Vaughan, Annette's husband, worked as a welder around **Epsom and Ewell** throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s, where he is believed to have come into contact with asbestos used in insulators for buildings and machinery such as asbestos blankets or gloves.

Annette claims she may have been exposed to asbestos while washing Peter's work clothes, if he came into contact with asbestos while at work. Annette was diagnosed with the rare and aggressive cancer, mesothelioma, in summer 2023 - six years after Peter sadly died in 2017.

Now, with the help of legal firm Leigh Day, Annette is appealing to Peter's former colleagues to help her with information about conditions at his work. She hopes the information will help her bring a legal claim as she faces the incurable disease.

"Mesothelioma is an aggressive, terminal form of cancer which can develop in an individual later in life even through secondary exposure to asbestos," said Claire Spearpoint, asbestos claims solicitor at law firm Leigh Day. "Annette believes that this may have been the case with her diagnosis, however following Peter's death she has limited access to information regarding the possible presence of exposure at his former places of work."

Leigh Day is looking to support Annette's claim by speaking to anyone who worked at Surrey Sheet Metal Crafts, Grundy Teddington and Vestec throughout the 1960s to 1980s. They may be able to offer information if asbestos was used and how asbestos exposure occurred. Annette is also hopeful that any local tradesmen who worked in the **Epsom and Ewell** area at the time may be able to offer information that could be of help.

Peter worked as a welder and director at Surrey Sheet Metal Crafts between 1965 and 1967, a company he set up with two other men. He was then employed at Grundy Teddington in the Twickenham and Teddington area throughout 1970 to 1971, before working at Vestec for 12 years between 1975 and 1987. During his time at Vestec, he was a supervisor and often referred to as 'guvnor'.

While former employees who overlapped with Peter at these companies would be particularly useful, Annette is also looking to speak to anyone who worked at Surrey Sheet Metal Crafts, Grundy Teddington or Vestec who could offer information on the kind of work undertaken.

All three companies are no longer in existence and have been dissolved, one as recent as March 2024. If you can provide any relevant information please contact Claire Spearpoint at: [cspearpoint@leighday.co.uk](mailto:cspearpoint@leighday.co.uk)

Picture of Peter Vaughan as a younger man (Credit: Leigh Day)

## No sex please, we're British police

10 October 2024



Two ex-Surrey Police officers have been banned from the profession for gross misconduct after engaging in sexual activity on various occasions at police stations whilst on duty.

One former officer was found to have given oral sex to her tutor police officer whilst on duty at Horley Police Station. PC

B admitted to performing the sex act on her tutor, PC C, and allegedly told another officer she gave oral sex on a sergeant's desk at Caterham Police Station. Mr C has continued to deny the allegations.

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Epsom and Ewell Times has withheld the names of the former officers involved as we take the view that the newsworthiness in the report is the handling of these matters by our local police force.

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The police misconduct hearing panel, held on July 25, found Ms B and Mr C "neglected their duties for their own gratification". The pair breached professional standards by engaging in sexually inappropriate behaviour whilst on duty.

Evidence was heard from another police officer who said Ms B had admitted to her that she and former PC C had engaged in sexual activity on a number of occasions at Caterham and Horley Police Stations. One officer said she saw former PC's B and C "getting up off the floor and laughing" after interrupting them "in a darkened room" at Caterham Police Station.

Report documents state the pair were alleged to be "kissing and cuddling" whilst on duty at Horley Police Station, a quieter station, on January 15, 2023. A police officer and former colleague said that he saw Mr C coming out of a dark room with his "outer layer tee-shirt untucked" and not wearing any police protective equipment such as body armour and belt kit. The officer walked past the room which former PC C had left and saw Ms B facing away from him, appearing to be tying up her hair.

Concerned with what he saw, the officer reported it to an inspector who checked in with Ms B's welfare after her shift. Ms B stated that former PC C had not behaved inappropriately to her and denied anything of a sexual nature happened between them.

But Ms B allegedly admitted to an officer she was in a relationship with former PC C. Mr C's wife also provided a statement to the panel, in which she said in April 2023, her husband confirmed that "he had an affair with a trainee officer at work".

In lying to a senior officer about her relationship with Mr C, the panel found the former PC B clearly breached the "most serious" standard of honesty in police professional behaviour.

Making matters worse, the panel considered that both former officers "deliberately" went to the "quieter" Horley station to carry out their sexual activities. Their sexual conduct was "repeated and sustained" over a period of time and in secret because "the officers knew it was wrong", according to the report.

Members considered that former PC C was especially deserving of blame as he was former PC B's tutor constable, meaning he had leadership responsibilities for mentoring her. The panel claimed he "failed" to act as a role model to Ms B.

Ms B was also criticised as she "failed to raise concern" about the alleged relationship when reportedly given an opportunity to do so by an inspector and instead lied to her. "No real remorse" was shown by either party and it was noted that Ms B refused to hand over her personal phone in full cooperation with the investigation.

The panel agreed the former officer's behaviour amounted to gross misconduct and it would undermine trust and confidence in policing if the public had been aware. They found the pair "neglected" their duties and responsibilities whilst on duty at a police station, and "discredited" the force.

Both officers resigned from the force in July 2023 while the investigation was still ongoing. The panel concluded the former officers' behaviour amounted to gross misconduct worthy of dismissal.

Head of Professional Standards, Superintendent Andy Rundle, said; "Surrey Police expects a high level of professionalism from our officers and staff. The misconduct process for those who do not meet those standards is stringent and we will take all action within our power to ensure that those who do meet these standards are dealt with robustly.

"The hearing found that if former PCs B and C had not already resigned, they would have been dismissed without notice. Both former officers' details will also now be placed on the College of Policing barred list indefinitely."

Surrey Police ethics print on wall at Mount Browne HQ. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

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## Hyperia's screams have mixed local responses

10 October 2024



What's it like being neighbours to one of the biggest theme parks in the UK? "It depends if you like screaming," residents

say. Living next to Thorpe Park has split opinion with some locals saying they like the 'nice screams' and others saying they struggle to sit in the garden.

The park, between Chertsey and Staines-upon-Thames in Surrey, has recently introduced its newest and biggest ride, Hyperia. Some locals said they could hear the screams and noise from the ride about a mile away on opening day, but not all of the park's neighbours are bothered by it.

Joyce Hunt, 93, has lived next to the theme park for 40 odd years and "loves to hear" the screaming. She said: "It's great to see young people go and enjoy it. They have a good scream there." Joyce said the park was handy when her grandchildren were young and she could walk to the park with them.

Bricklayer Kevin Nye, 52, said it's "great" living next to the park and hearing the "nice screams". He moved into the street eight years ago for "peace and quiet". Although it's busy in the summer, Kevin said it's calmer the rest of the year.

But one couple said Thorpe Park "encroaches on [our] daily lives" and they "don't leave the house after 5pm". Jackie, 55, said the traffic on the roads is so bad after the theme park closes she "doesn't bother" leaving the house. One time, Jackie said she was stuck on the roundabout for 25 minutes, when her home was just a short walk away.

"It's one of the reasons why we're thinking about moving away from Surrey," said Jackie, "Staines is too congested". Jackie and partner Neil, 60, moved to the area 20 years ago when Thorpe was just a "small park" but now they say the number of customers is "out of proportion".

First opened in 1979, Thorpe Park has grown from strength to strength and expanded its rides and attraction offerings. A spokesperson for Thorpe Park said it has not received any complaints from local residents next door to the park about recent issues of parking, noise or litter.

Sitting outside in the garden, the couple said it's not so much the screams that disturb them but the click click clicking of the rides as the cars climb to the top, and the sudden whoosh that follows on its way down. With Halloween parties, late functions in the evening- the pair said it's "never quiet".

Other locals, like Alan, 59, said he "didn't want to sound like an old fogey" but sometimes the PA system for the autumn functions was "too loud" and lasted until 11pm at night. But he accepted it is a theme park: "What do you expect? There are worse things to live next to."

Thrill-seekers visiting Thorpe sometimes park down residential streets around the site to avoid paying parking fees. Although some neighbours said they "don't blame" people for trying to save a few quid, one couple had even taken to putting bricks on the curb outside of their house to stop people parking.

Liz and Barry Taylor, 58 and 73, said people parking outside their house at the weekends can cause a lot of traffic and congestion down their quiet road. They said sometimes they struggle to get out of their drives and dodge other cars, but it has not been "too bad" since Hyperia opened. "It's alright," said Liz, "but I'd rather it wasn't there."

Not all the neighbours mind it: Johanna said it is "no problem", adding that she is "all in favour of working people" trying to save money. She said: "When you think about the problems of the world- it's nothing. They are youngsters."

Neighbours raised issues of people chucking litter out of their car and onto the kerb as hometime comes around. "Lots of rubbish gets left along the road," said Joanne Bolton, 65. She moved next door to the park three years ago to be closer to her daughter. Residents complained of fast food packaging and wrappers being thrown out of cars and "left tumbling down the street" before people drive home.

But Joanne said: "I like looking out at the green area [of trees around the park]. If that goes I'd be mad." Although she "quite likes the screaming", she gets more wound up about the planes that fly over her garden.

A Thorpe Park spokesperson said: "Thorpe Park is very much part of the local community we operate within and has been positively contributing to the local area for 45 years. We strive to do all we can to ensure we keep our local residents, staff and guests happy, and we pride ourselves on being an established part of the community, taking our responsibility as a good neighbour seriously. We have a long-standing positive relationship with our local residents and this is something we value and want to maintain."

The vast majority of park guests visit for a single day. "Substantial" on-site car parking is available, along with good public transport links near Staines Train Station. The Thorpe Park Express bus transports guests directly between Staines Train Station and Thorpe Park at regular intervals during the day and during operational hours.

The spokesperson added: "Here at Thorpe Park we pride ourselves on being a significant employer of local people. Our teams work closely with our local community to ensure we are giving back to our local area and contributing towards making it a positive place to live and work on a number of levels."

"Thorpe Park worked hard to support the residents association in working with Cllr Hulley and Surrey Highways to bring improvements to the roundabout - at our own cost - to accelerate and resolve long standing issues impacting residents."

Some more of these initiatives include Site Conservation teams doing daily litter picking along the main road leading to Thorpe Park, in both directions, and beyond the perimeter. Teams also make regular landscaping support from our teams to ensure local green spaces are kept well maintained.

Image: Suntooooth License details