

D-Day celebration on Epsom Downs

28 May 2024



A special event to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the D-Day Landings is taking place on Epsom Downs on Thursday 6 June, 7-9.30pm. The event is being jointly run by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Go Epsom and Epsom Downs Racecourse.

The D-Day Landings are recognised as the largest naval, air and land operation in history, with more than 150,000 troops landing on five beaches in Normandy and bringing about the liberation of north-west Europe from Nazi occupation. Commemorative events are taking place nationally to remember those who gave their lives during the D-Day Landings.

The public are invited to come down to the Racecourse from 7pm, when the grandstand will open. Refreshments and fish and chips will be on sale, and there will be a range of entertainment on offer. The event is free to attend.

At 9pm, a ceremony will take place at the beacon on Epsom Downs, including a lone piper playing, and at 9.15pm the beacon will be lit. The beacon lighting is part of a national chain of beacons being lit across the country, and along the Normandy coast of France, and is designed to represent the 'light of peace' that emerged out of the darkness of war.

Cllr **Clive Woodbridge**, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee at the council, said:

"The beacon lighting event is an opportunity for the community to come together to honour the thousands of people involved in the D-Day landings. Their brave actions enable us all to enjoy the peace and freedom we have today.

"We look forward to welcoming residents and visitors to this special and important event."

Karen Pengelly, BID Manager at Go Epsom, said:

"Epsom's beacon was erected two years ago to mark the Platinum Jubilee of Her Majesty the Queen. It is an absolute honour to be involved in the D-Day 80th commemoration. Epsom, just like many other places, played an active part in World War 2; this is our chance to remember the sacrifices made by so many."

Tom Sammes, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said:

"We are honoured and delighted to be a part of the D-Day 80th commemoration. The racecourse was a key part of Epsom's World War 2 response and we look forward to welcoming the community to remember the brave personnel who risked their lives for freedom and peace."

Background image credit Expert Infantry CC BY 2.0 DEED

Community fund open for bids

28 May 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is inviting community groups and organisations to bid for neighbourhood funds raised by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), to deliver projects that will support new development and benefit Epsom & Ewell residents across the borough. Bidding opens on 7 May for six weeks, closing on 18 June.

The CIL raises funds from developers in recognition that new development creates pressure on local infrastructure. It is spent on the provision, improvement, replacement, operation, or maintenance of local infrastructure. Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has invested more than £210,000 from the 2022/23 Neighbourhood CIL Fund in community infrastructure projects including:

- Replacing playground equipment in Rosebery Park and Alexandra Recreation Ground
- Repairing pathways in Nonsuch Park to ensure they are safe and accessible

- Upcoming works to support biodiversity and improve visitor experience, including an additional new bench, at Stamford Green Pond.

Councillor **Steven McCormick**, (RA Woodcote and Langley) Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, said “I strongly urge local community groups and organisations to take this opportunity to bid for funds for community projects and initiatives that can improve quality of life for residents in Epsom & Ewell.

The Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy Fund offers us the chance to deliver projects that have a real impact on our communities, for example enhancing access to the countryside, improving accessibility and facilities in our parks and open spaces, improving health and safety for example by installing public water fountains, and more.”

The bidding process is designed to be as clear as possible. Information on the process can be found in section 6 of the CIL Spending Protocol.

Bids will be shortlisted using the criteria set out in section 7 of the CIL Spending Protocol. Shortlisted bids will be presented to the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee for approval and, for any spend over £50,000, then to the Strategy and Resources Committee.

Image: Rosebery Park - children's recreation area. Google

Should Nonsuch Park go to the dogs?

28 May 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will launch a six-week consultation on commercial dog walking in Nonsuch Park from Monday 29 April.

The consultation was commissioned by Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee following concerns raised by visitors about the increase in dog walkers with multiple dogs in the park.

Ahead of implementing any measures to control commercial dog walking, the Committee is keen to consult with the public and stakeholders about this issue to help inform any future decisions.

Officers from Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will also be at Nonsuch Park on the following dates and times to answer any questions the public may have:

- 29/04/2024 - Cheam Gate, 8:30am-10:30am
- 15/05/2024 - London Road Gate, 10:30am-12:30pm
- 22/05/2024 - Sparrow Farm Road Gate, 12:30pm-2:30pm.

Councillor **Julian Freeman**, (Lib Dem College) Chair of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, said: “We are aware that Nonsuch Park is hugely popular with dog walkers and while most dog walkers are responsible, concerns have been raised about the growth of commercial walkers with multiple dogs.

“It is important that as many people as possible engage with the consultation, so the Committee can understand park visitors’ thoughts, concerns and suggestions about dog control and commercial dog walking. Their input will help us make informed decisions that balance the needs of both dog walkers and the broader park community.”

The consultation survey is available on the Epsom & Ewell consultations webpage - Consultations | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (epsom-ewell.gov.uk).

The survey will close on 3 June 2023.

Nonsuch Park is managed and maintained by a Joint Management Committee, comprising an equal number of Councillors from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and the London Borough of Sutton. The committee Chair rotates between the two councils annually. The two councils fund, on an equal basis, the running of the park, after taking income into account. The committee is covered by the political balance arrangements.



Boxing champions young people in Epsom & Ewell

28 May 2024



A new local boxing programme, led by **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** and delivered by **Epsom Boxing Academy**, saw its first cohort graduate in March. 14 students, referred by local schools, were enrolled on the course. Graduating students were awarded an England Boxing Bronze Award which was complimented with an AQA Empire Fighting Chance Award in nutrition and health.

The structured boxing programme aimed to help young people build confidence, self-discipline, and resilience as well as improving self-esteem and supporting positive mental health.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, said; “I was honoured to attend the graduation of the Epsom & Ewell Community Boxing Scheme.

“Boxing is a fantastic way to keep fit, but it has also been shown to aid in the development of life skills including self-discipline, mental strength and control, and personal responsibility; as well as helping manage feelings of aggression. Boxing also provides invaluable opportunities for students to connect with positive mentors.

“We know that community schemes like this one are a fantastic way to tackle inclusion in sport whilst promoting positive outcomes for young people in our borough. I look forward to Epsom & Ewell Borough Council spearheading more initiatives like this one in the future.”

Joe Harding, Boxing Coach and founder of Epsom Boxing Academy, added; “The scheme was a great chance to create and deliver a programme specifically for our community in Epsom & Ewell.

We saw an unbelievable change in the students over the weeks as they developed and demonstrated boxing techniques, learnt about the human body, and about food labels and nutrition.

Life coaching and mentoring helped students’ progress in terms of their self-confidence, personal discipline, and punctuality. We were able to provide a safe space and an environment for the young people to express themselves. The results were outstanding. We were extremely proud to be part of such a great project.”

The Community Boxing Scheme is part of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s wider strategy to improve the wellbeing of residents through activity; and reduce barriers to sports and leisure participation for those who may not otherwise have access to facilities. It follows on from a successful swimming programme, delivered in partnership with leisure operator and social enterprise GLL and made possible by an award from Sport England funded by the National Lottery.

Image courtesy EEBC

Fast track your planning application at a premium

28 May 2024



From 1 April 2024, applicants submitting certain planning applications in Epsom & Ewell will be able to choose to ‘fast track’ their application.

Developed to meet customer demands, the new optional service will be helpful to applicants who have a builder waiting to start work, or who need building work to start or finish by a certain date. Applicants will be able to pay to have their planning applications determined more quickly than the statutory eight-week period.

The types of applications that can be fast-tracked are:

- **Householder Applications** - for instance, those required for extending homes e.g. building a single storey rear

extension, or front porch.

- Certificate of Lawful Development Proposed (Householder) - an application to show that the work you are proposing to do to a house is a 'permitted development' and therefore doesn't need a formal application. Sometimes you will need a certificate of this nature when you sell a house.

The fast-track fee is £350 for a Householder Application and £150 for a Lawful Development Certificate and is paid to the council, in addition to the usual cost of submitting a planning application.

Councillor **Steve McCormick**, (RA Woodcote and Langley) Chair of the Licensing and Planning Committee, said,

"We are incredibly proud of our Planning department who in the last year, have overcome significant challenges to go from being one of 10 UK council teams performing below an expected threshold of 70% for minor/other applications, to well exceeding national targets. It is brilliant that Epsom & Ewell Borough Council can now facilitate a service which will meet an obvious need for many residents wishing to progress building projects within the borough.

"I hope that this will ease stress for many people working to tight timelines for their builds."

Applicants can learn more about the service and apply by visiting the council's dedicated webpage: [Fast Track Service | Epsom and Ewell Borough Council \(epsom-ewell.gov.uk\)](https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

Should we be going to.....?

28 May 2024



The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is back. Following on from the success of the games last year, a wide range of activities are available in **Epsom & Ewell** again, including tennis, judo, swimming and more. The Games are the largest multi-sport youth programme of their kind in the South East, offering **free** local training for 7-16 year olds across Surrey, leading to a final celebratory event for the whole family.

The Games are ideal for beginners who may not get the opportunity to attend clubs or are put off by the thought of competing against others. Supportive coaches will help participants join in, have fun, learn new skills, and boost their confidence.

Registration is now open for the free training sessions which start after Easter and are aimed at those who live or go to school in the borough. Following the training, teams can unite for a family-friendly event at the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford on Saturday 15 June.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, said "I'm so pleased that we are running the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games in Epsom & Ewell again this year. The initiative provides a fantastic opportunity for young people who are still building their confidence in sport to access training free of charge.

"I hope that everyone in our borough will take a look at what's on offer and even tell friends and family about the initiative, so that we can ensure that as many children as possible can access the training."

You can find out what's on offer in the Epsom & Ewell borough and register for a place by visiting www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/syg

A helping hand from the Council

28 May 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has launched a local campaign to tell residents about community support services that offer them, and their loved ones, a helping hand.

The council offers a range of valuable services for those who are elderly or vulnerable. They are run by staff who provide a personal and caring service, and council subsidies mean that costs are kept to a minimum. Services include:

- The Dementia Hub: respite care for people living with memory loss and dementia.
- Meals at Home: tasty, healthy meals delivered to homes in and around Epsom & Ewell, catering for any dietary requirement. The team can even drop off shopping, too.
- Transport from Home: DBS checked drivers help people in Epsom & Ewell, who are unable to use public transport, with door-to-door travel.
- Community Alarm: easy-to-use devices that raise an alarm in an emergency and can even help find a loved one who has become lost whilst away from home.
- The Community & Wellbeing Centre: support hub for the over 55s; a place to relax, make friends, join activities, and feel at home.

Residents will notice information about the services across the borough on council social media accounts including Facebook, Instagram and X, in the council email newsletter, and in local advertising.

Councillor Clive Woodbridge, Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee, said: “As we become older, or for people with additional needs, living independently can feel challenging. We also know that many of our residents are carers for loved ones who would really benefit from our services.

Our trained teams offer care and support for people who need it most, allowing them to stay independent for longer. We hope this campaign will reach residents who could use a helping hand and encourage them to talk to us to find out how we can help.”

If you or someone you know could use any of these services, please talk to Epsom & Ewell Borough Council today. Call 01372 732000 or visit the website: www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/communitysupport

The Dementia Hub, meals at home and shopping service are also available for people who live outside of the borough of Epsom & Ewell.

Epsom and Ewell Council goes East

28 May 2024



Councillors at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council voted last night to undertake the relocation of the council’s Town Hall accommodation. Staff currently located at the Town Hall will move to 70 East Street, a modern purpose-built office building in central Epsom.

The move will bring about a number of significant benefits:

- Financial benefits: Remaining in the Town Hall building would require it to have extensive, costly refurbishment over the coming years to comply with energy efficiency and fire regulations, along with general maintenance of existing building structures which are reaching end of life, which would cost more than twice as much as the cost of relocating. In addition, the move will create significant operating cost savings into the long term, with annual operating costs expected to reduce by over 50%. These future costs savings will help sustain key service delivery.
- Environmental benefits: The new building will be more energy efficient and sustainable with a smaller carbon footprint, enabling the council to deliver on its ambitions to be a greener council and to become carbon neutral by 2035.
 - Service benefits: The move will provide a modern and fit-for-the-future workplace that will best serve the Borough.

The East Street building is already owned by the Council. It is a five-minute walk to the High Street and bus stops are located directly outside the building, providing easily accessible public transport. The building also provides its own parking, serving visitors and those with mobility issues.

It is intended that 70 East Street will not accommodate the Council Chamber, and instead a separate proposal is being developed to locate this in Bourne Hall, Ewell.

Cllr **Neil Dallen**, Chair of the Strategy & Resources Committee, said:

“Our focus must always be on what is best for our residents, and the significant financial and environmental benefits of

this move are clear. The current Town Hall building is expensive to run and contains a significant amount of unused space. The new building is smaller and will be far more cost-efficient. The costs involved with the move are far outweighed by the savings that we will make through avoiding the Town Hall refurbishment and through significantly reduced running costs into the long-term.

“Just as importantly, the move will allow us to progress towards our target to become a carbon-neutral council by 2035. We believe the relocation will provide multiple benefits to the borough.”

Jackie King, Chief Executive of the council, said:

“Relocating council staff to a smaller, modern and fit-for-purpose building aligns strongly with our ongoing determination to be a modern, forward-looking organisation that can best meet the needs of our residents. We are excited to progress with this move and improve value for money for our taxpayers as well as continue to provide the best services possible to the community.”

Work continues to look at options for the existing Town Hall site and this will form the subject of a separate report to the council’s Strategy and Resources Committee in due course.

The image is the creation of Epsom and Ewell Times not Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Related reports:

A new Town Hall for Epsom and Ewell?

Kids takeover Ewell’s Bourne Hall

28 May 2024



On Friday 17 November **Bourne Hall** in Ewell collaborated with local college **NESCOT** as part of a national Kids in Museums Takeover Day event. This project sits within **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s** Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy which aims to increase access to art, culture and heritage within the borough, as well as nurturing local, creative talent.

Mirroring these values and supported by Arts Council England, the **Kids in Museums** charity, aims to empower young people and help them learn digital marketing skills, as well as support museums to engage younger audiences.

Since Takeover Day began in 2010, over 40,000 children and young people have taken part. Takeover Day was established to help historic institutions empower young people and give them meaningful roles in their organisations. Over 5,000 people, from toddlers to 25-year-olds, now take part each year.

In support of the Takeover Day, Bourne Hall welcomed a group of creative arts students from NESCOT to its Museum this month to view their collection of ‘paper tapestry’ wallpapers. The wallpapers originated from homes within the borough from 1690 onwards and were created by hand using block-printing techniques. As objects within Bourne Hall Museum’s collection, they are excellent examples of our borough’s creative and heritage-rich past.

Focused around the Kids in Museums theme of ‘Let’s Play’, students then used the wallpapers as a springboard to let their creativity run free - employing techniques learned in the artistic studios at NESCOT, the end result is a fantastic collection of colourful and characterful textile artworks. An exhibition of the students’ work is now on display at Bourne Hall Museum, free to access and enjoy at your own pace.

“As part of our new Arts, Culture and Heritage Strategy, we are committed to nurturing creative talent and increasing access to resources and opportunities within our Borough,” says Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s Community and Wellbeing Committee. “Working collaboratively with NESCOT shows how our cultural and historical past can be reimagined through the eyes of the creative talents of the future. Blending the past and the present through such artistic outputs is fantastic to see and I warmly congratulate the students from NESCOT on their exhibition, which I would encourage residents to visit.”

Sarah Jane Morgan, Curriculum Coordinator Art and Design and Digital Design and Lecturer and **Chloe Chivers**, Art & Design Tutor at NESCOT added “Our UAL Level One Diploma in Art and Design students put their skills into action creating contemporary fabric prints inspired by historic wallpaper samples found here in the Bourne Hall archive. It was a great opportunity for our students to modernise historic prints dating back to the 17th Century, designing for a new audience. An experience enjoyed all round!”

Local Council gets in the Christmas spirit for all

28 May 2024



The countdown to Christmas is here! **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** and **Bourne Hall** are bringing Christmas cheer to winter days for residents and visitors. Festivities begin with the Christmas Lights Switch On in Epsom Market Square on 24 November, and at Bourne Hall on 9 December; followed by a week of family fun at Bourne Hall from 9 - 16 December. Free parking days in Epsom & Ewell town centres will help with Christmas shopping, and The Wizard of Oz panto will be spreading some Christmas panto magic at Epsom Playhouse.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee, said "We are looking forward to Christmas festivities in Epsom & Ewell this year, starting with the Epsom Christmas Lights Switch On.

"The Switch On would not be possible without the support of local charities and community groups. I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has worked so hard to make it possible for us to hold the event this year. I hope everyone is able to enjoy spending time with friends and family this holiday season".

Epsom Christmas Lights Switch On

Friday 24 November, 4pm - 9pm. Epsom Market Square. Free event.

- The switch on will take place at 6.30pm.
- Family fun, festive food and drink, live music and more. This event is held in partnership with local charities and community groups.

A Jolly Good Christmas at Bourne Hall

9 - 16 December (excl. 10 December) 10am - 5pm plus evening events (times vary).

To book tickets, visit: www.bournehall.org

Bourne Hall Christmas Lights Switch On.

Saturday 9 December, 10am - 5pm. Free event.

- A day of festive fun including performances from local dance schools.
- 4.30pm: The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell switches on the Christmas lights at Bourne Hall.

Meet Father Christmas.

Saturday 9 & 16 December, 10am - 4pm. Free event.

- No pre-booking required.

Santa's Grotto.

All week, 9 - 16 December (excl. 10 December), 10am - 4pm. Free event.

- Father Christmas will be there on 9 & 16 December. On other days, visit the beautiful grotto at Bourne Hall and post him a letter in the Bourne Hall post box.

Christmas Wreath-making.

Monday 11 December & Friday 15 December. 7 - 9pm. £60pp (price includes a drink).

- Learn how to create your own beautiful Christmas wreath with Jade Sibly, using flowers and foliage from Hook Heath Flower Farm.

Christmas Cake Decorating Workshop.

Tuesday 12 December, 5.30 - 7pm. Free event.

- Discover how to pipe, shape and accessorise your cake to create your own Christmas showstopper with Anita Chappel, Bourne Hall's Head Chef.

Seasonal Storytelling.

Wednesday 13 December, 7 – 8pm. Free event.

- As the year ends, enjoy age-old tales and seasonal superstitions from the cold heart of winter. Brought to you by Bourne Hall Museum’s curator, Jeremy Harte.

Family screening of *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (PG).

Thursday 14 December, 6 – 8.30pm. Free event.

- A heart-warming tale for all ages.

Live music.

Saturday 16 December, 11am – noon & 1pm – 2pm. Free event.

- Enjoy festive snacks and drinks whilst listening to acoustic music in the Flying Saucer Café.

The Wizard Of Oz - Panto 2023

Friday 15th December 2023 to Monday 1st January 2024

To book tickets, visit: www.epsomplayhouse.co.uk

- Join Dorothy as she begins her adventure into the wonderful land of Oz, helped along the way by Lion, Tin Man and Scarecrow. A show filled with excitement, laughter and all the usual panto magic.

Find out about events in Epsom & Ewell over the festive period here: <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/visitors/whats-on/all>

Free parking days in Epsom & Ewell

Find information about car parks managed by Epsom & Ewell Borough Council here: <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/car-parks>

- Epsom: Epsom & Ewell Borough Council car parks will be free on 10, 17, 24 and 25 December.
- Ewell High Street and Dorset House car parks will be free from 4pm on Friday 8th December until 7am the following day for Ewell Yule.

Changes to council services

The Town Hall will be closed on 25, 26 & 27 December 2023 and 1 January 2024. On the 28 & 29 December it will be open between 9am – 3pm.

Waste and refuse services:

- During the Christmas and New Year’s weeks, collections must accommodate the public holidays, and at a time when bins are much fuller than usual. So, some services may not be available as usual, and your normal collection day may change.
- All planned changes can be found here: <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/recycling-and-waste/christmas-and-new-year-collections>
- Christmas week: there will be no refuse collections during Christmas week. Please leave out food and recycling (including glass recycling) only. During Christmas week, collection days may change. Please check the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council website for recycling and food bin collection days during Christmas week.
- New Year’s week: Normal refuse collections start again in New Year’s week. However, collection days may change. Please check the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council website for collection days during New Year’s week.
- Before Christmas, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will place a label on resident’s bin handles with collection details for the festive period. If you are an Epsom & Ewell resident, please do look out for this reminder about how services will be changing in your road over Christmas and New Year’s weeks.

Community Support Services will be affected. Please check this page to find out opening times and days that services will be closed over the Christmas period: <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/support-services>

In January Epsom & Ewell Borough Council offer free real Christmas tree recycling for all residents. This is a fortnightly service – check your Christmas bin label for details of when real Christmas tree collections happen in your road.

What are your priorities for community safety?

28 May 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has launched a public consultation on the priorities for community safety in the borough and are asking residents, workers, visitors and businesses to have their say on the proposed action plan.

The council is part of the Epsom and Ewell Community Safety Partnership, which also includes Surrey Fire & Rescue Service, Surrey Police, Surrey County Council, Kent, Surrey and Sussex Probation Service, Surrey Downs Clinical Commissioning Group, Surrey Police & Crime Commissioner and Rosebery Housing Association.

Community safety covers a wide range of activities designed to reduce the likelihood of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour, protect victims and hold perpetrators to account. It also involves reducing incidents of domestic abuse and behaviour damaging to the community.

As part of the Epsom & Ewell Community Safety Partnership, the council have committed to playing its part in the following themes:

1. Focus on the most vulnerable or those at risk of harm
2. Serious organised crime and PREVENT
3. Identify and tackle crime and anti-social behaviour
4. Improve Community Engagement

The new Plan is the first time the council has publicly committed to actions in support of those themes and they would like to gather the views of the community.

Cllr **Alex Coley**, (RA Ruxley) Chair of the Council's Crime and Disorder Committee said: "I asked for this community safety action plan to go to a public consultation so we can hear what local people think our priorities should be. The government recently conducted a national consultation on expanded anti-social behaviour powers and the relationship between Community Safety Partnerships and Police & Crime Commissioners.

"Now it's time to ask what our local community want from the Council and our partners. Please tell us your community safety priorities and share with others so we hear from as many people as possible."

The consultation will run until 17 December 2023 and can be accessed via:

www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/council/consultations. Comments can be made by email to consultations@epsom-ewell.gov.uk

The Plan to improve Planning pays off

28 May 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council have received official notification from the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, Rachel Maclean MP, that their planning department is no longer under review for designation.

In April 2023 the council, along with nine other local authorities, received a letter from **Michael Gove** MP, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, which stated that due to the performance levels of the council on planning applications during October 2020 and September 2022, designating the council was under consideration.

See **Epsom and Ewell Times** report of 15th May 2023 Epsom and Ewell planning improving after Government threat?

The council had been fully aware of this historic issue relating to performance over that period, which was a result of Covid and capacity-related issues. Having acknowledged the issues, the council took swift decisive action to address them,

securing additional staffing resourcing within the department as well as investing in IT and improved ways of working.

As a result of the council's actions, service levels and performance on planning applications improved rapidly and significantly. Since early 2022, the council has continued to determine at least 90% of planning applications within the statutory timescale target, compared to the government threshold of 70%:

- Apr-Jun 2022 - 95%
- Jul-Sep 2022 - 91%
- Oct-Dec 2022 - 95%
- Jan-Mar 2023 - 96%
- Apr-Jun 2023 - 95%.
- Jul-Sept 2023 - 90%

Jackie King, Chief Executive of Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said:

"We are very pleased that the Secretary of State has recognised the issues the council faced were historic and temporary in nature, and that the council has worked very hard to take significant proactive steps to address and improve them, resulting in our Planning Department far exceeding national targets over the past five consecutive quarters. We have a strong and stable team and systems in place and are very confident that we will continue to provide a high level of service, over and above what is expected, into the future."

Bloomin' marvellous for Epsom and Ewell

28 May 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, Go Epsom Business Improvement District, and dedicated volunteers from across the borough were delighted to pick up a number of awards for Nonsuch Park, Epsom Town Centre and Ewell Village at this year's South & South East in Bloom awards.

For the first time, Nonsuch Park picked up two awards, a prestigious Gold Award for Large Conservation Area and a Silver Gilt Award for Heritage Park.

Judge **Peter Holman**, who is also Chairman of the South & South East in Bloom scheme, praised the efforts of the Nonsuch Voles Volunteering Group, and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Operational Services and Countryside Team, who all work together for the overall benefit of the park.

Mr Holman said, "Woodland management, planting new trees and beds, and uncovering and restoring horticultural features all add value. Since my last visit, it's good to see progress and the natural areas of the park are an excellent example of what can be achieved to benefit wildlife."

Ewell Village kept its Silver Award status in the Large Village of the Year category and was congratulated on the efforts of the community volunteers who help maintain the Gertrude Longhurst Memorial Garden and Bourne Hall Park.

The council's work at Bourne Hall was also praised. The judges said, "With its historic grounds, Bourne Hall showed noticeable improvements to the area at the rear of the building, which now forms an outdoor extension to the café area. It is understood that planting to soften its appearance is planned along with a new children's play area. Adjacent to the pond, a new pollinators bed has been successfully planted and looked attractive.

"The Wheatsheaf public house was pleasing to see and welcoming. Also of note was the work at Gertie's garden."

Epsom Town Centre entered the Business Improvement District category and retained its Silver Award status. The judges noted the planting schemes in Rosebery Park, the 'Pocket Park' in South Street and the new planters outside TK Maxx, they were also impressed with the murals around the Town Centre and the Lidl Living Wall in Upper High Street.

Councillor **John Beckett**, Chair of the Environment Committee, said "I am pleased to see the hard work and dedication of the council, Go Epsom, businesses, residents and volunteers has been formally recognised at this year's South & South East in Bloom awards.

"Maintaining our standards by winning Silver Awards in Ewell Village and Epsom Town Centre again and improving on last year's awards tally by winning Gold and Silver Gilt for Nonsuch Park is a brilliant achievement.

“Plans are already being put in place for the borough to take part in Bloom next year. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who is committed to ensuring our borough is the best it can be for the local community, visitors and wildlife all year round.”

Karen Pengelly, BID Manager at Go Epsom said, “Epsom is a lovely town, and the introduction of planters, murals and general greenery are welcome additions to our street scene. Visitors and local workers have commented on how much they appreciate the efforts of everyone involved in making Epsom look even better. Onwards and upwards for 2024 - there’s always more to do!”

The awards were held at RHS Wisley on Friday 29 September 2023.

South & South East in Bloom is part of Britain in Bloom and runs annual competitions across the counties of Kent, Surrey, East & West Sussex, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, East & North Dorset and East Wiltshire.

Related reports:

Bloom awards for Epsom and Ewell (2022)

Image: Rosebery Park in Spring: © Copyright Marathon and licensed for reuse under this Creative Commons Licence

Our Star shines on Epsom Playhouse

28 May 2024



This month **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council** has installed 90 solar panels on the roof of **Epsom Playhouse**. The panels will generate over 32,000 kWh of electricity annually, covering a third of the Playhouse’s current electricity usage and saving more than 6.9 tonnes of carbon each year. The project is part of the council’s **Climate Change Action Plan** which sets an ambitious target for council operations to be carbon neutral by 2035.

The council has already installed solar panels at its Operational Depot which have saved more than 35 tonnes of carbon to-date and currently provide 20% of the site’s energy. Further solar panel installations are in the pipeline, following feasibility studies. Additional carbon-saving measures include installing energy efficient lights in all council buildings, and purchasing energy from a green tariff that guarantees energy is supplied from renewable sources. There are also plans to replace streetlighting throughout the borough with energy efficient LED lights. This will be done in phases, with phase 1 completed by 31st March 2024.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s operational carbon footprint has reduced by 13% since 2019 when the council first began to measure it.

Councillor **John Beckett**, Chair of the Environment Committee, said “We’re absolutely committed to tackling climate change at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.

“Climate change is not a standalone single issue for the council or the borough; it runs through a broad range of our activities and behaviours. We’re passionate about working with partners and our residents to lead the way to a more sustainable borough, and the installation of solar panels at Epsom Playhouse is one of a range of initiatives that contributes to this.”

More details about the Council’s Climate Change Action Plan can be found on the council website: <https://epsom-ewell.gov.uk/residents/climate-change>

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Glyn students brighten the Borough

28 May 2024



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and **Glyn School** have come together to transform an unused building on the site of the Upper High Street car park with a community mural funded through the Government's Safer Streets initiative.

Ten local secondary school students recently worked in collaboration with the council and international graffiti artists from **Positive Arts** to create a large scale mural celebrating the biodiversity within our borough. The artwork has dramatically improved the aesthetics of the building, which previously looked tired and in need of renovating.

Giving support to the project, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, Chair of the Community & Wellbeing Committee at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, said: "It is a goal of the council to ensure that our natural environment is both celebrated and accessible to all. This project showcases how culture and creative practices can help to elevate the natural landscape of our borough in new and colourful ways.

"This type of project sits within the emerging Cultural Strategy for the council, which seeks to nurture and champion the creative talents within our community while increasing access to creativity for all to enjoy and engage with. The students' teamwork has also been extremely impressive and is something to be proud of".

Julian Phethean from Positive Arts said, "The young people were really determined to produce something they could be proud of and that's exactly what they achieved!

"All of the students worked well in a team, made a positive social impact, and displayed a high level of creativity, focus and drive."

A spokesperson for Glyn School said: "The students involved thoroughly enjoyed this unique experience to give back to the community in a very different way."