EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

Long serving Epsom Councillor blasts LGR and NACs

9 January 2026



Dear Editor

I am not sure where your Editorial writer of 6th January 2026 gets their information on SCC's pilot project Neighbourhood Area Committees (Parish power, democratic ideals — and the Residents' Association dilemma), but NAC's are certainly not the answer to the proposed LGR centralisation of local government and are far away from the concept of local democracy.

But before I address that, let's just step back a bit and see how we got here. The Government had no electoral mandate to abolish SCC and Surrey's Districts and Boroughs. And even if a vague manifesto reference to the reform of local governments counts as legitimate, the Leader of SCC had no mandate to use his Executive power to drag all of Surrey's local authorities into a rushed and centralising new local government structure.

The Government and Tim Oliver also cancelled the May 2025 local County Council election, denying residents themselves of the chance to express their view on this change, via the ballot box. That said, residents used a different mechanism to say what they thought. The results of the Government's own public consultation on the Unitary Options, published in October, showed that 51% of respondents expressed support for the three Unitary Option and only 19% favoured SCC's two Unitary option, with 56% strongly opposed to it. Yet the Government decided it knows better.

The outcome is that we won't have the devolution of power as promised under LGR but, instead, the centralisation of local government upwards and into two Unitary Authorities covering populations over ½ million. And in my Division, covering Ewell Court, Auriol, and Cuddington, just two Unitary councillors will replace the current eight local councillors with the expectation (I suppose) that this is sufficient to ensure that our residents needs and expectations will still be adequately met.

And this is where the Government's concept of Neighbourhood Area Committees comes into play. How ironic that, having realised Unitary Authorities will have nothing "local" about them, the Government decides (fully supported by the ruling party at SCC) that they will also impose what will fill that void.

Your Editorial seems quite keen on these. They write "*These advisory bodies bring together local councillors, police, NHS, voluntary sector leaders and community stakeholders — arguably, the very people most qualified to inform decisions on community priorities*."

However – and given that I am a Residents' Association councillor you probably won't be surprised at this – I think the people most qualified to determine local priorities and what their council tax should be spent on, are residents and council taxpayers themselves. Not an unelected quango with a small minority of residents working to an agenda determined by the Unitary Authority. Neighbourhood Area Committees therefore do not pass the tests of democratic local government, representation of the people, nor the ability for local people and communities to influence local outcomes.

Your Editorial also states that NACs come "*at minimal administrative cost*." I am not sure that's a given if it's only based on SCC piloting four NACs. If introduced by the East Surrey Unitary there could 36 or more of them. And how long will it take before the Police, NHS, and Fire Service, for example, realise that that simply cannot resource every NAC and every meeting in Surrey.

So, I do not support the NAC option. It is not local, it is not democratic, and it excludes the voice of most residents. But neither do I support the Town Council and precept model which will add a further tax burden on residents alongside any new elected Mayor's annual precept, in order to run allotments and not much else.

We need to look at options such as providing Unitary Councillors, individually or jointly in their localities, with funding to allocate locally. We need more local engagement and consultations on the introduction of school streets, speed limits and no verge parking zones and more. We should increase opportunities for community asset transfers enabling communities take over council assets that are better run by those who will use them. And we should undertake more co-designing with residents and users of local services and facilities, to better reflect their needs and aspirations.

So, going forward, if I get the chance to influence the local arrangements, it won't be to install a quango of unelected public servants and self-selected individuals, but it will be introducing localised structures and financial decision making to ensure that our residents are able to influence the important local choices and funding allocations that affect their lives.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Eber Kington – (RA Surrey County Councillor Ewell Court, Auriol and Cuddington and former RA Epsom and Ewell

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Borough Councillor)

Editor’s note: Epsom and Ewell Times received its published information about Neighbour Area Committees and the cost of running 16 meetings of pilots direct from Surrey County Council’s communications team.

Related letters and editorial

Parish power, democratic ideals — and the Residents’ Association dilemma

Have your say on the future of local representation in Epsom and Ewell

Epsom and Ewell’s Local Democracy Debate: What’s at Stake as Consultation Enters Phase Two

Letters from local Councillors on Epsom and Ewell parishes

Call to join the merry Morris Men of St Mary’s Ewell

9 January 2026



The friendly team of Ewell St Mary’s Morris Men are holding an open day for anyone who would like to try out a bit of Morris Dancing. No experience needed.

Morris Dancing is a very old British tradition going back more than 600 years and whilst some people enjoy the colour, the cheerful music, the fun and whole spectacle, they sometimes feel a bit nervous to actually try it, this open day is an ideal opportunity, no audience, just a lot of very friendly people. Give it a try, there’s nothing to lose, and it might just be that thing that ticks your box. It’s Free, it’s Open to all and there’s no commitment

There are many reasons to try out Morris Dancing and if you asked a hundred different Morris Dancers you would get a hundred different reasons, however these are some of the more common reasons.

It is a very old tradition and should be supported

It keeps people fit and trim It is fun The people are all friendly It beats boredom Any age can do it

2-4pm Saturday 17th January, Bourne Hall in Spring Street, Ewell Village KT17 1UF is on the 406, 293 bus routes and has plenty of Car Parking available. Ewell West, and Ewell East railway stations are also nearby.

Everyone welcome, from Epsom, Cheam, Ashtead, Sutton, Malden, in fact anywhere. Just come along. On Saturday 17th January.

Musicians wishing to try the music are also welcome, again, no experience required.

More information

Website – https://ewellmorris.co.uk
email – contact@ewellmorris.co.uk
Facebook – ewellstmarymorris

Alan Greenwood

Do you have the bottle for these cold nights?

9 January 2026

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With the UK in the midst of a bitter cold snap, many of us are reaching for hot water bottles to help keep warm during the day and through the night.

While hot water bottles are an effective and affordable way to keep warm, in 2024 nearly 1,000 people were admitted to burn units in England and Wales following hot water bottle accidents.

Here, the team at Health and Safety training experts High Speed Training share some practical advice on how to use hot water bottles safely.

Dr Richard Anderson, Head of Learning and Development at High Speed Training, said: “Hot water bottles are a fantastic way to beat the chill, and with energy costs remaining a concern, they are more popular than ever. However, like any household item that uses high heat, they aren’t without risk.”

Check the age

It is recommended that hot water bottles are replaced every two years. The rubber used in their construction can deteriorate over time, making bottles more likely to split or leak.

You can check when a hot water bottle was made by looking for a flower-shaped symbol, known as a ‘daisy wheel’, embossed onto the neck or body of the bottle. The number in the centre shows the year of manufacture, while the twelve surrounding segments represent the months of the year. The number of segments with dots indicates the month the bottle was made.

For example, if the symbol has 25 in the middle and dots in the first six segments, the bottle was manufactured in June 2025. If a segment contains more than one dot, the number of dots in the final filled segment shows which week of the month the bottle was produced.

How to fill and use your hot water bottle safely

Dr Anderson added: “Before filling a hot water bottle, always check it for visible damage or signs of wear and tear. Avoid filling the bottle with boiling water, as this can weaken the internal seams. Allow the water to cool slightly before filling.

“It’s also advisable to only fill the bottle to around two-thirds full. Expel any remaining air before tightening the stopper securely.”

He also advised always using a cover on a hot water bottle to reduce the risk of contact burns, and never sitting or lying on one, as this increases the likelihood of the bottle failing. “When not in use, empty the bottle completely and store it with the stopper removed in a cool, dry place, such as a cupboard.”

Copy provided by High Speed Training

Get That Drain Unblocked in Epsom & Ewell – Trusted Local Drainage Specialists

9 January 2026



Blocked drains are one of the most common and disruptive problems faced by homeowners and businesses in Epsom and Ewell. What often starts as a slow-draining sink or unpleasant smell can quickly turn into an overflowing drain if left untreated. Acting early is usually the best way to prevent further damage and unnecessary costs.

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Drainage & Plumbing Ltd is a local drainage company providing professional drain unblocking services across Epsom, Ewell and nearby areas. Working regularly within the community, the team understands the drainage challenges common in the area, particularly in older properties where pipework has been in place for many years.

The company focuses on thorough, long-lasting solutions rather than temporary fixes. Blockages caused by grease, debris or everyday waste are cleared properly using professional equipment, helping restore normal flow and reduce the likelihood of repeat issues. Whether the problem affects a kitchen sink, toilet or external drainage system, work is carried out efficiently and with minimal disruption.

Reliability and transparency are key priorities. The business places strong emphasis on clear communication, punctual attendance and fair pricing. Customers are given honest advice based on the condition of their drains, allowing them to make informed decisions without pressure or unnecessary upselling.

Drainage issues can affect residential homes, rental properties and local businesses throughout Epsom and Ewell. Having access to a dependable local drainage specialist can make a significant difference when problems arise, especially when quick action helps prevent further disruption.

By choosing a local service, residents are also supporting a business that contributes to the local economy and community. The company continues to build its reputation in Epsom & Ewell through repeat customers and word-of-mouth recommendations.

If you are experiencing a drainage problem or would like professional advice, local help is available from a team that understands the area and its infrastructure.

Drainage & Plumbing Ltd
Local drainage specialists serving Epsom & Ewell
Call: 07771 200075
Website: drainage-plumbing.co.uk

Sponsored article

Warm places to go to in Epsom and Ewell

9 January 2026



Christ Church Ewell

Address: Cheam Road, Ewell, KT17 1AD

Opening Times: Wednesday from 10am to 1pm

Services offered: Hot drinks; meals; social activities

Accessibility: Ramps available for disabled access and disabled toilet

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Epsom Methodist Church

Address: Ashley Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5AQ

Opening Hours: Wednesday from 10am to 6pm

Services offered: Hot drinks; meals; craft activities and social activities;

Accessibility: Fully accessible

King’s Church, Epsom

Address: Off Gibraltar Crescent, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 9BU

Opening Hours: Friday from 6pm to 8pm

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Services Offered: Hot drinks; Meals; Craft activities; Social activities;

Accessibility: Fully accessible.

Love Me Love My Mind

Address: St Barnabas Church, Temple Road, Epsom, KT19 8HA

Opening Times: Monday from 1pm to 7pm

Services Offered: Meals; Hot drinks; Craft activities; Physical activities; Social activities; Meals.

Accessibility: Wheelchair accessible; Disabled Toilet

St Mary the Virgin, Ewell

Address: Ewell Village Hall, London Road, Ewell, KT17 2AY

Opening Times: Thursday from 12pm to 2pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks; Meals; Social activities; Food bank/ Food Club / Community Fridge.

Accessibility: Accessible toilet available.

Epsom Library

Address: 6 Epsom Square, Epsom, Surrey KT19 8AG

Opening Times:

- Monday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Tuesday : 9.30am to 7pm
- Wednesday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Thursday: 9.30am to 7pm
- Friday: 9.30am to 5.30pm
- Saturday: 9.30am to 5pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Epsom Library Webpage

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Ewell Court Library

Address: Ewell Court Community Library, Ewell Court House, Lakehurst Road, Ewell, Surrey KT19 0EB

Opening Times:

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 10am to 5pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 5pm
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Ewell Court Community Library Webpage

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Ewell Library

Address: Bourne Hall, Spring Street, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey KT17 1UF

Opening Times: Tuesday to Saturday from 9:30am to 5pm

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks via a voucher scheme with the onsite cafe, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Ewell Library Webpage

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Stoneleigh Library

Address: 1 Stoneleigh Broadway, Stoneleigh, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 2JA

Opening Times:

- Monday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 10am to 1pm
- Friday: 10am to 1pm and 2pm to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm;
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Stoneleigh Library Webpage

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Tattenhams Library

Address: Tattenhams Community Library, Tattenham Crescent, Epsom Downs, Epsom, Surrey KT18 5NU

Opening Times:

- Monday: 10am to 1pm
- Tuesday: 10am to 1pm
- Wednesday: 10am to 1pm
- Thursday: 10am to 4pm
- Friday: 10am to 5pm
- Saturday: 10am to 4pm
- Sunday: Closed

Services Offered: Warm space, hot and cold drinks, events and activities.

Accessibility: Full information can be found on the Tattenhams Library Webpage

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Epsom Vineyard Church (Community Venue)

Address: 23 Lansdowne Road, West Ewell, Surrey, KT19 9QJ

Opening Times: Wednesday: 2pm to 5pm and Friday 10am to 12pm

Services Offered: Hot drinks ;Social activities; Light Meals;

Accessibility: Disabled access; accessible toilets; parking for 5 cars, plus on street parking.

Image: Epsom Methodist Church

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8th January 2026

9 January 2026

Council Council constitution Editorial

Parish power, democratic ideals — and the Residents' Association dilemma

6 January 2026

EDITORIAL For nearly ninety years, since the creation by Charter of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in 1937, the Residents' Associations have held political control of the council. Their defining … Read More

Community Council Council constitution

Have your say on the future of local representation in Epsom and Ewell



6 January 2026

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is currently running the second stage of its Community Governance Review (CGR), asking residents whether two new parish-style bodies — Epsom Community Council and Ewell … Read More

Community Health Volunteers

Epsom snooker star on cue to help patients



4 January 2026

Epsom General Hospital is grateful for the laser-like focus of snooker legend Jimmy White. The 63-year-old star of the green baize took time out from his busy schedule recently to … Read More

Council Council constitution Elections

Epsom and Ewell's Local Democracy Debate: What's at Stake as Consultation Enters Phase Two



30 December 2025

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Council Council constitution Letters

Letters from local Councillors on Epsom and Ewell parishes



30 December 2025

Posted in the order of receipt. From Cllr Alex Coley (Independent Ruxley) Dear Editor, It is disingenuous to go to residents with a consultation that shows a band D precept … Read More

Community Council

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council celebrates its first Young Legends graduates

28 December 2025

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council proudly marked the completion of its first Young Legends programme with a celebration event for participants and their families. Over the last nine weeks, over … Read More

Council News

Epsom and Ewell Council leader message for 2026



28 December 2025

Cllr Hannah Dalton (RA Stoneleigh) has outlined Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s goals for 2026 in a New Year message to residents. The leader has promised a smooth transition to … Read More

Council News

Mole Valley leaders look to their final year legacy



27 December 2025

We are entering the final full year for councils in Surrey before they are dissolved and merged into mega authorities – and the leaders know time is running out if … Read More

Arts Culture News

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Epsom Christmas Concert Triumphs After Last-Minute Conductor Crisis



22 December 2025

What could have been a genuine crisis for Epsom Choral Society’s Christmas Concert on Saturday became a remarkable story of teamwork, professionalism, and musical courage. The day began with unwelcome … Read More

Council Council constitution Elections

‘I don’t believe I am a political person’: Surrey leader reflects



20 December 2025

As Surrey heads into the new year, the mood at Woodhatch Place, the county council’s head quarters, is one of reflection and quiet apprehension for the year ahead. For Tim … Read More

Housing News

Epsom and Ewell one of the most expensive places to own a home in the UK



19 December 2025

Residents in Epsom and Ewell could be spending the equivalent of more than four-fifths of a single average salary on mortgage repayments, according to a new affordability analysis published by … Read More

News Policing

East Surrey gets new Police Station



19 December 2025

Surrey Police’s near two-year hunt for a replacement to its shut, dangerous, crumbly concrete riddled Reigate station is over – with people only needing to walk travel miles to the … Read More

Community Education Faith

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Epsom Christmas carols of two colleges and a council



18 December 2025

In the first and a unique festive venture for the Borough of Epsom Ewell a special carol service was held in the Chapel of St Luke, Epsom College this evening. … Read More

Council Environment Planning

Epsom waste site plans refused after years of noise and disruption complaints



18 December 2025

Plans to retrospectively approve changes at a controversial waste and recycling site near Epsom have been refused, following years of complaints from residents about noise, dust and early-morning lorry movements. … Read More

Community News Volunteers

From Abramovich’s frozen wealth to Epsom’s Ashley Centre – support for Ukraine continues



18 December 2025

The Government has announced that £2.5 billion from the frozen proceeds of the sale of Chelsea Football Club by sanctioned Russian oligarch Roman Abramovich is to be directed towards humanitarian … Read More

Council Housing Planning

Surrey countryside campaigners warn new planning rules risk more speculative development



18 December 2025

Local countryside campaigners have voiced strong concerns over the Government’s newly announced changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), warning that the reforms could increase speculative development across Surrey … Read More

Council Council constitution

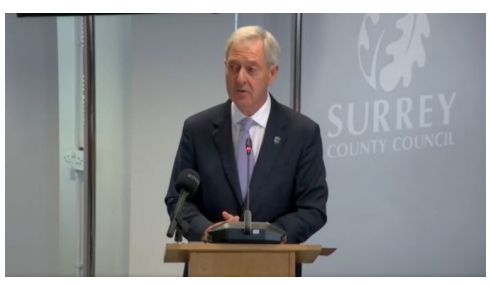
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Surrey to have a Mayor?



18 December 2025

Surrey will get a mayor despite months of uncertainty and a lack of solid confirmation from the government, the county council leader has insisted. Tim Oliver said he is “confident” … Read More

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Parish power, democratic ideals — and the Residents’ Association dilemma

9 January 2026

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

EDITORIAL

For nearly ninety years, since the creation by Charter of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council in 1937, the Residents’ Associations have held political control of the council. Their defining claim — and the claim on which generations of RA councillors have been elected — is that they are not a political party. They describe themselves as pragmatic, non-ideological representatives, motivated only by the practical interests of residents and by efficient, modest and locally accountable government.

That historic self-identity now faces its most searching test in decades.

The decision to promote the creation of two new parish or “community” councils — one for Epsom and one for Ewell — at the very moment when Local Government Reorganisation is removing a tier of local government, raises a question that goes to the heart of the RA project. Is the Residents’ Association movement acting in accordance with its founding principles — or is it, for the first time, beginning to behave like the very kind of political body it has always claimed not to be?

The new community councils, if ultimately approved, would initially be responsible only for allotments and for acting as statutory consultees on planning matters. The projected precept would be around £43–£46 per Band D property — yet council reports make clear that the overwhelming share of the budget relates not to allotments but to administrative costs. The ratio highlighted during the council debate — approximately £1.5 million in administration and around £20,000 in allotment management — leaves opponents arguing that residents would be paying for a structure, not a service.

Supporters reply that this is about local voice, continuity and identity under the new East Surrey unitary authority. They argue that unparished areas risk being left behind elsewhere in the country, and that residents deserve the ability to remain represented at a truly local level.

That argument is a respectable one. But it is also a philosophical one.

It places a principle — more tiers of directly elected democratic representation — above the question of whether those tiers provide proportionate value for money or a clear functional purpose. In short, it places democratic ideology ahead of administrative efficiency.

That is — ironically — the kind of approach the Residents’ Associations have historically said they exist to avoid.

A further tension arises when one compares the parish model with the alternative now being piloted elsewhere in Surrey: Neighbourhood Area Committees. These advisory bodies bring together local councillors, police, NHS, voluntary sector leaders and community stakeholders — arguably, the very people most qualified to inform decisions on community priorities. They operate without a precept, at minimal administrative cost, and are designed expressly to improve coordination and engagement under the new unitary structure.

Yet this model does not feature in EEBC’s consultation options.

The consultation preamble instead foregrounds the “potential impact” of losing a local tier of governance, and asks residents to respond within a framework in which the only practical question is whether to establish parish councils — not whether alternative governance models may offer equal or greater benefit at far lower cost.

If the Residents’ Association ethos is one of pragmatism, value for money and minimal bureaucracy, then excluding the

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lowest-cost participatory model from public consideration is difficult to reconcile with that philosophy.

Some councillors have gone further, suggesting that the drive toward community councils is shaped less by principle than by personal and institutional incentives — that is, by the desire of some existing borough councillors to continue to occupy civic roles in a post-unitary landscape. Whether or not that suspicion is fair, the perception exists, and it has been voiced across party lines during the council debate.

The Residents' Associations have for generations prided themselves on being the guardians of restrained, businesslike and non-political local government. If they now choose to champion new and potentially expanding administrative bodies — with uncapped taxation powers and initially limited service responsibility — they will need to persuade residents that this is not a departure from that tradition, but a logical extension of it.

That case will need to rest on facts, not sentiment; on function, not symbolism; and on the long-term interests of residents, not on the preservation of municipal office.

As the parish consultation enters its second phase, that is the question at stake: whether the proposals reflect the values the Residents' Associations have always proclaimed — or whether, in the face of structural change, they risk becoming the very political establishment they were founded to resist.

Raymond HILLS

9 January 2026

Raymond HILLS passed away on 12th December 2025 aged 63 years.

The funeral service will take place on Friday 6th Febuary at 15:20 at North East Surrey Crematorium

Any enquiries to Raymond.Hills.Estate@gmail.com

Frank Edward Harold HARRIS

9 January 2026

HARRIS, Frank Edward Harold passed away on 16th December 2025 after a brave and courageous battle, aged 81 years. Husband to late Eileen and Dad to Gary. Grandad to Charlotte. Uncle and a Friend to many.

The funeral service will take place on Monday 12th January at 11am at Peterborough Crematorium.

Donations, if desired, to Cancer Research UK.

Any enquiries to W Bailey & Son on 01945 584762.

Letters from local Councillors on Epsom and Ewell parishes

9 January 2026



Posted in the order of receipt.

From Cllr Alex Coley (Independent Ruxley)

Dear Editor,

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It is disingenuous to go to residents with a consultation that shows a band D precept of £43.52 (rounded up to £44), when this could be more than six times higher. The Council's own figures add up to a Band D precept of £296.62 for Epsom Parish Council, when certain key community assets are transferred. This is due to the enormous burden of running costs (£73.10) and building repairs (£180).

You will hear that this consultation is simply for the creation of new parish councils dedicated to representing residents' voices and the statutory provision of allotments. That is a Trojan Horse. Seeking a view from residents on a lower figure and then multiplying it several times later is deeply misleading. These additional costs are very likely to be even higher than shown as they are based on out-of-date running costs reported in February 2024 and building repair costs from July 2019.

Residents who worry about their area being left behind will discover that creating a new parish council opens up the opportunity for the forthcoming unitary councils to offload costly buildings. With an uncapped precept, residents can be made to pay for these offloaded buildings — whatever they cost. This can happen at ANY time AFTER the new parish council is created. The one thing that definitely won't be left behind is your money. I am seeking further analysis to calculate itemised costs for all the many buildings, parks and open spaces which could be transferred in future years, adding to the parish precept even further.

Using figures in the Council report from 9th December, these are the expected Parish Tax bands for Epsom when the three key community assets are included after the consultation has closed.

Band A — £197.75
Band B — £230.70
Band C — £263.66
Band D — £296.62
Band E — £362.53
Band F — £428.45
Band G — £494.36
Band H — £593.24

Residents are being treated like Turkeys. Not just voting for Christmas, but paying for Christmas too!

Yours faithfully,

Alex Coley (Independent – Ruxley)

From Cllr James Lawrence (Liberal Democrat, College Ward)

Dear Editor,

I would like to remind readers that this consultation is to set up two parish councils, that will only manage allotments. That is the only service proposed to be provided to residents. Of the 11 allotment sites in the borough, the council currently runs only 7. Some wards for which councillors are proposed don't even have any allotments in them. Before addressing the clear ambition to further expand responsibilities and costs, as indicated by "could work with East Surrey Council in the future to undertake any services which it is agreed may be better run at a local level, such as parks, open spaces and community buildings etc." I will first focus specifically on the proposals as written.

The consultation document (appendix 4 of 9 Dec 2025 Full Council papers item 11) on pg 8 states that "the budget essentially covers" two key things: "Parish Council Administration" and "Allotments". What is not explained anywhere in that document is the fact that of the total collective cost of £1.52mil, only £0.02mil is required for the management of the 7 allotment sites. This is the only part of the precept (the new tax) that may possibly relate to the suggested ambition to "improve community engagement, local democracy, and service delivery" (pg 2 of appendix 4), and even then only for the few hundred council allotment holders. At only 1% of the proposed cost, the "local democracy" part of the extra tax is at best a rounding error on the amount you will pay.

As has been indicated, in reality it is highly unlikely that the parish precept will remain at ~£45. What is the future projection of this additional tax? We will receive no discount on our unitary council tax rates. The council's own papers (appendix 7) predict significant rises to the tune of ~£220 above the £45 for a Band D property if the three big community assets of Bourne Hall, Epsom Playhouse and the Community & Wellbeing Centre are included. Why are none of these future expectations and cost breakdowns not included in the consultation document? I will leave the reader to decide.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr James Lawrence (LibDem College)

From Cllr Bernie Muir (Conservative, Horton Ward)

Dear Editor,

The white elephant of parish councils is an exercise in self-indulgence and self-interest at vast expense to the Borough's residents.

"The proposal adds an extra, unnecessary layer of cost and local bureaucracy with little, if any, benefit, especially given that all areas WILL be represented by new Neighbourhood Area Committees comprising of your Councillors, health, police and a tailored list of local groups or individuals that serve your community — a fact not mentioned in the

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ISSN 2753-2771

Consultation."

Without having determined what the Parish Councils would do, other than manage allotments thus what it would cost, other than 'considerably higher' than the initial charge, they are asking residents their view on setting up two costly councils based on effectively no, or missing, information.

The maths reveal that lack of value — The council quotes an additional cost of £44–£46 for the first year (for a Band D property) to cover the cost of maintaining allotments, despite this costing only 60p per household with the rest of the precept, some 99% of the first-year charge, going on administrative costs.

The average cost per property would actually be almost 20% higher at £53 in the first year, exceeding the figures quoted in the consultation (around £45). That is because the average property in Epsom and Ewell is Band E, not the quoted Band D figure. The actual cost in the first year would vary between £30 (Band A) and over £90 (Band H).

However, that is only the tip of the iceberg.

The council has ambitions to take on much, much greater costs, all of which would be charged to residents as an additional council tax 'precept' in future years. The first three assets being considered for transfer to the new parish councils would alone increase the average additional precept cost per property in Epsom to around £350, with costs for Epsom households varying from £198 (Band A) to over £590 (Band H, Epsom) based on the council's figures.

The council's own public report pack goes on to state 'If other community assets (e.g. country parks etc) were to be transferred, the costs would be considerably higher'. Even £590 per year could go considerably higher! All this is on top of the standard council tax charge. Whilst borough council tax rises were capped at 3% each year, there is no cap at all on parish council precepts.

Before responding to the consultation, I encourage residents to ask themselves what, specifically, the proposed parish councils are going to provide, and whether it is worth the large, increasing and uncapped costs.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Bernie Muir (Conservative Horton)
Vice-Chairman Surrey County Council
Surrey County Councillor — Epsom West Division
Epsom & Ewell Borough Councillor — Horton Ward

From Cllr Hannah Dalton (RA Stoneleigh) leader of the ruling Residents Associations Group on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

Dear Editor,

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is not alone in making the decision that, as a result of Surrey local government reorganisation, there is an urgent need to review or establish Community Councils (also known as Parish or Town Councils). This work is also being undertaken by Guildford Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate & Banstead Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council and Surrey Heath Borough Council.

From July to October 2025, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council conducted the first resident consultation on the proposal to establish Community Councils, and 67% of respondents were supportive of the proposal. As a result of the consultation, and listening to our residents, further work has been carried out and the Council is undertaking a second and final resident consultation from December 2025 to February 2026.

It is disappointing that the Labour, Liberal Democrat, Conservative and Independent groups are seeking to derail this work and, in doing so, deny the residents of Epsom and Ewell the second consultation to make an informed decision on whether to proceed with establishing two Community Councils. To my mind, this is another example of political parties denying residents their democratic voice — which we have already seen through the cancellation of the Surrey local elections due to take place in May 2025, and more recently, through not listening to the resident voice in the consultation on Surrey local government reorganisation, where residents were vehemently opposed to the establishment of two Unitary Councils.

The case for establishing a Community Council becomes stronger when you consider what the new East Surrey Unitary Council — which will represent a population of 551,000 — will mean for democratic representation for the residents of Epsom and Ewell.

Currently, the residents of Epsom and Ewell have 35 Borough Councillors and 5 County Councillors. Following the establishment of the East Surrey Unitary Council, this will reduce to 10 Councillors for a population of 81,000; that is a 75% decrease in democratic representation. If ever there were a compelling reason to explore introducing a local Community Council, it is this.

The key areas the second consultation is seeking residents' views on are:

- to establish two Community Councils — one for Epsom and one for Ewell
- to maintain the 14 individual wards that currently make up the Borough of Epsom and Ewell
- to propose 2 Community Councillors for each ward, elected as usual, who would all be volunteers and receive no remuneration for representing residents at a local level
- a proposed precept of around £45 a year (approximately £3.75 a month or 12p a day)

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The precept would cover the new Community Councils' administration — such as employment costs, office supplies and equipment, website and IT, insurances — but more importantly, services such as planning, because the Community Council would be a statutory consultee.

This is a pragmatic approach to the proposed introduction of Community Councils, as currently we do not know how the new East Surrey Unitary Council will function.

However, it is worth noting that evidence from areas which have already undergone local government reorganisation shows that there is a critical role for Community Councils, and that the 'Neighbourhood Area Committees' being proposed by Surrey County Council, in practice, do not have the requisite powers or representation to deliver for the residents they represent.

This Epsom and Ewell Community Governance Review consultation will close at 11.59pm on Sunday 1 February 2026 and can be accessed online at:

https://eebc.inconsult.uk/CGRproposal/consultationHome

Paper copies of the consultation can be found at:

The Town Hall
Bourne Hall
Stoneleigh Library
Epsom Library
Ewell Court Library
Community and Wellbeing Centre

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Hannah Dalton

From Cllr Kate Chinn (Labour Court Ward)

Dear Editor

I do not believe there is a need for community councils and they will cause additional costs for residents. There are far too many unknowns. The new unitary council is only obliged to pass on management of allotments which, if the Residents Association councillors get their way, would be two costly administration systems set up for a minimal service.

Alternatively, all the borough's costly and heavily subsidised venues including the Playhouse and Bourne Hall could be transferred. Both need continued costly refurbishment. Costs that would be passed on to residents.

The RA- led council are clearly pushing for two parish/community councils – one for Epsom and one for Ewell. An increase of administration from the two currently representing the borough.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Kate Chinn

ELKIN (nee Davey) Margaret 'Maggie' Eleanor

9 January 2026

Died Peacefully on 6th December 2025 aged 78.

Beloved wife to Peter and Mum to Graeme, Kirsty and Lisa. She will be greatly missed by all her family and friends.

Funeral Service will take place on Thursday 8th January 2026 at 2.00pm at St Paul's Church, Chichester, PO19 6FT

Family flowers only but donations may be made to Parkinson's UK c/o H.D. Tribe Ltd Funeral Directors www.hdtribe.co.uk

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A Nice Xmas Double for Epsom & Ewell FC

9 January 2026

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26th November 2026

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Epsom & Ewell FC v Balham FC 20th December – Combined Counties Premier League. Away At Imperial Fields, Bishopsfield Road. Morden.

We played Balham FC at their adopted home, Imperial Fields, and recorded our first double of the season after beating them 3–1 way back in early August at our then temporary home, the Reg Madgwick Stadium in Cobham. This was a far more attritional game, which we emerged from as winners thanks to a second-half strike to secure a 1–0 victory.

We welcomed Che Bell back into our defensive formation and he made a great comeback. Teddy Ralph played at left wing-back in a very unfamiliar position for him and acquitted himself very well. We also welcomed Prince Aderogba to the football club, who impressed on his debut. Antonios Nazareth took a place on the bench after recovering from flu earlier in the week.

One of our players, Connor McShane, was injured in the warm-up, so Ryley Merrett was called up and arrived by taxi to take his place on the substitutes' bench. Last but not least, our 44-year-old assistant manager, Craig Dundas, played up front alongside Tyler Robinson. This demonstrated just how many players we are missing. Craig, by the way, played very well during the 58 minutes he was on the pitch and was a constant threat to the Balham defence.

First Half

The game was mostly played in the Balham half, although they did come back into it during the five minutes before half-time. The referee "set his stall out" early by booking Luis Oliveira in the 8th minute. A further three yellow cards were brandished, making it 2–2 in the book at half-time.

We did have a good shot from Tyler Robinson saved, but this was about the only real goalmouth action of the first half.

Half-time: 0–0

In the 50th minute, Karl Bailey replaced the injured Jason Bloor, and in the 58th minute Obasanjo Akinniranye replaced Craig Dundas. We were still very much on top at this stage.

In the 63rd minute, we got the goal we richly deserved as Tyler Robinson broke down the right flank and crossed for substitute Akinniranye, who calmly slotted the ball between two defenders to give us the lead.

Balham immediately began making substitutions, and we followed suit when Callum O'Keeffe replaced Teddy Ralph in the 74th minute.

Unfortunately, we lost Tyler Robinson in the 87th minute to an alleged elbow on a Balham defender. He was shown a straight red card after the referee consulted with his assistant. Was the red card harsh? Yes, it was. Tyler was convinced after the match that this was the case, and this view was supported by the Balham player involved, who expressed his surprise at the decision.

Could we hold out, with what appeared to be plenty of injury time still to play? The answer was **YES**. A very good three points were secured, moving us on to 28 points, although with no change in our league position.

What's Next?

We have a big match against Corinthian Casuals at Chalky Lane, Chessington, next Saturday, 27th December, with a 3pm kick-off. As a large crowd is expected, it would be advisable to arrive in good time if travelling by car to secure a parking space.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

18th December 2025

9 January 2026

Community News

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26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771

A year in the life of Epsom’s Deputy Lieutenant Mary Zoeller



17 December 2025

From scout band concerts to royal visits, the past year has offered Epsom resident Mary Zoeller a front-row view of some of Surrey’s most inspiring community activity. Appointed a Deputy … Read More

Horse racing News Sports

Derby Prize Money to Rise to £2m as Epsom Seeks to Reassert Its Place at the Top of British Racing



16 December 2025

The Derby at Epsom is set to regain its position at the very summit of British flat racing after The Jockey Club confirmed that prize money for the 2026 renewal … Read More

Arts Culture Health

Epsom mural project to celebrate neurodiversity



16 December 2025

A major new public art project celebrating neurodiversity is planned for Epsom, led by local autistic artist Marcele Silvina Rodrigues White, following support from the rail operator and council to … Read More

Football Sports

Cobham Cruise Past Epsom & Ewell in 4–0 Chalky Lane Defeat



15 December 2025

Epsom and Ewell FC 0 – 4 Cobham Combined Counties League Premier South. Venue Chalky Lane Chessington. The Salts succumbed to their worst home defeat of the season, losing 0-4 … Read More

Rugby Sports

Late Penalty Breaks Epsom Hearts in 34–33 Thriller

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26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



15 December 2025

Dartfordians 34 Sutton & Epsom RFC 33 Saturday 13th December. The midpoint of the campaign has been reached and the return journey has begun in Regional 2 South East. In … Read More

Business Education

Neurodiversity good for business Surrey study shows



15 December 2025

Businesses and policymakers risk missing out on workforce potential by misunderstanding neurodiverse conditions and the biological differences that shape entrepreneurial strengths, according to new research led by the University of … Read More

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Cobham Cruise Past Epsom & Ewell in 4–0 Chalky Lane Defeat

9 January 2026



Epsom and Ewell FC 0 – 4 Cobham Combined Counties League Premier South. Venue Chalky Lane Chessington.

The Salts succumbed to their worst home defeat of the season, losing 0-4 to Cobham. The fact that Cobham are running away with the league (13 points clear with 2 games in hand on 2nd place) meant it would be a difficult game, but unfortunately a poor performance made it easy for them, and they didn’t have to get out of second gear in order to claim the 3 points in front of 101 fans.

Injuries and suspensions meant we had to move players around again, although, after the fact, the suspensions were probably best today rather than Tuesday evening, with a more winnable game v Badshot Lea.
Sami Nabbad returned in goal, Shane Dunne came into midfield as Adam Green went to centre-back in place of the suspended Antonios Nazareth, Callum O’Keefe returned in place of Jason Bloor, Filip Ksaidz replaced Andrew Herring, and finally Karl Bailey came in for Ali Fofahan.

There was a little bit of hope in the early stages as Luis Oliveira managed to get to the goal line in the 2nd minute, but he was forced out by three defenders and unable to get the cross in, and the ball ricocheted off him, not even getting the corner. Cobham had the first chance of the afternoon when No. 9 Marklew had a shot across the goal after a good move down their left. Fortunately, there was no one coming in on the far post — something that was to change shortly. Nabbad was forced to make a couple of diving stops to prevent the ball going across the goal. He then had a poor kick-out and his ball went straight to a Cobham player who tried to play in No. 10 Hayford, but fortunately there was a bit too much on the pass and it ran out for a goal kick.

We then lost Shane Dunne to a knee injury after 15 minutes which would cause us problems as he holds the midfield together, and with Adam Green in defence, we were in for a difficult time. After 17 minutes Cobham got their reward for their control of the game. Again it came down their left with No. 11 Rule playing a nice ball across the goal, with Marklew

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running in unopposed and passing the ball into the net.
Epsom & Ewell 0-1 Cobham.

Cobham were now in control and on 31 minutes a nice ball was played into Marklew, and he found himself 1-on-1 with Nabbad, who had moved quickly off his line. Marklew attempted to lift the ball over the onrushing keeper and fortunately put a bit too much on it and it went over the bar too. Shortly after, we managed to put a nice move together and the ball was played to Oliveira who burst towards the box only to be brought down just outside. McVey, who normally takes the kick, stepped aside for No. 9 Robinson to have a go, but his shot hit the bottom of the wall and rebounded easily back to the keeper. On 36 minutes we gave away a free kick outside the box, which earned Nelson-Roberts a yellow card, in a similar position to our previous kick. Cobham No. 7 decided to go under the wall as well. He also managed to hit the bottom and it rolled easily back to Nabbad. Unfortunately, Sami managed to let the ball go through his hands and legs and it rolled into the goal. I don't even think it managed to hit the back of the net.

Cobham continued to create more and keep us pinned in our half and they had a couple more chances that didn't really trouble Nabbad, but a header in the box from Marklew appeared to strike an Epsom & Ewell arm. There was a big shout from Cobham players but the referee waved it away. Difficult to see from where we were standing but we went in 0-2 down.
HT Epsom & Ewell 0-2 Cobham.

There needed to be a big talk from the management to get the players focused for the second half. 2-0 down still means we are in the game, but our performance in the first half was poor and lacked any real energy. Hopefully, we would give it a go in the second. Alas, it was not to be and despite the fact we were playing down the hill in the second half, Cobham continued to exert pressure. Again they had a couple of chances and a third goal looked on the cards rather than us getting back into the game, and on 62 minutes we gave them a third goal. Trying to play out from the back, Nabbad played the ball to Green who attempted to play the ball across goal to Aiwone. He tried to let the ball run across his body whilst facing the goal, but No. 11 Rule anticipated the move and took the ball off Aiwone and slotted the ball into an empty net.

In the meantime, Oba Akinniranye had replaced Karl Bailey and, as always, he started to cause trouble on our right; however, he managed to get himself booked after a little bit of trouble with Cobham No. 4, and both ended up in the book. Oba did manage to provide an assist for our first real shot on goal and good movement found Ryley Merritt (who had replaced Dunne in the 1st half). He had a good shot, but it went across the goal. As the keeper scrambled across it must have been close. Cobham seemed to think *we have to stop this* and on the 85th minute another move down the Cobham right had the ball played across goal and No. 14 Simpson had another easy finish at the far post.

We managed to create a couple of chances towards the end and finally their keeper had to make a save, after Oba again created problems and his shot was stopped just short of the goal. Jack Torbett, returning after another lay-off, hit the bar from a cross/shot. There was nothing really after that, and Cobham continued their march to the title.

After a great mid-week performance v Step 4 Bedfont Sports in a friendly, today's performance was disappointing and with only one shot on goal for the whole game it is probably the worst since we lost to Sutton Common Rovers. Losing to Cobham is also not the worst result either, but we need to gather ourselves for Tuesday night v Badshot Lea at Chalky Lane. KO 7.45, as some of the teams below us are putting in good results and we don't wish to be drawn into another relegation battle.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Team:
Nabbad, Oliveira, Nelson-Roberts, C. Green, Dunne, Aiwone, O'Keeffe, Murphy-McVey, Robinson, Ksaidz, Bailey — Subs: Gilfillian-Waul, Dundas, Akinniranye, Merrett, Torbett.

Epsom and Ewell FC Media

11th December 2025

9 January 2026

Council Council constitution News

Public of Epsom and Ewell to be asked if they want two new Councils

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ISSN 2753-2771



10 December 2025

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has voted to continue exploring the creation of two new community councils—one for Epsom and one for Ewell—following an often heated debate at the Full … Read More

Rugby Sports

Epsom’s Five Tries Not Enough to Halt Brighton Charge



8 December 2025

Sutton & Epsom RFC 33 Brighton 43. Saturday 6th December. Brighton is one of Sutton & Epsom’s oldest fixtures dating back to 1897. The arrival of Brighton also marked the … Read More

Council Housing Planning

Blockbuster cinema and 480 homes plan for Leatherhead town centre



6 December 2025

Hundreds of new homes in blocks of up to 12 storeys high, as well as a three-screen cinema, could be coming to Leatherhead town centre if newly submitted plans are … Read More

Council Council constitution Editorial

Do Epsom and Ewell Borough’s allotments need their own elected Councils?



5 December 2025

Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillors will meet on Tuesday 9 December to decide whether to progress the next stage of creating two new parish councils for the borough before the … Read More

Council Council constitution

Neighbour Area Committees in Surrey

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26th November 2026

ISSN 2753-2771



5 December 2025

As Surrey prepares for major local government reorganisation, the County Council has been trialling a new model of community involvement known as Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs). These committees, currently operating … Read More

Culture Football Sports

Surrey author’s unexpected journey to global football goodwill



5 December 2025

If you had asked Surrey-based accidental author Stephen Johnson twenty years ago whether he would one day write a ten-book children’s series, sponsor a grassroots football kit in East London, … Read More

Community Local History News

“Us and Them” visualises connections with former Epsom patients



5 December 2025

A ground-breaking heritage project exploring the lives of disabled people detained in Surrey’s former mental hospitals is turning fresh attention on Horton Cemetery in Epsom – the burial ground of … Read More

News Westminster

MP warns as 3,600 Epsom homes face fuel poverty



4 December 2025

More than 3,600 households in Epsom and Ewell are estimated to be living in fuel poverty this winter, according to new figures that have reignited debate over the Government’s decision … Read More

News Policing

Woking up to Surrey face recognition cameras

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ISSN 2753-2771



4 December 2025

Formal protests have been lodged against Surrey Police's use of facial recognition technology that scans the faces of every adult and child in a bid to identify known suspects. Surrey … Read More

Council Transport Volunteers

Young Surrey volunteers help shape new neuroinclusive travel app



4 December 2025

Young people in Surrey have helped test a new travel-planning app designed to make public transport less stressful for neurodivergent passengers. Members of ATLAS, Surrey Youth Voice's participation group for … Read More

Council Transport

Surrey fast to introduce slow speed limits?



4 December 2025

20mph speed limits could soon be introduced across three Surrey neighbourhoods, with residents now invited to give their views. Surrey County Council is consulting on new slower-speed zones in Barnsbury …

Community Environment Volunteers

The Mayor of Epsom and Ewell meets local climate volunteers



4 December 2025

The Mayor of Epsom & Ewell, Cllr Robert Leach, met with members of the Epsom and Ewell Climate Action Network (EECAN) to hear about the community projects they are mobilising … Read More

Football Sports

Epsom and Ewell FC's narrow defeat

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26th November 2026

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4 December 2025

Tooting & Mitcham 2 – 1 Epsom and Ewell FC. Saturday 29th November. Imperial Fields, Morden. Combined Counties Premier South League The Salts slipped to a narrow 2-1 defeat at … Read More

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