

11th June 2026

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Council Finances

“Are Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillors adults?” Bourne Hall row continues



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4 June 2026

Roy Deadman Reflects on Election and the Road Ahead Dear Editor, I am writing with a full heart and a great deal of gratitude following my election as councillor for ... [Read More](#)

“Are Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillors adults?” Bourne Hall row continues

11 June 2026



Epsom and Ewell councillors have backed a proposal to invest £250,000 over two years in Bourne Hall Museum, but only after another bruising debate over transparency, councillors’ access to information and the continuing fallout from the withheld museum service review.

At a special meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council’s Community and Wellbeing Committee on 9 June, members voted by six votes to none, with one abstention, to support “Option 2” — investment in improvement of the museum. A funding request and business case will now go to the Strategy and Resources Committee in July.

The alternatives before councillors were to continue with business as usual, with no additional funding, or to close the museum.

In a media release supplied after the meeting, the council described the decision as “a significant step forward” and said the investment would help the museum remain “relevant and sustainable”. Committee chair Cllr **Clive Woodbridge** (RA Ewell Village) said Bourne Hall Museum was “a much-valued cultural asset” and that, with Local Government Reorganisation approaching, “ensuring a lasting legacy is more important than ever”.

Yet the meeting showed that the question of Bourne Hall Museum’s future has become inseparable from a wider dispute over how much information councillors and the public should be allowed to see before decisions are made.

The report before the committee referred to two 2025 reviews: the Bourne Hall Museum Service Review and the Local Government Association Cultural Peer Challenge. It stated that the reviews were relevant to all three options, including maintaining, developing or closing the service. However, the full Service Review was still not included in the public committee papers.

The report said the council’s Proper Officer had been invited to reconsider attaching the redacted service review, but had concluded that it would “not be appropriate” in order to “ensure the impartiality of information presented to members as the decision-making body”.

That explanation was fiercely challenged.

Cllr **Chris Ames** (Labour Court), who is not a member of the committee but addressed the meeting with the chair’s permission, argued that councillors had a right under section 100F of the Local Government Act 1972 to inspect documents containing material relating to business before a committee unless they disclosed exempt information.

He told the meeting that “impartiality” was not a lawful exemption. He said councillors were “elected adults capable of weighing evidence” and accused the council of operating in an “Alice in Wonderland world” in which selected councillors were given a report but, he said, were being required to act as though they had not seen it.

Cllr Ames also raised the question of public access, saying that section 100B of the same Act required relevant background papers to be published unless a legal exemption applied. He said no such exemption had been claimed and warned that the decision could be vulnerable to call-in or legal challenge.

Cllr Woodbridge said members had “all had a chance to read the report” and tried to steer the discussion back to the future of the museum. But the disclosure issue repeatedly resurfaced.

Cllr **Bernie Muir** (Conservative Horton) said that, having now seen the information, she could not understand why it had not been provided in the first place. She described the situation as “appalling” and said councillors should be trusted unless they had demonstrated otherwise.

She then turned to the substance of the review, saying that if the document seen by councillors was the full consultant’s report, “they’ve completely wasted their money”, because much of it amounted to basic organisational advice.

Cllr **Kate Chinn** (Labour Court) also expressed concern about what councillors were or were not allowed to say about the service review. She said she had left a pre-meeting briefing “more confused” about what she could quote or refer to. When she asked whether “bias” was a lawful reason for withholding material, she said she had been told it was “not about the law” but about the Proper Officer’s decision-making.

The chair said he was sure legal advice had been taken, but that the decision was one for the Proper Officer, made on her own judgment.

Epsom and Ewell Times has seen a confidential email sent by Chief Executive Jackie King to members of the committee before the meeting. In it she said it was “not about confidentiality, sensitivity or lack of transparency” but about “impartiality of information presented to members as the decision making body”.

The Chief Executive wrote that the Service Review was “not unbiased” and would not be suitable in its “raw” form for inclusion in a committee report comparing options, because it “repeatedly emphasises the need for continued investment in the existing museum” and could steer readers towards a preferred conclusion. She said she was willing to share the operational report with committee members, with sensitive data such as names redacted, but maintained that it was not suitable to append it to the public options appraisal.

The council’s public agenda for the special meeting stated that no matters were scheduled which would appear to disclose confidential or exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Financial questions also dominated the meeting.

The committee papers put the museum’s current annual budget at around £232,168. Of that, £65,785 related to employee costs for 1.5 full-time equivalent staff, while £123,840 was listed as “accommodation” — described in the papers as a central recharge for use of the space. Central services charges were £32,110, insurance recharges £2,292, other costs £12,180, and income from museum activities £4,039.

The “recharge” point was important because it raised doubts about what the museum really costs and what closure would actually save.

In simple terms, a recharge is an internal accounting allocation. The council incurs general costs for buildings, management, support services and overheads. It then spreads those costs across different services, so that each service appears in the accounts as bearing a share of the council’s wider running costs. That does not necessarily mean the museum is paying rent to an outside landlord, or that closing the museum would save the whole sum shown against it.

Cllr Woodbridge described these as “accountancy charges rather than real charges” and said that if the museum closed the council would not necessarily save that cost, because it was not a cost generated only by the museum.

That distinction matters. On the face of the papers, the museum appears to cost the council £232,168 a year. But more than half of that figure is the £123,840 accommodation recharge, and another £32,110 is central services charges. If those sums are mainly internal allocations of overheads which would remain elsewhere in the council’s budget, the direct cash saving from closing the museum could be far lower than the headline budget suggests.

Cllr Muir queried why such a large accommodation cost was charged to a free public museum located in a council-owned building. She asked why the museum had been put in that position when it was a public service occupying space within Bourne Hall. Ian Dyer, Head of Operational Services, accepted that the charge was historic and “would need to be challenged”.

Cllr **Alex Coley** (Independent Ruxley) said the recharge model could also make it “extremely unlikely” that the museum would succeed in major external funding applications, because funders would not want their money effectively being used to support internal council recharges. He said the LGA Cultural Peer Challenge had identified this issue.

Cllr Coley also questioned whether councillors were being asked to approve a meaningful investment or simply a process. He said some of the proposed actions — such as replacing long-form text in displays, creating strategies, branding work and social media planning — sounded like business as usual rather than a major transformation. He called for “concrete, tangible” outcomes rather than more paperwork.

Mr Dyer said some short and medium-term recommendations had already been completed by museum staff and that the next stage would be to bring back a business plan setting out what changes would be made with the proposed £125,000 per year.

Cllr Chinn, who proposed supporting Option 2, said any report to Strategy and Resources would need much more detail, including timescales, costs and the implications of Local Government Reorganisation. Cllr Woodbridge agreed that the committee was being asked to decide the principle, not the full business case.

There was little appetite in the room for closing the museum. Before the vote, Cllr Woodbridge said he sensed members appreciated the value of the museum and noted that Option 3 — closure — had not been pursued in the debate.

The committee’s decision does not itself release the £250,000. That decision now passes to Strategy and Resources, where councillors will have to decide whether the business case is strong enough, whether the museum’s accounting model is sustainable, and whether the long-running argument over the service review has been resolved or merely

postponed.

For now, Bourne Hall Museum has survived another political test. But the controversy over who gets to see the evidence, and when, remains very much alive.

Sam Jones - Reporter



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Epsom Racecourse: Preview and Tips for Derby Day on Saturday

11 June 2026



It's Derby Day at Epsom Racecourse; one of the most important race meetings of the year. Today's card consists of eight races, with the two Group One contests taking centre stage; the Coronation Cup and the Derby itself. These are supported by two Group Three races, the Dash Handicap and three further handicaps.

*Read on for a preview of and tips for the Epsom card, brought to you by **BOYLE Sports**, who have all the **horse racing odds**.*

Racing kicks off with the Group Three Tattenham Corner Stakes (13.30). This is a race for older horses run over seven furlongs. There is plenty of good quality recent form on show here, with Never So Brave as the top rated runner for Andrew Balding. His first effort this season was underwhelming, but improvement is expected. Alcantor is a consistent sort who seems likely to run to at least a place, while Golden Mind could spring a surprise if the rain continues to fall.

Next is the extended mile Group Three Princess Elizabeth Stakes for fillies and mares (14.05). Shes Perfect and Sparks Fly jointly top the ratings, and bring a similar level of form to the table. Shes Perfect has very well to place in Group One company but lacks a Group level win, while Sparks Fly has won a Group Three contest before. She was two lengths behind last year's Derby winner Lambourn in the Huxley Stakes last month, which is promising, and was third in this race last year. Shes Perfect has the most potential for improvement, though.

The Coronation Cup follows, run over a mile and a half (14.40). Francis-Henri Graffard's revered gelding Calandagan comes back to attempt to reverse last year's form with Jan Brueghel here, having won five back-to-back Group One races since that day in France, England, Japan and the UAE. Now rated five pounds higher than the Coolmore representative, the Aga Khan horse will be hot favourite and for good reason. He faces some top class opponents, but he is the highest rated horse in the world over this distance currently and will take all the beating.

Race four is the five-furlong Dash Handicap (15.15). Ian Williams' Dyonisos is god on undulating tracks and could pick up a place at least, having been only narrowly beaten last time, but this is a big ask for him. Kinswoman is a consistent sort who ought to factor, and Cindy Lou Who looks somewhat overpriced and could be a good each-way play.

Onto the feature race of the day, the Derby, worth £1million to the winner (16.00). Benvenuto Cellini is Coolmore's first string, under Ryan Moore, having won the Chester Vase last time. Item is a very strong candidate for Juddmonte, but is unproven on softer ground. James J Braddock and Pierre Bonnard finished within a short head of one another at Leopardstown last time and are contenders, but both would need a career best. Action is worth keeping an eye on too.

A 10-furlong handicap follows (16.40). Pendella could go well for Karl Burke, given five pounds by rider Jack Nicholls. Savvy Disko makes his handicap debut and could be of interest, while Folk Pageant could be in the mix. Hell Yeah He Did has shown plenty of potential so far and could have a good chance for Ralph Beckett.

Second to last is a mile and a half handicap (17.20). Hengest has recently completed a hat-trick but would need a real career best to win this, while Charlie Johnston's Elsass seeks a similar achievement, having won both of his two most recent starts. Regal Ulixes looks competitive and could be at a winnable mark. He performs on any ground too.

The Derby Festival concludes with a six-furlong handicap (17.55). Gold Star Hero has recently completed a hat-trick and comes here 16 pounds higher than his last start in 2025. Partisan Hero could get involved, as could Saint Lawrence. Sondad looks competitive on last year's form, but must leave a disappointing return to action behind him.

Epsom selections - Saturday:

13.30 - Alcantor

14.05 - Shes Perfect

14.40 - Calandagan

15.15 - Cindy Lou Who

16.00 - Item

16.40 - Hell Yeah He Did

17.20 - Regal Ulixes

17.55 - Sondad

Horses racing Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

Epsom Racecourse: Preview and Tips for Derby Festival Oaks Day on Friday

11 June 2026



The first day of the eagerly anticipated Derby Festival is finally here. Today's eight-race card has the Group One Oaks as the headline race, supported by the Listed Surrey Stakes, the Group Three Diomed Stakes, the Woodcote Stakes, Nifty 50 handicap and three further handicaps.

*Read on for a preview of and tips for the Epsom card, brought to you by BOYLE Sports, who provide all **horse racing odds**.*

The action kicks off with the five-furlong Dash Handicap for two-year-olds (13.30). Alfa Duplicate, U S S Charleston and Wedonttellies were all winners last time out, with U S S Charleston looking possibly the most likely to repeat the form, given five pounds by his rider. There is no guarantee that he will handle this track, though, therefore Coyy might be worth thinking about. Charmanfourtimes could go well having come down four pounds, while Naana's Shadow has an eye-catching booking in Oisin Murphy.

Next is the Woodcote Stakes; a six-furlong race for two-year-olds (14.05). Plenty of the runners have already won a race, and this should be an exciting watch. Charlie Hills' El Lambo won his race by the biggest margin - over four lengths - but has a tricky draw in 11. Rlasthope is worthy of some each-way interest, while George Boughey's Havana Flash is an interesting debutant. Wild Terrain impressed on winning debut at Hamilton, and again the booking of Oisin Murphy is a potential indicator.

Race three is the extended mile Group Three Diomed Stakes (14.40). Karl Burke's Boiling Point tops the ratings and won last time out in Listed company at Goodwood recently. He should handle this track well and is a serious contender. Seagulls Eleven equally should go well around Epsom and can handle some rain too. Chancellor has limited form on turf but won well on his debut on soft ground at Doncaster, so he could outrun his odds.

The Nifty 50 Handicap follows, run over 10 furlongs (15.15). Roger Varian's Sallaal returned to action nicely over course and distance in April, but he is drawn wide here. Respond's new mark needs to be proven today, whereas Alpha Crucis' looks appealing. Let's Dream steps up in class here and could have an each-way chance after a win at Chester in May.

In the afternoon's feature race, the mile and a half Group One Oaks (16.00), Coolmore's Amelia Earheart looks the likely favourite after winning the Cheshire Oaks at Chester in May. Charlie Johnston's Venetian Lace tops the ratings and ran significantly better than expected in the 1,000 Guineas, finishing third, and she could run another solid race here. She is probably better on firmer ground, though. Cameo can go on softer ground, as can Thundering On, who could be worth thinking about.

An extended mile handicap is next (16.40). Celeborn is a useful sort who could be of interest in first-time cheekpieces after a midfield finish last time, while Stem can act on any ground and stays on a competitive enough mark to get involved here. It's worth looking out for Man Of La Mancha, while Walsingham could prove to be overpriced for David O'Meara.

Second to last is the Listed Surrey Stakes, run over seven furlongs (17.15). This looks a reasonably open race, but Joseph O'Brien's Irish raider Greek Mythology could be an interesting one to side with. He has won on the all-weather and is still relatively unexposed on turf, but has placed on both starts on that surface so far.

Finally, racing concludes with a seven-furlong handicap (17.50). Zarathos seeks a hat-trick, but looks unlikely here. Course and distance winner Rhoscolyn is now down to an attractive mark and warrants serious thought, while Colombier is entitled to improve on his seasonal reappearance at Ascot.

Epsom selections - Friday:

13.30 - Coyo

14.05 - Wild Terrain

14.40 - Boiling Point

15.15 - Alpha Crucis

16.00 - Thundering On

16.40 - Stem e/w

17.15 - Greek Mythology

17.50 - Rhoscolyn

Horses racing Image: Credit Paul. CC BY 2.0

Hopes and thanks of a new Councillor in Epsom

11 June 2026



Roy Deadman Reflects on Election and the Road Ahead

Dear Editor,

I am writing with a full heart and a great deal of gratitude following my election as councillor for the Epsom Town & Downs ward, and to give a short update on the progress and challenges ahead. To every resident who placed their trust in me, thank you. It means more than I can properly put into words.

Over the past six months of canvassing, I had the privilege of hundreds of conversations on doorsteps right across the ward. Those conversations were the most valuable part of the entire campaign. Residents shared their personal stories and experiences with me, from the frustration of persistent potholes and the importance of protecting our precious green spaces, to concerns around local planning decisions.

I heard about the need for safer, better-lit walkways that properly connect our town, and the challenges facing families trying to access local SEND support. Public transport came up repeatedly, with many residents, particularly those in Langley Vale, calling for more frequent and better-connected services. Road safety and speeding through residential streets was a consistent theme, as were concerns about anti-social behaviour, e-scooters, and inconsiderate moped parking.

The Chalk Pit and the importance of holding firm on the agreements in place was raised by a number of residents, and I want to assure you that this remains very much on my radar. People also spoke passionately about maintaining funding for the brilliant local groups and organisations that already make Epsom and Ewell such a great place to live, and that support must continue as we navigate the significant changes ahead.

Now that the election is over, I want to be very clear: staying connected to this community is not optional, it is essential. In due course my fellow councillors and I will be arranging local meetups, and we will be back out on the doorstep listening and asking for feedback. Representing this ward is a privilege, and we intend to earn that trust every single day.

I want to give a very special thank you to Helen Maguire and her entire team. Their support throughout this campaign was extraordinary. Helen ran a professional, values-driven campaign and set a standard that we will all carry with us into our roles as councillors.

What made it particularly special was that Helen did not just support from a distance. She was out canvassing alongside us in the evenings and at weekends, making sure that as a team we were genuinely listening to residents and placing their

views at the centre of everything we do. The trust she placed in us as candidates, and now as councillors, was humbling and deeply motivating.

I also want to thank the incredible volunteers who delivered thousands of leaflets, supported our canvassing, showed up to events, and were there at the end of some very long evenings knocking on doors, sometimes with a well-earned pint to follow. Your dedication was the backbone of this campaign.

And to my fellow Liberal Democrat candidates, now councillors, I want to say how proud I am to have stood alongside each of you. Over these months, we have built something genuinely special, a team bound together by trust, hard work, shared values, mutual respect, and a real desire to do what is right for the communities we all call home. We have also, crucially, managed to make each other smile along the way.

Looking ahead, we face significant challenges. By 31 March 2027, we will see the formation of the East Surrey Unitary Council, as Surrey County Council is divided into two new authorities, East and West, with the borough and district councils merging into the new East Council. As Shadow Councillors, we must ensure that on vesting day, local services continue without disruption. The residents of Epsom and Ewell should feel nothing but continuity and, in time, genuine improvement.

I also want us to recognise the officers, the dedicated employees across the councils involved in this transition. Their combined skills and experience will be absolutely vital to the success of the new Unitary Council, and we must support and value them throughout this process.

I am pleased to share that I will be sitting on the East Surrey Authority Employment Committee, where I hope to play a constructive role in making this transition work well for everyone.

The work has already begun in earnest. There have been local discussions and planning meetings with the Liberal Democrat Epsom and Ewell team, as well as wider meetings involving all 40 Liberal Democrat councillors representing East Surrey, laying the groundwork and ensuring we fully understand the challenges ahead.

We recently held a full councillor induction day, where I had the pleasure of meeting colleagues across all parties who will help form this new team. I was proud to be present at the first inaugural full Shadow East Surrey Council meeting, where we elected senior roles, cabinet positions and committee members, building the structures we need to move forward at pace.

The mix of skills, different backgrounds and wealth of experience amongst the shadow councillors has put us in a strong starting position to deliver on our objectives.

This is also, I believe, a unique opportunity. A fresh start means we can shape how this new council works, how it manages its budget, and how it delivers services. I am determined that we bring real efficiencies, hold outsourced contractors firmly to account against their contractual obligations, and negotiate future contracts that deliver genuine value for our residents.

Until midnight on 31 March 2027 we will be Shadow Councillors focusing on what I have outlined above. Until then we will support, where possible, the current councillors of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and continue to listen to residents in preparation for the handover of responsibility to East Surrey.

Finally, thank you to my family and friends. The extra childcare, school runs, family dinners missed, and the many hugs when I needed them most – without that steadfast support, the campaign would have been so much harder. I am deeply grateful.

I look forward to getting to work for Epsom Town & Downs. This is just the beginning.

Yours faithfully,

Cllr Roy Deadman

Epsom Town & Downs Ward

East Surrey Unitary Council

4th June 2026

11 June 2026

Business Council Planning

Late hour Epsom kebab decision gets a grilling



2 June 2026

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Editorial

Power changes. Our duty does not.



2 June 2026

One of the easier occupations in local journalism is to be a cheerleader. Another is to be a partisan attack dog. Epsom and Ewell Times intends to be neither. Our ... [Read More](#)

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LibDem vote kept RA's Dalton in power – but Cllr Freeman faces questions over his own political past



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Council Council constitution Planning

Fresh Local Plan row as residents challenge legality of latest Epsom and Ewell consultation



2 June 2026

A fresh dispute has erupted over Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's embattled Local Plan process after residents challenged the constitutional validity of the council's latest planning consultation. The row follows ... [Read More](#)

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Epsom and Ewell Local Plan next phase



28 May 2026

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Council Finances

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28 May 2026

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Council Council constitution Letters

A motion in note or a note in motion?



28 May 2026

Dear Editor, Thank you as always for your coverage of last night's council meeting. You correctly report that the mayor refused to allow councillors to debate my motion on the ... [Read More](#)

Power changes. Our duty does not.

11 June 2026



One of the easier occupations in local journalism is to be a cheerleader. Another is to be a partisan attack dog. Epsom and Ewell Times intends to be neither.

Our role is simpler and harder: to report fearlessly, scrutinise those who exercise power, publish differing viewpoints,

correct errors where necessary, and ask awkward questions whoever happens to occupy the seats of authority.

Readers familiar with our record know this is not a new posture adopted for convenience.

Over recent years, EET has carried extensive and often critical reporting concerning the record of the Residents' Association administration at Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

We reported searchingly on the Local Plan controversy — including questions surrounding process, oversight, governance and public confidence in decision-making.

We reported vigorously on the Bourne Hall redevelopment dispute, including clashes between councillors, scrutiny concerns, executive decisions and the wider debate about transparency and democratic accountability.

We covered controversy surrounding Rainbow Leisure Centre and wider issues of public assets, local services and decision-making priorities.

Those reports did not always please those holding office. That is not the point. The point is that power — especially long-established power — deserves examination.

Political circumstances in Epsom and Surrey are now changing rapidly.

The Residents' Association's once dominant electoral position has weakened dramatically. Liberal Democrats are increasingly influential in both Epsom and Ewell and the emerging East Surrey structures.

Some might therefore expect a local newspaper to change its tone, soften its scrutiny, or discover fresh loyalties.

They should not.

Our reporting has already shown this.

We reported concerns surrounding attempts to restrict candidate engagement with the press during the recent election period — what became known publicly as the “gagging order” controversy.

More recently, we examined the decisive leadership vote at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council in which two Liberal Democrat votes helped retain the incumbent leadership by a single vote. In doing so, we put questions directly to Liberal Democrat councillor Julian Freeman regarding his stated reasons for supporting the incumbent leader and the consistency of those reasons with aspects of his own political history.

That is not anti-Liberal Democrat reporting. Nor was previous scrutiny anti-Residents' Association reporting.

It is journalism.

There is a distinction.

Political parties, independents, residents' groups and elected personalities all understandably wish to advance narratives favourable to themselves. Newspapers have a different obligation.

We are not an extension of any political campaign, administration, opposition group, business interest or activist faction.

We are a local, community-based, not-for-profit news organisation. Our loyalty is to evidence, public interest and readers.

That means some reports will discomfort the Residents' Association. Others will discomfort Liberal Democrats, Conservatives, independents, campaigners, officials, developers, pressure groups — and occasionally ourselves.

So be it.

A healthy local democracy requires neither compliant journalism nor selective scrutiny reserved for yesterday's establishment while today's rising powers enjoy indulgence.

Power changes hands.

The duty to hold it to account does not.

Epsom Councillor's disclosure claims Bourne out on review

11 June 2026



The future of Bourne Hall and its museum has become one of the most contentious issues in Epsom & Ewell local politics in recent months. Debate has ranged from ambitious proposals for the landmark “UFO-shaped” building's revival to sharp disagreements over governance, transparency and access to information. Earlier this year, councillors on the Community

& Wellbeing Committee challenged elements of the Council's approach, while a decision connected with the matter was later suspended by the Council's Chief Executive acting in her statutory capacity. Central to the dispute has been a service review of Bourne Hall Museum, parts of which were initially withheld from councillors and the public.

In the following letter, Independent councillor Alex Coley sets out his view following a review and the subsequent disclosure of much of the report's contents.

A fuller background is provided in the following Epsom and Ewell Times reports:

Bourne Hall row escalates as Chief Executive suspends councillors' decision

Ewell's Bourne Hall plans knocked back by scrutiny

Independent view of Ewell's Bourne Hall

Ewell's "UFO" shaped Bourne Hall to take off anew

Letter to the Editor — Cllr Alex Coley

Dear Editor,

Amidst all the excitement of the Annual Council meeting on Tuesday 26 May, I received the outcome of an internal review into the FOI request that I submitted for the Service Review of Bourne Hall Museum at the beginning of February.

We should be very grateful to the service review author for the depth of understanding and breadth of appreciation for the questions they were asked to explore. This document is absolutely fundamental for elected members to deliberate the future of the museum. It should never have been withheld.

Comparing the redacted and unredacted versions side by side, it becomes apparent that an almost paranoid sensitivity to potential embarrassment has played a part in non-disclosure.

Unredacted sections describe the absence of any visitor data or visitor research, siloed working at EEBC, and the lack of structured objectives for the museum. Yet all these were laid bare in the LGA Cultural Peer Challenge and disclosed in full.

Recognising and acknowledging these issues are crucial to assuring councillors that the issues are understood sufficiently and that an injection of new funding will be used appropriately and effectively. This cannot be achieved behind a veil of secrecy. Trust must be earned rather than demanded.

From the original FOI request to the delayed response took 109 days — almost four months. The normal expectation is 20 days. The initial response was a mish-mash of erroneous case law and political deflection disguised by the application of Section 43(2) of the Freedom of Information Act — "to prejudice commercial interests".

I had to make a formal complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office when our Council failed to conduct an internal review within 40 days. The resulting correspondence makes it clear that it was ICO intervention which led to the information being disclosed properly.

Subsequently, the Council has disclosed most of the information unredacted.

However, the belated introduction of Section 36 of FOI in the response is an intriguing piece of code-switching. This relates to the "effective conduct of public affairs" and was not used in the original response. In layman's terms, this concerns the ability of council officers to give free and frank advice.

Section 36 was engaged as a reason not to disclose advice given by a consultant to council officers. While I agree that it is important for such advice to be given freely, the need to do so openly, honestly and transparently is critical when spending public money — not least to the decision-makers who are accountable for public expenditure.

Fortunately, with ICO involvement, a strong public interest has been shown to outweigh concerns.

For those who explore the response in full, you will note that the respondent decides: "the majority of the report contains high-level, non-controversial analysis and recommendations that do not meet the threshold of demonstrating a likelihood of prejudice."

Well, hurray!

I must conclude that significant effort and energy is being expended by both officers and councillors in battles over secrecy. This is a waste of public money and an affront to the representation of electors. Councillors should not have to become investigative journalists to know what is going on in the organisation they have been appointed to run.

Transparency is significantly better value for money and, as the unredacted contents of the service review reveal, a far better means for deciding how public money should be spent in future. Democracy should be done and seen to be done.

I hoped that this item would be brought back to the Community & Wellbeing Committee to be determined in the manner it always should have been — openly and with all the information available.

However, recent correspondence to councillors on Thursday 28 May seems disconnected from the FOI request. It refers to a Special Community & Wellbeing Committee on 9 June and states:

"Following the invitation to revisit the non-inclusion of the Bourne Hall Service Review in the previous committee papers, it is the decision of the Council's Proper Officer for access to information that the decision will not be overturned."

The missive goes on to say:

"However, in order to move this item forward, the Council's Proper Officer proposes to limit access to the Bourne Hall

Service Review to the voting members of the Community & Wellbeing Committee that shall be in attendance at the 9 June special meeting and she will be present to discuss why the information will remain restricted.”

Finally, the message concludes:

“Please note that no photographs or copies of the exempt document are permitted to be taken.”

Readers of a certain vintage may recall sitcoms of the 1970s and 1980s — Dad’s Army, ‘Allo ‘Allo and, of course, Yes Minister. What a pity the writers never delved deeper into local government. There is a richness of material for satire and farce that is unmatched.

Perhaps we should reach for some of that Sir Humphrey comedy wisdom:

“If the right people don’t have power, do you know what happens? The wrong people get it. Politicians, councillors, ordinary voters!”

As we say in Epsom & Ewell: None Such.

Alex Coley
Independent Councillor - Ruxley

A motion in note or a note in motion?

11 June 2026



Dear Editor,

Thank you as always for your coverage of last night’s council meeting.

You correctly report that the mayor refused to allow councillors to debate my motion on the constitution, falsely framing it as an attempt to change the constitution, and that I denied this.

As both councillors and the public were prevented by the mayor from even seeing the motion, I thought your readers might like to. It was not a motion to amend the constitution but to amend the recommendation in the report, to add two unarguable factual points. Both were framed as to “note”, meaning that no action was required.

Had they been allowed, councillors would have been invited to:

- Note that, while the constitution states at paragraph 2.1: “The Code of Conduct for councillors is available in Appendix 1 and the arrangements for making a complaint and dealing with complaints can be found in the council’s Operating Framework”, no such arrangements exist in the Operating Framework.
- Further note that while the live register of delegations and the Terms of Reference for the Full Council and other Council Committees, Sub-Committees, Advisory Panels and Joint Arrangements delegate to hearings panels the determination of complaints referred by an Investigating Officer regarding alleged breaches of the councillors’ Code of Conduct, neither document provides any authority for such panels to issue any sanction.

It was my intention to draw the attention of councillors and the public these deficiencies in the constitution that councillors were being asked to approve, but with no attempt to amend it, as claimed by the mayor.

To be fair to Cllr McIntyre, it was obvious that she was merely reading from a script given to her by the administration, probably by those who are responsible for ensuring that the constitution is fit for purpose and who have a vested interest in concealing its failings. It was her first meeting as mayor and we might hope that she will learn from the incident.

My mistake was not that I submitted the amendment to the recommendation “late”, as there was no requirement to submit it in advance, but that I submitted it in advance at all, giving the administration the opportunity to engage in procedural shenanigans. I will learn from this.

Of course, as Cllr Lawrence eloquently and movingly attested, the absence of a proper procedure for complaints against councillors has real world consequences. The administration has targeted a number of opposition councillors, including myself, with code of conduct complaints while shielding senior Residents Association councillors.

Finally, you are right that the underlying problem with the meeting was that many councillors regard a meeting where matters of such importance as the council’s constitution are considered as a purely “civic” event, and any discussion to be keeping them from the refreshments provided at council tax payers’ expense.

Cllr Chris Ames

Labour, Court Ward

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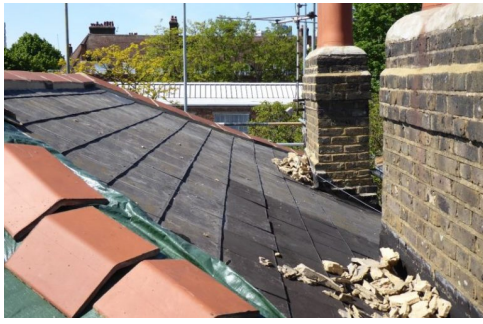


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Epsom boxer Amelia, 12, wins National Schools title

11 June 2026



A 12-year-old boxer from Epsom has brought home the town's first National Schools boxing title in 15 years after a series of dominant performances at the England Boxing National Schools Championships.

Amelia O'Hagan, of Epsom Boxing Academy, claimed gold in the Class A 44kg category after progressing through Surrey, Southern Counties and the national finals.

Having qualified through the county and regional stages, Amelia faced London champion Davene Asabere of Newham's Fight for Peace club in the quarter-finals.

Coach Joe Harding described Amelia's performance as explosive from the outset. Starting at high tempo, she used fast attacks to head and body to control the bout, before forcing a stoppage early in the second round after a sustained assault left her opponent unable to continue.

The championships then took Amelia north to Newcastle for the semi-finals and finals weekend.

In the semi-final she met Midland Counties champion Hollie Browne of Black Country Boxing Club. Determined to improve on last year's runner-up finish, Amelia produced what her coaches described as a controlled and disciplined display.

Using speed, footwork and sharp combinations, she repeatedly caught the taller opponent with attacks to head and body before moving safely out of range. After three rounds of sustained pressure and tactical boxing, Amelia secured a unanimous 5-0 points victory to reach the final.

There she faced local favourite Imogen Paylor of Felling ABC, champion of Tyne, Tees and Wear and a boxer with significantly more competitive experience.

According to Epsom Boxing Academy, Amelia again began strongly, attacking with body-to-head combinations and forcing her taller opponent backwards. The second round saw more sustained exchanges, with Amelia's footwork and ring movement proving key.

Knowing the final round would bring an all-out response from her opponent, Amelia maintained the pace, countering effectively and finishing strongly. The judges awarded her a second unanimous 5-0 victory, crowning her National Schools Champion for 2026.

The success marks Epsom's first National Schools "Golden Gloves" champion since Charlie Eastwood, who won the title 15 years ago and later added further national honours.

The victory also secures Amelia a place on the England Boxing National Development Pathway.

Joe Harding, head coach at Epsom Boxing Academy, said: "This girl is an amazing talent and at 12 years old this is only the start. She is hard-working and determined and I'm certain she will go on to represent her country.

"We have come close several times since starting our new Epsom club four years ago, with several silver and bronze medals, so bringing home the Golden Gloves with Amelia was a little emotional, to say the least."