## Surrey gets cycling boost from Government

Out of a central Government pot of £32.9 million Surrey County Council has won £863,000 for new and improved cycling and walking facilities. With at least 80 or so County or equivalent local authorities in England, Surrey has got a decent share.

The investment will see more cycle and walking routes being created across the county, cycle training expanded to include adults, business groups and children who aren't in education, and the development of 'Liveable neighbourhoods'. Liveable neighbourhoods are areas that are improved to be more people-centred with infrastructure and schemes such as 20mph zones that make it easier and safer to walk and cycle.

Cycle maps will also be produced for key routes around the county as well as personalised travel plans for organisations to lessen the need to travel by car.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth said, "We're delighted that the government has awarded us this funding so we can continue to transform how residents and visitors travel around our county and give them the confidence to walk and cycle safely.

"With 41% of Surrey's carbon emissions coming from transport, choosing to travel more sustainably will also mean we can all play our part to become a net zero county by 2050.

"This funding will complement a range of other schemes we've already implemented to improve walking and cycling facilities across Surrey. These include active travel schemes on the A23 in Redhill and Park Road in Stanwell, local cycling and walking plans in Woking, Reigate and Banstead, Spelthorne, Runnymede, Elmbridge, Mole Valley and Waverley, as well as a £50m investment to improve bus services and help grow user numbers."

Surrey County Council was awarded £863,224.00 from Active Travel England's Capability and Ambition fund which helps councils to develop better designed walking and cycling schemes.

For more details about active travel in Surrey see www.surreycc.gov.uk/activejourneys.

HM Government states: "Local councils will benefit from skills training and a boost to green jobs thanks to a £32.9 million scheme launched 2 January 2023, which will enable them to develop thousands of well thought-through local walking and cycling schemes, co-created by the communities that will use them."

Womens' safety is a concern: "The measures aim to get more people of all groups walking and cycling and help to address the barriers that exist. Surveys show the number one issue putting women off cycling is how safe they feel on the roads with 79% of women supporting more protected cycle lanes being built. Safety will therefore be the major focus for the new designs and routes."

National Active Travel Commissioner, **Chris Boardman**, said: "If we want to enable hundreds of thousands more people to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday trips then we need to deliver high-quality schemes that make it feel easy, fun and safe."

**Xavier Brice**, Chief Executive Officer of Sustrans, the charity that makes it easier for people to walk, wheel and cycle, said: "Sustrans is pleased to see this investment in training and community engagement which will ultimately lead to high-quality infrastructure developments across England that help people choose to use their cars less."

## The cost of advising on the cost of living

The Cost of Living Crisis is affecting many in Epsom and Ewell with rising prices and concerns about the future. But for some, the crisis is truly devastating. People in our borough are coming to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) very worried about paying their bills and looking after their families. The CAB want to make sure people have the right support to manage in these difficult times.

They help clients by giving free advice and information about many different issues including debt, benefits, housing and employment advice. They can give crisis support including vouchers for the local food bank and funds to help with fuel payments. They also offer practical advice such as how to reduce energy use and save money on bills.

CAB can check that people are claiming all the benefits and other money that they are entitled to. They can also help people with budgeting skills whether they are already in debt or are worried about managing their money effectively.

**Louise Curd**, the publicity and fundraising manager of Epsom's CAB says: "Like all Citizens Advice, we are an independent charity and need to raise funds to keep our services running. We are not part of the government but are one of over 270 local Citizens Advice helping those in the local community.

Our work makes a big difference. During 2021-22 we helped more than 2,700 people resulting in over £1.12m financial outcomes for those clients (unclaimed benefits and money due to them; debts, payment or loans written off or restructured etc). Reducing financial worries can have a knock on effect of reducing stress and improving wellbeing. In fact last year 80% of our clients said that our help had made a big difference to their situation."

The Borough's local CAB has come together with the **Aviva Community** crowdfunding team to raise money to help it respond to the cost of living crisis and build a more resilient community. So far, they have raised over £5,000. The fund closes on 10 January and the more they raise, the more people they can help. All funds received will go towards running their free advice services for the benefit of the community of Epsom & Ewell.

You can donate via this link:

https://www.avivacommunityfund.co.uk/p/citizens-advice-epsom-ewell-cost-of-living-advice-services

CAB Epsom and Ewell is located in The Old Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom and initial contact can be made via its website contact form HERE.

## Rail strikes to prolong home-working?

Due to the planned national strikes **Epsom and Ewell** rail customers are urged only to travel if absolutely necessary from Tuesday 3 to Sunday 8 January 2023. From Tuesday 3 to Sunday 8 January, strike action will see a severely reduced service between 07:15 and 18:30, on a limited number of routes, for customers who have to travel. Sunday 8 January will also be impacted by the strike; first trains across the SWR network will start from around 07:30 and are likely to be very busy.

The strikes impact both lines that serve the rail stations in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell. SWR - Epsom, Ewell West and Stoneleigh (and Worcester Park) on the Waterloo line and Southern services for Epsom and Ewell East on the Victoria and London Bridge lines.

The national advice is always to consult in advance of your journey the online rail service journey planner https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/

## The seasonal goodwill of Epsom and Ewell

In the middle three weeks of December local rotarians escorted Father Christmas around the streets of Epsom accompanied by Tilly the train and a band of helpers from local youth associations. Joining the effort were **Wilsons of Epsom** on two of the nights, when they provided a driver and a Santa Claus.

It was a truly wonderful experience with young children and adults saying how delighted they were to see Santa Claus; and they gave generously to help local charities. This year knocks on people's doors returned and they were pleased to see the Train and Santa after the COVID lay-off.

With today's Social Media such as WhatsApp, children were ready and waiting. It was a wonderful sight when the train started down a street to see little groups in the darkness waiting. Tilly was also happy to have so many photos taken of her.

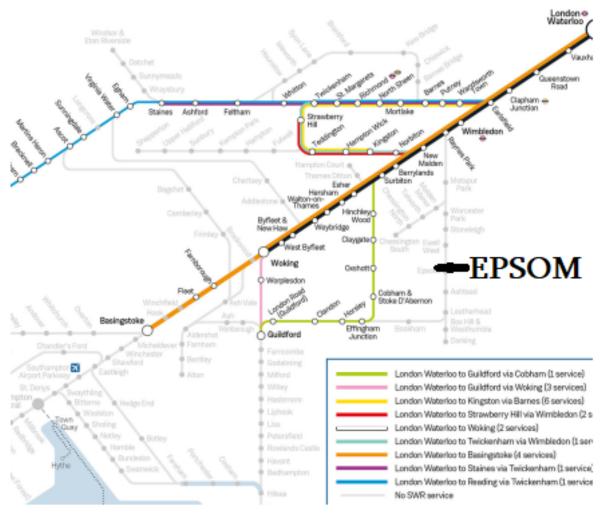
Around £6000 was raised for local charities, which included the youth organisations who helped.

Epsom Rotary, over the festive season, supported a group of young carers to a pantomime trip, a Christmas Card Appeal raised £250, the Christmas Hamper and Balloon Race Competitions, Carol singing and collections in the Ashley Centre raised even more cash for local charities. They supported the **Meeting Room** by collecting and donating presents and collecting donated foods from Waitrose.

Rotary and the local charities they support thank the marvellous generosity and spirit of Epsom and Ewell's wonderful local community.

## **Epsom and Ewell miss out on New Year transport**

South Western Railways will run 21 extra services between midnight and 3.15am on New Years Day but none down our line. You could get to Oxshott. Not closer. Southern trains are no better with all services out of Victoria rescheduled to depart from London Bridge. Last train 23:45 (you'll miss the fireworks) – but you'll need to double-check that on the day.



South Western Railways late night New Year services on the coloured lines.

Tube services will run all night on most lines and that means you could get the Northern Line to Morden and the last 293 bus to Epsom is still scheduled to depart at 00:25. The tube journey takes 30 minutes – so you'll still miss the fireworks.

There are night-buses throughout the night that could take you to Wimbledon, Morden, Raynes Park and Kingston and the closest to Epsom and Ewell being the 93 from Putney Bridge to North Cheam. But threats of strikes may effect journeys and you must check on the day to avoid being stranded.

If you know of any other alternatives to get back to Epsom and Ewell leaving London after midnight do let us know.

## **Epsom Hospital multi-storey car park rises**

A Planning Inspector has allowed **Epsom and St Helier Trust** to go ahead with a 6 level car park at **Epsom General Hospital**. Despite the plans rejection by local councillors and over 100 local objectors resisting. In a key section of the published decision (6th December) the Inspector stated:

"Overall, the institutional character of the hospital site strongly contrasts with the character of neighbouring residential areas. Accordingly, the wider hospital site, including the appeal site is appropriately recognised in the 2008 Environment Character Study 2008 as having its own unique character (Area 35E). This area is described as having a low sensitivity to change and relatively low ratings in terms of townscape quality and value. The proposed multi-storey car park would be notably taller than the immediately adjacent elements of the hospital building and would form a new, sizeable and somewhat bold structure at the edge of the wider hospital site. In many respects the proposed design is honest, reflecting that it would be a structure which results from its function. The design and scale, however, would be compatible with the wider utilitarian character of the hospital site within which it would be principally read. It would readily relate to the scale and height of the taller buildings on the hospital site including the consented backdrop of the Guild Living scheme. Accordingly, the multi-storey car park would appear as a logical and coherent consolidation of the built form in the unique host character area."

In short, the implication is that as the hospital site is as a whole rather ugly, more ugliness is not objectionable. The Inspector goes on to observe:

"Despite the proposed height and massing there are relatively few public perspectives in which the proposed structure would be readily experienced. The principal ones would be from the site frontage to the hospital complex on Dorking Road and across the open sports ground from Woodcote Road. The proposed structure would also be highly visible from the public footpath connecting Dorking Road to Woodcote Road where it passes adjacent to the appeal site. However, in all of these places the multi-storey car parking building would be primarily experienced in the context of the adjacent modern, large hospital buildings described above. In those main views from Dorking Road and Woodcote Road it would be seen at some distance, dissipating any visual effects arising from its bulk and height at the edge of the hospital site. For users of the footpath adjacent to the site there is scope to install hedging along the boundary as part of the landscaping for the appeal site, as found elsewhere on the path, mitigating to some degree the visual effects from the proximity of the height and scale of the structure."

While acknowledging that there would be harm to neighbouring conservation areas he stated: "The scale of harm, however, would be significantly moderated by the existing impact of the hospital buildings on the setting of these conservation areas. The existing hospital complex would form the principal context and backdrop in which the car park structure would be experienced in the limited public views identified from within the Conservation Areas".

On the question of encouraging commuting by car there appears to be a paradox. The Inspector stated "Overall, the modest uplift in total parking provision would not be excessive or unduly encourage significant or unnecessary additional car-based trips to the hospital." [Emphasis supplied.] He goes on: "In the round the appeal proposal would generate environmental benefits over existing conditions in terms of reducing queue lengths and associated emissions and through the significant provision of vehicle charging points as part of the necessary transition to a lower carbon future."

To read the full appeal decision Click HERE

Related reports:

Epsom Hospital car park appeal

Epsom Hospital's multi storey carpark wrong on many levels?

## Xmas balloon race and a hamper for charity

**Epsom Rotary** are raising funds for many local good causes this Christmas. Take part in a virtual balloon race or guess the value of a hamper donated by **Honey and Bamboo** of Ewell.

**Ballooning venture:** 

At a loss as to what to buy someone for Christmas? Buy them a balloon in our Christmas Day Balloon race. These are just like helium balloons and the aim is to see which balloon travels furthest in the week following Christmas. There is a prize for the winner!!

You can choose how much helium is put in the balloon and how thick the rubber of the balloon should be. You can choose the shape of your balloon and you can decorate it appropriately. You can also name the balloon eg Grandad Ron.

The difference is that the balloons do not exist in the real world. A computer simulates the flight of all the balloons, updating where they would have got to every 15 mins.

No ruining the environment and causing mayhem with birds and fish. You can log in at any time to see where you have ended up. Real weather data is collected for the simulation so, at Christmas, you may have strong winds and cold to contend with. You are racing against the other balloons in the Rotary Christmas race and a fun thing for your family is to phone round every day to see where the balloons have got to, plot the positions on a map and share it with the family members.

Its great fun and so cheap. Each balloon costs £3 and £2 of that goes to our charity account. Fun and doing good at the same time!!!

You can buy a set of codes to give to others and they can log in using the code - your gift to them.

THEY MUST LOG ON THEMSELVES BEFORE CHRISTMAS DAY TO SET UP THEIR BALLOON READY FOR THE RACE WHICH STARTS ON CHRISTMAS DAY

### **Click HERE to buy your balloons**



#### **Hamper Competition**

Honey and Bamboo Ltd, in Ewell offers a Christmas Hamper as a fundraiser. Entries are charged £5.00 per entry to guess the total value of the hamper. The winner would be the nearest guess below the actual value of the Hamper.

Details of what the hamper contains are:

Bottle of Surrey Honey, Christmas pudding. Bottle of Red wine, Bottle of White wine, Roast potato spice mix, Ferrer Roche Chocolate, Bottle of Honey and Ginger, Mature cheddar Cheese, Spice mix for turkey stuffing, Gravy mix, Box of Ceylon tea, Box of mince pies x 2, Caramelised Onion Chutney, Two packets of Afiya wax melts, Bottle of dried tomato, Olive and Garlic in Virgin Olive Oil, Wax wrap, Box of Christmas Crackers, 250 grams of mix fruit and nuts, Christmas stocking filled with sweets.

Send your £5 (or more!) to Epsom Rotary Trust Fund and mark it Hamper

Account Number 17256844 Sort Code 60-08-01

Click here to Entry Form

Examples of local good causes supported in recent years by The Epsom Rotary Charity Trust Fund include:

Kids Out & Carers/Activity Holiday, Surrey Youth Games, Nescot Award, Young Musician, Rosebery School, Blenheim School, Youth Speaks, Young Photographer, French Speaking Competition, Young Champion, Employment Fair etc.

# Senior local Councillor slams Surrey's budget consultation

**Cllr Eber Kington**, long serving **Residents Association** Borough Councillor and former Epsom and Ewell Mayor has served as a County Councillor since 2009. He has long campaigned against waste on staffing and councillor expenses. For example when standing in 2017 he stated he had "..called for a review of the County Council's senior management structure to reduce the then £42 million salary bill [that] was voted down by the Conservatives. He opposed the Conservatives' 2015 decision to increase their council allowances by over 60%. He has argued for the need to cut the use and cost of agency staff, which [then] stood at over £13 million."

Today he has focussed on **Surrey County Council**'s public consultation on the 2023/2024 draft budget. He describes "as biased and meaningless". He goes on to claim "The questions are deliberately designed to lead residents towards those responses that support the draft budget. Negative responses are discouraged by additional and unsupported commentary warning of the consequences of choosing the response.

In addition, the final question invites residents to give details of "any benefits" they can see if the budget was implemented. Quite clearly SCC is not interested to learn of residents' views on any disbenefits of the budget, as that question is not even asked.

A truly impartial survey would have also encouraged residents to state what they felt was unnecessary expenditure, perhaps on high level salaries, or what for them is a higher priority, for example night-time safer streets."

In addition, Councillor Kington was critical of information gathering on the respondents' personal circumstances.

"There are 24 questions, but only the last three are on the draft budget. The first 21 questions are on the status, background, salary, and other personal details of the respondent. You have to ask why any Council requires its residents to provide so much personal detail before they can even start to give an opinion. Maybe one cost saving would be for SCC to reduce its spend on such biased and meaningless surveys".

It is believed that a similar survey in 2022 produced about 100 responses out of a Surrey population of 1.2 million.

**Epsom and Ewell Times** has verified Cllr Kington's claim. The consultation questionnaire indeed has just 4 questions directed at the issue with the first 21 directed at profiling respondents.

Surrey County Council state: "The council is setting its budget for 2023/24 and has set out plans for £1,095.6m (just over £1bn) of spending. The council faces a budget gap of £83m for next year, largely due to inflation pushing up the cost of delivering services, but also due to increasing demand for services, policy changes from government, workforce shortages and continuing impact from the Coronavirus pandemic. Having worked to identify £68.6m of efficiencies within the budget, the draft budget is currently facing a £14.4m overspend."

You can find more information and a link to the survey HERE



Related reports:

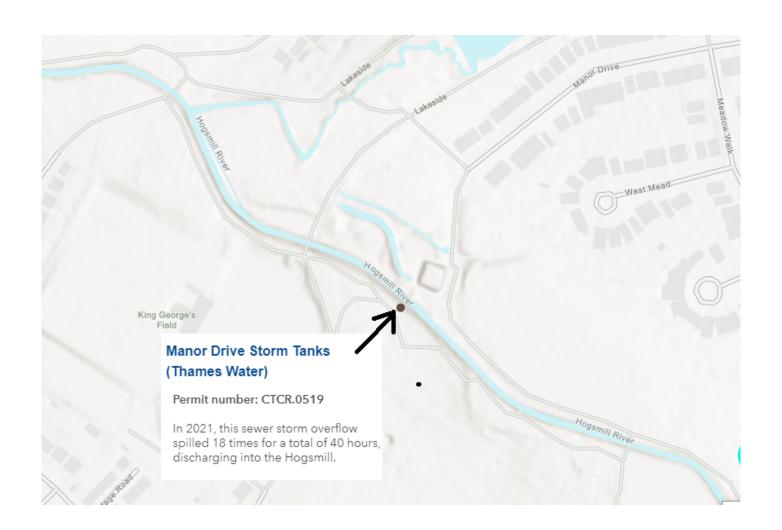
#### Great expectations on Surrey's tax?

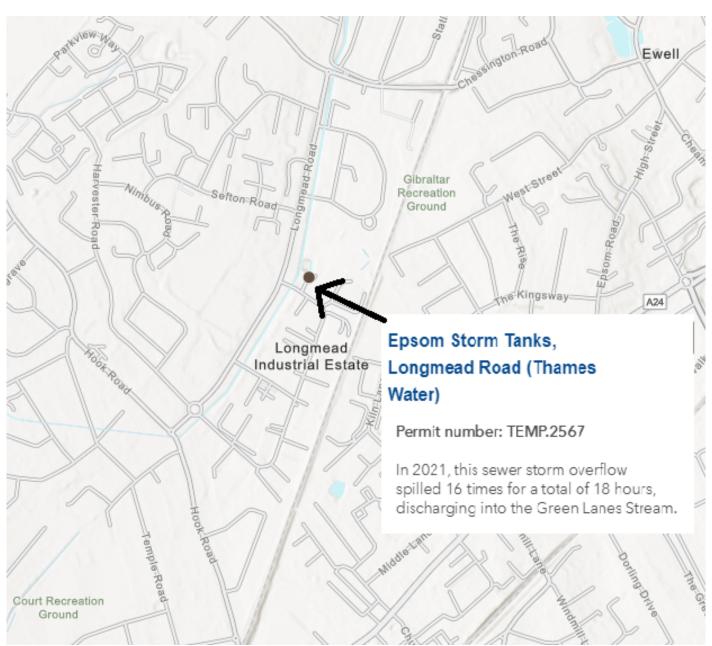
December 3, 2022

Surrey County Council's leader says he has "no expectation at all" that council tax will be put up by the full amount allowed despite a £14.4million budget gap at the ... READ MORE

## Local sewage uploaded

Epsom and Ewell's **Hogsmill River** and **Green Lanes Stream** feature in the latest sewage report. The Rivers Trust undertake a review of the health of the nations rivers. Recent publication of the statistics for 2021 has prompted a petition to reduce sewage discharges. The main local water supplier is Thames Water. A company that reportedly has not issued dividends to shareholders other than holding companies for several years. The company's earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation are about 50% of its approximate £2 billion annual revenue. Yet, in July it awarded its chief executive £727,000 of a reported £3.1 million "golden hello" on top of her £2 million annual salary. The announcement came shortly after a damning report from the Environment Agency about the failure of water companies to stop sewage entering our rivers and waterways.





Images and data courtesy the Rivers Trust

Thames Water stated that the spillages from the Longmead arose due to a faulty sensor.

The Rivers Trust provide things you can do to maintain healthy rivers. CLICK HERE to its website.

The Rivers Trust is a registered charity and an umbrella organisation of 65 member trusts. The member trust for our area is The South-East River Trust

Related stories in the Epsom and Ewell Times:

River "Bogsmill" blights Borough

"Garden of Eden" coming to West Ewell as Wetlands Plan is approved. Will this stop pollution?

[Original: A local Labour Party promoted petition on the Hogsmill reported by us in June 2022 has expired. The local Liberal Democrats are promoting a new petition for general application on river pollution nationwide.]

CORRECTION 22/12/2022: Epsom and Ewell Times apologises to Mark Todd and the local Labour Party. The petition raised by them on change.org is still live. The link may have been temporarily broken when we checked on 12th December 2022. The link to

that petition is HERE.

## 2030 vision for the elderly in Surrey

Surrey County Council sets out its vision for the care and living of the older generation by 2030. In 2021/2022 Adult Social Care in Surrey spent £506 million to support older people. This money helped over 5,600 older people and their unpaid carers. Money was also spent with voluntary organisations that support people in their community too. Adult Social Care also ensures services for information, advice and guidance are available to help people understand their care options and to make good care-related decisions.

The county of Surrey has a population which is getting older with people living longer than in other parts of the country. These changes mean that many more people are likely to be living alone, without support from their family. By 2030, the number of people aged 75+ predicted to be living alone will have increased by 27%. National reporting states that the number of unpaid carers 65 years old and over will increase by 17% from 2016 to 2025.

Dementia is most common amongst older people and in Surrey it is estimated that between 2020 and 2030 the overall number of people with dementia could increase by 28%, from 17,700 to 22,672.

In building the 2030 strategy SCC stated "We spoke to over 750 people living in Surrey. We worked with many diverse groups of Surrey residents of all ages including unpaid carers, care providers, partners, and colleagues. This took seven months and included workshops and surveys. We wanted to know what works well, what does not work well, what could be improved and what is important to our residents."

The plan sets out all the ways SCC, working with its partners in the NHS, care sector and districts and boroughs, will support people to live and age well in Surrey over the next decade. At the heart of the plan is a commitment to improving opportunities and care choices in local communities so that older people can be as active and independent as they wish.

The council engaged with residents and their families, as well as staff and partners, to draw up the strategy – and is now seeking input to help shape how it's put into practice.

The plan is centred around three priorities. They are:

- Prevention supporting people to lead healthy and independent lives in their local communities for as long as possible
- Living independently enabling people to live in their own homes with care and support tailored to their strengths, including through planned new extra care housing
- Care homes making sure that Surrey can offer the right mix of high quality care homes for those who need them

Further details can be found in the summary version of the plan at surreycc.gov.uk/livingwellinlaterlife.

Working with partners, including the NHS in Surrey Heartlands and Frimley, as well as care providers and voluntary organisations across the county, the council has already achieved some key milestones in its plan.

These include:

- signing a new contract for home care services so that people receive even better care in their own homes
- enhancing its reablement service for people needing short-term care, such as after a hospital stay, through linking with specialist care workers
- carrying out in-depth planning to help SCC and its partners meet the growing need for care home places catering for complex and challenging needs

The council's keen to continue to gather residents' and partners' input as it works towards meeting the commitments in the plan. There will be opportunities to take part in workshops and surveys.

Anyone who has an interest in shaping services for older people can sign up via the web page or by calling 0300 200 1005, SMS (for the deaf or hard of hearing) 07527 182 861, text relay 18001 0300 200 1005 or BSL video relay.

Mark Nuti, Surrey County Council's Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, said: "Our ambition here in Surrey is that no one is left behind - we're committed to helping those who need us most, and improving quality of life for everyone. We want older people to be able to lead independent and active lives for as long as possible in their own homes and communities and, if they



need extra support, to receive tailored and dedicated care. Our Living Well in Later Life plan sets out how we will continue to modernise our services and work with our partners over the rest of the decade to enhance the lives of older people in Surrey. If you have an interest in shaping services for older people, please come forward and help us put our plan into practice."

Additional reporting from Surrey County Council news service.