

Council pay tribute to Epsom tree hero

7 August 2024



Councillors of Epsom and Ewell stood in silence in memory of local tree hero **Mike Ford**. The full council meeting held in the Town Hall chamber on 30th July heard a tribute from Councillor **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley Vale).

“It is with great sadness that we share the news of the passing of Mike Ford on June 27, 2024. Mike was a pivotal figure in the creation of the Epsom Tree Advisory Board nearly three decades ago. He moved to Epsom in February 1981 and worked as a skilled carpenter for over 50 years, retiring in 2009. He is survived by his loving wife, Leslie, and their son, Darren, and daughter, Emma.

For many years, Mike dedicated himself to planting, nurturing, and caring for countless trees within our community and beyond. His passion for trees is evident in every project he undertook. I first met Mike in Rosebery Park around 2010 when the Friends group was developing a tree trail for park visitors. Thanks to Mike’s vast knowledge, the tree trail was published and is available to this day on the Friends of Rosebery Park website.

Mike’s deep understanding of the park’s trees was astounding, reflecting his unwavering commitment to the natural world. Mike could recount the origins of many trees in Rosebery Park and across the borough, often mentioning if they’d come from his own garden. I vividly remember finishing a walk with him, standing by the pond in Rosebery Park, gazing at willow trees, and he remarked, “We don’t plant trees to enjoy in our lifetime; we plant for future generations to enjoy.” This profound statement underscores the enduring impact of his work.

As our friendship grew, I became more involved with the Tree Advisory Board. Mike’s tireless efforts helped secure the planting and preservation of trees across the borough. His enthusiasm inspired a dedicated group of volunteers, embodying his can-do, will-do spirit. Mike’s passing leaves a significant void, and I will miss our conversations dearly. However, I am comforted by the memory of the successful replanting of the Mike Ford Copse in the Alexander Recreation Ground by board members last December. Mike was there to witness it.

Mike Ford’s legacy will endure through the Epsom Tree Advisory Board and the many trees he planted, which will continue to offer hope, shade, and beauty to future generations. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him.”

Related report:

Dedicated Epsom tree-man

Image: Dedication event at Alexandra Recreation Ground honours local hero Mike Ford Epsom & Ewell, 3rd December 2023

Green Flag Awards Honour Epsom and Ashtead Commons

7 August 2024



Local communities are celebrating as both Epsom Common and Ashtead Common have been awarded the prestigious Green Flag Award, recognizing them as two of the best-managed green spaces in the UK. This esteemed award, administered by the environmental charity Keep Britain Tidy, sets the benchmark for the management of recreational outdoor spaces across the UK and internationally.

Epsom Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR) has achieved this accolade for the 18th consecutive year, underscoring its

continued excellence in environmental stewardship. The site, managed by **Epsom & Ewell Borough Council**, is a haven for biodiversity, featuring oak woods, pasture woodlands, and wetlands that are home to rare species like cotton spotted orchids and purple emperor butterflies. It is also designated as a Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI) due to its significance as a breeding bird habitat.

Councillor **Liz Frost**, (RA Woodcote and Langley) Chair of the Environment Committee, expressed pride in the achievement, attributing the success to the hard work of volunteers and partners, including the Epsom Common Association, the Lower Mole Partnership, and Natural England. "This award is a testament to the dedication of our volunteers and staff who work tirelessly to maintain this beautiful and biodiverse space," she said.

In Ashted, the Ashted Common has also been honored with the Green Flag Award, further enhanced by receiving Green Heritage Site Accreditation. This recognition highlights the site's exceptional conservation efforts and its status as a National Nature Reserve since 1995. Managed by the **City of London Corporation**, Ashted Common is renowned for its ancient oak pollards and diverse habitats, including those supporting rare invertebrates and breeding birds.

Ben Murphy, Chairman of the City Corporation's Epping Forest and Commons Committee, noted the significance of the award, stating, "These awards demonstrate the effectiveness of our management plans in preserving open spaces like Ashted Common for future generations. It also reflects the positive impact of the City of London Corporation's investments in local communities."

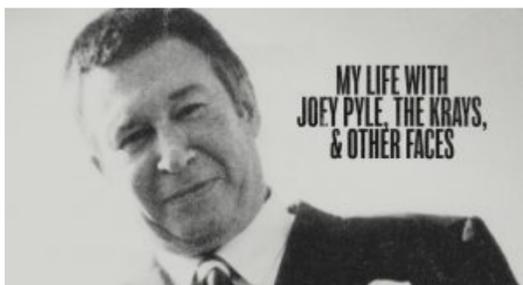
Both sites were evaluated on several criteria, including accessibility, safety, cleanliness, community engagement, and efforts to combat climate change. The awards celebrate the commitment of the staff and volunteers who ensure these spaces remain welcoming and well-maintained for the public. The Green Flag Award scheme highlights the importance of well-managed green spaces in fostering community well-being and promoting sustainable living.

The achievements of Epsom and Ashted Commons underscore the value of preserving natural habitats and providing safe, accessible green spaces for all. As community members and nature enthusiasts enjoy these areas, the Green Flag Award serves as a reminder of the critical role that well-maintained parks and reserves play in our social and environmental health.

Image: Great Pasture at Epsom Common. EEBC

Crime story of an Epsom workhouse baby

7 August 2024



Born 1946 in the Epsom Union Workhouse **Ronnie Field** lived a life of crime. Together with local Epsom author **Martin Knight** he tells his story in **Nefarious - A Life in Crime**. Released in May this year it was Daily Mail Book of the Week and number one in the Amazon True Crime chart.

Ronnie Field was a prolific armed robber, close ally of crime boss Joey Pyle for forty years, friend and fellow prisoner of the Kray twins - he was the last man to stand trial with a Kray brother. Ronnie was also the inaugural prisoner in the notorious Belmarsh Unit - the "super" prison within a prison.

This is the first time Ronnie has told his incredible story. Nefarious is a raw, honest and sometimes humorous account of an abusive childhood, almost inevitable journey into criminality and life sharing the fast lane of armed robbery with the real-life Sweeney and on to the even more dangerous and murky waters of south London's gangland.

Offering fresh Kray material, unseen photographs and untold stories regarding some of the world's most infamous gangsters, Nefarious is an incredible first-hand account from one of the last voices of a generation.



Martin Knight was born in the borough of Epsom & Ewell. Martin has had a long career in newspapers, firstly with the Financial Times, and then with various media monitoring agencies he has launched. Martin is also an author of local histories and has co-written autobiographies. He is a shareholder in Early Morning Media Ltd and publisher London Books Ltd. He was a co-founder of and serves the editorial board of the Epsom and Ewell Times.

Nefarious - a Life in Crime can be purchased via Amazon [HERE](#).

Satisfy your eye at Epsom film festival

7 August 2024



Epsom based **Satisfied Eye International Film Festival** (SEIFF) is set to dazzle film enthusiasts with its “Best of Fest 2024,” running from July 26-28 at the brand new **Picture House** in Epsom Square. This special event will showcase the top-rated films from SEIFF’s history, highlighting exceptional storytelling from over 20 countries since its inception in 2018.

The festival kicks off on July 26 with the “People’s Choice” segment, featuring films like the Spanish short “Ainhua” and the heartwarming “A Kiss” from the Netherlands. This selection promises a journey through a variety of emotions, setting the tone for the weekend.

On July 27, the morning begins with “Kids Animation,” where young audiences can enjoy charming shorts such as “The Kite” and “Ian, A Moving Story.” The afternoon continues with “Best of British,” spotlighting homegrown talent with films like “The Legend of Bob Leonard” and the poignant “An Irish Goodbye.”

Saturday’s programming also includes the thought-provoking “Underage Engineers,” an inspiring Polish documentary, and the “Rising Stars” segment, which showcases emerging filmmakers. The day wraps up with “The Human Condition,” exploring deep human emotions through shorts like “Bonobo” and “Hot Chocolate.”

Sunday, July 28, starts with “Adult Animation,” including the award-winning “Lost & Found” and the haunting “The Driver Is Red.” The festival then honors female filmmakers with the “Wonder Women” segment, featuring powerful films like “A Travers” and “The Letter Room.”

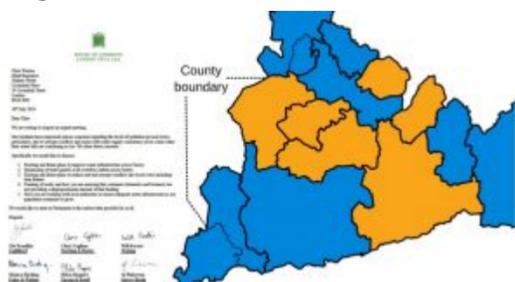
The weekend concludes with “All Blood Runs Red,” a collection of shorts addressing diversity and prejudice, and “A Night at the Oscars,” celebrating SEIFF’s past Oscar nominees and winners, such as “The Neighbor’s Window” and “Brotherhood.” Finally, “The Lighter Side” closes the festival on a humorous note with a series of comedies including “Career Day” and “Archibald’s Syndrome.”

This year’s SEIFF promises a cinematic feast, offering something for everyone and celebrating the best in independent filmmaking. Don’t miss the chance to experience these compelling stories on the big screen.

For full programme and tickets [click HERE](#)

Surrey’s LibDem MP majority take on Thames Water

7 August 2024



Buoyed by having the majority of Surrey County’s 11 Parliamentary Constituencies returning Liberal Democrat Party Members of Parliament, the six new law-makers, including **Epsom and Ewell’s Helen Maguire** MP, have joined forces to tackle **Thames Water’s** shortcomings. A spokesman said “This is all part of the campaign by the Liberal Democrat Party to get our streams, rivers and coastline, cleaned up and to stop the often illegal dumping of sewage into our water.”



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Chris Weston
Chief Executive
Thames Water
Cavendish Place
14 Cavendish Street
London
W1G 9NU

16th July 2024

Dear Chris

We are writing to request an urgent meeting.

Our residents have expressed serious concerns regarding the levels of pollution in local rivers, particularly, due to sewage overflow and issues with water supply consistency all at a time when their water bills are continuing to rise. We share these concerns.

Specifically we would like to discuss:

1. Existing and future plans to improve water infrastructure across Surrey.
2. Monitoring of water quality at all overflow outlets across Surrey.
3. Existing and future plans to reduce and end sewage overflow into local rivers including time frames.
4. Funding of works and how you are ensuring that customers (domestic and business) are not providing a disproportionate amount of that funding.
5. How you are working with local authorities to ensure adequate water infrastructure as our population continues to grow.

We would like to meet in Parliament at the earliest date possible for us all.

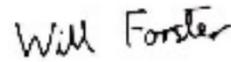
Regards



Zoe Franklin
Guildford



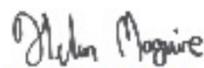
Chris Coghlan
Dorking & Horley



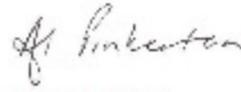
Will Forster
Woking



Monica Harding
Esher & Walton



Helen Maguire
Epsom & Ewell



Al Pinkerton
Surrey Heath

Surrey Political Map: Offa29 - Own work. CC BY 4.0

Epsom County Councillor win for childminders

7 August 2024



Surrey County Council (SCC) has announced a significant change in the payment system for childminders, following a successful campaign led by Residents' Association County Councillor **Eber Kington** (Ewell Court, Auriol & Cuddington). The new system, which will see childminders receiving monthly payments, comes as a response to overwhelming feedback from the childminding community.

Currently, childminders in Surrey receive 60% of their term's funding upfront at the start of each term, with the remaining 40% plus any necessary adjustments paid by mid-term. This staggered payment system has been identified as a barrier by nearly half of the respondents in the 2024 Early Years Provider Survey. Additionally, SCC's in-person consultation revealed that 95% of childminders favored a shift to monthly payments.

Councillor Kington highlighted the discrepancy in SCC's public messaging, which he argued favored larger group providers over individual childminders. He was approached by a childminder from his division, expressing the need for a spokesperson to advocate for a payment system that supports their financial stability and professional efficacy.

The childminder stated, "It would be good to finally have a spokesperson who can support us in calling for a change and enabling us to make a choice in how we are paid, so we are able to continue doing our jobs to the best of our ability, without worrying how or when we will be able to pay our mortgages."

Councillor Kington emphasized the importance of this change, especially in light of the upcoming expansion of early years entitlement, which will require more childcare places. He argued that ensuring a reliable payment system is crucial for recruiting and retaining childminders.

After lobbying the Council, Councillor Kington raised the issue at the July Council Meeting. In response, Clare Curran, Cabinet Member for Children, Families, and Lifelong Learning, confirmed that SCC is transitioning to a new software system for early education payments. This system, set to be implemented in September 2024, will include the option for monthly payments.

Following the meeting, Councillor Kington expressed his satisfaction with the outcome. "This is excellent news, but it is a shame that childminders have had to work hard to get the change despite the clear evidence of need shown in SCC's own consultation results," he said.

The move to monthly payments aligns SCC with other local authorities, such as the London Borough of Sutton, which already offer this option to their childminders. This change is expected to provide greater financial stability and support for childminders, enabling them to focus on delivering high-quality care without the added stress of managing inconsistent payment schedules.

Image from www.childcare.co.uk

Surrey author tells story of Luftwaffe uncle

7 August 2024



Surrey-based author **Matt Graydon** brings a powerful new perspective on World War II with his latest novel, ***Leaving Fatherland***. Drawing from real-life family events, Graydon takes readers on a journey with protagonist Oskar, from his troubled childhood in Nazi Germany to his search for identity in New York City.



Matt Graydon

The novel is inspired by the wartime experiences of his German uncle, whose crash in the North African desert during the war had become family legend. This personal connection infuses *Leaving Fatherland* with authenticity and emotional depth, making it a significant addition to historical fiction.

Published by Cranthorpe Millner on August 20th, 2024, *Leaving Fatherland* stands out for its detailed portrayal of life in the Luftwaffe and the harrowing aftermath of war. Graydon's protagonist, Oskar, endures an abusive childhood, a turbulent war, a failed marriage, and forty years of research, all in search of understanding his father's violence. This narrative, steeped in meticulous research and family history, offers readers a poignant exploration of how the past shapes our identity.

Graydon, who resides in Surrey with his family and a lively cockapoo, has a rich background in journalism and public relations, skills that have significantly contributed to his historical research and storytelling. He is an active member of the Phoenix Writing Group in **Dorking** and the UK's Society of Authors, continuously enriching Surrey's literary community.

Early reviews praise *Leaving Fatherland* for its thorough research and compelling storytelling. Kirkus highlights the novel's exploration of family loyalty and ethics, while renowned historian Iain MacGregor lauds it as a deeply honest family drama spanning continents and decades.

Fellow authors and historians, including Anna Stuart and Louise Fein, commend Graydon's compassionate and thought-provoking narrative. The book has been described as immersive and cinematic by award-winning filmmaker Andi Reiss, and as a moving family story by Jenny Towey of the Anglo-German Family History Society.

Leaving Fatherland (ISBN: 978-1-80378-209-6) is available in paperback (£12.99) and eBook formats from August 20th, 2024.

Computer's gift of a Trojan Horse?

7 August 2024



The computer won the Derby! On the eve of yesterday's famous Epsom flat race Epsom and Ewell Times published winner tips Los Angeles from Royal Ascot Odds and first to cross the finishing line **City of Troy** from a super-computer. What other gifts for humanity might be brought by AI?

An Epsom and Ewell Times reader put £50 on both tips and came away with a £100 profit thanks to the brain-power of a super-computer. He said "One swallow does not make a summer. So, I won't be inclined to follow computer tips every time but thanks for this one"

No Royal could be spotted on Epsom Downs this Derby Day but our own leading citizen Mayor **Steve Bridger** and

Mayoress Carol Bridger took centre stage in the Royal Box of The Queen’s Stand. Another Epsom and Ewell highlight was **Helin Konyar** a Ukraine scholar of the local **Laine Theatre Arts** leading the National Anthem just before the Derby stakes. The King and Queen attended Oaks Day on Friday.



Students of Epsom’s Laine Theatre Arts. Helin Konyar front row centre in yellow dress.

City Of Troy (3-1 Favourite) banished the memory of his disappointing run in the QIPCO 2000 Guineas with a breathtaking performance to clinch victory in the 245th Betfred Derby at Epsom Downs today.

The colt, sired by Justify, secured a record-extending 10th win in this prestigious Classic for his trainer Aidan O’Brien, while jockey Ryan Moore celebrated his fourth Derby triumph.

City Of Troy, racing on the inside, was settled towards the rear among the 16 runners as stablemates Euphoric and Los Angeles led the field.

Rounding Tattenham Corner, City Of Troy began to make an impressive move, surging to the front in the final quarter mile. He maintained his momentum, finishing strongly to fend off Ambiente Friendly by two and three-quarter lengths, with Los Angeles trailing three and a quarter lengths behind in third.



The Derby jockeys. Epsom Racecourse 1st June 2024 c. Epsom and Ewell Times

“It was hard to know what would happen today, but I was very sure we still had the best horse before the race,” Ryan Moore said to ITV Racing. “Newmarket... it didn’t happen. I can’t pretend that we knew it would happen [today], but we do know that he has a big engine, he showed himself to be a brilliant two-year-old. The Guineas... we got a few things wrong. But it’s great that he could come back today. He’s still a little bit immature, that’s the first time he’s run around a bend, hopefully there’s plenty more to work with.”

Moore reflected on the race's turning point, stating, "We did a few things wrong at Newmarket, today we rectified it and put it right."

On the sensation of guiding City Of Troy through the final stages, Moore said, "He was going to win very easily. With the loose horse in front of him, he was still a bit unsure, and then he galloped out strong. He quickened well and then kind of waited, you have to be delighted with what he has done today."

"I had to find a little bit of room. The race kind of opened up, loose horse in there, he travelled well into the straight, and he picked up and went to the front very easily and very quickly," Moore recounted. "Then I felt he was still a little bit inexperienced, with the loose horse in front of him he wasn't quite sure what to do - he was pricking his ears, then he changed his leads near the line and went on again. I'm just delighted that a horse who showed so much as a two-year-old - he was very good at two - and the Guineas, we got a few things wrong on the day and it's great that Aidan's got him back and brought him here today. He didn't lose faith in the horse, stuck to the plan and it has paid off. We believed that if he turned up like we thought he would, he'd be too good for them, and he was."

"I was always happy where I was. It's never going to be 100% smooth with a field that size, where we were, but I was able to pick a path. He took me there early and easily, and the race was over and he was in control of it a fair way out."

"He's special - he won the Dewhurst, won a Group Two as early as July, won the Dewhurst, then to come here, and it's the first time he's been round a bend, and obviously it's a big step up in trip. We thought he was the sort of horse, and once again Aidan's brought him here, he's turned up and it all worked out great," Moore concluded to ITV Racing.

Epsom Downs witnessed a remarkable performance today, marking yet another chapter in the illustrious careers of City Of Troy, Aidan O'Brien, and Ryan Moore.

Bearing the balls of Derby week in Langley Vale

7 August 2024



Residents of **Langley Vale**, an estate adjacent to the renowned Epsom Racecourse, have expressed growing frustration and concern over repeated incidents of anti-social behavior and vandalism coinciding with the annual **Derby week**. The community's grievances were vividly shared through a series of social media posts, highlighting a range of disturbances and a perceived lack of adequate police response.

One resident described a troubling encounter with three males, one of whom had a cast, yet lamented the police's apparent indifference. "This is serious now, not just knock down ginger, but they don't seem to be taking it seriously. They should be going on site and looking for these culprits. The police should be patrolling this whole area of the downs anyway. They know we get trouble every year; a burnt-out car last year on the downs and theft," the post read.

Another resident voiced their anger over the disruption Derby week brings to the village, accusing the police of failing to ensure community safety. "The whole village gets held hostage this time of year, and the police don't do enough at all to make the residents feel safe," they stated.

The most alarming incident reported involved the shattering of bedroom windows by ball bearings, suspected to have been launched with a catapult, between 10-11 PM. Fortunately, the children's rooms were spared. The attack occurred at the top of Grosvenor Road, near the bridle path. "Reported it to the police, obviously, but if anyone has had similar treatment or saw anything suspicious, can you let me know or report it to 101," the resident urged.

Further reports of catapult and ball bearing damage surfaced within the village, including a patio door destroyed within a half-hour span. The resident noted the impressive accuracy of the attack, considering their home's secluded position next to the woods. They identified a pattern, suggesting the culprits were targeting homes from the bridle path at the top of Rosebery, Grosvenor, and Beaconsfield Roads, areas supposedly under police dispersal orders. "Despite these boys being exactly in the same place three evenings and nights running, no police presence was seen at the top of the village," the post concluded.

As Derby week continues, Langley Vale residents remain on edge, calling for more proactive measures from law enforcement to protect their community from further disturbances.

Inspector **Kelly Clifton-Sinclair**, Borough Commander for Epsom and Ewell, said: "We are aware of reports of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the Langley Vale area. We know that these crimes can have a serious effect on the local community, and I would like to reassure residents that we are investigating all possible lines of enquiry so that we can work to identify those responsible. Since the reports were made to us, we have had officers patrolling the local area, proactively speaking to the local community and those affected, to make sure residents feel safe."

"If you are a victim of crime, or have recently been a victim of crime, please report it to us so that we can investigate it thoroughly. Each report helps us to build our understanding of crime in the area so that we can respond, work to deter



crime, and help keep our communities safe. If you have any information that might assist our investigation, please get in touch with us via Messenger quoting PR/ 45240061106.”

Should the Epsom Derby go back to Wednesday?

7 August 2024



The first Wednesday of June used to be for many an unofficial bank holiday. Office, retail and factory staff parties filled **Epsom Downs** enjoying a day off and the annual **Epsom Derby** flat-race. The Epsom High Street shops used to close.

Of course, this year the Epsom Derby will take place on Saturday 1st June and the shops will remain very much open.

In a bold statement aimed at reviving the charm and prominence of the Epsom Derby, retired jockey **Dane O'Neill** has suggested returning the event to its traditional Wednesday slot. This proposal comes in light of apparent declining attendances and the Derby's diminishing distinctiveness against competitors like Royal Ascot.

O'Neill was speaking to Boyle Sports, who offer the latest odds for the Epsom Derby event, said "I think they have messed things up by moving it around a lot, and as a result has lost its identity for the wider public. We have seen it under several different guises. For the aficionado it is always going to be the Epsom Derby, one of the mainstays of English racing, but they have changed it so much that it has lost its spark."

For much of the 20th century, the Epsom Derby was synonymous with the first Wednesday in June. This midweek scheduling created a unique atmosphere, drawing massive crowds not only for the race but also for a festive day out. Historically, even Parliament would adjourn to allow members to attend, highlighting the event's national significance.

However, in 1995, the race was moved to Saturday in a bid to boost attendances and television ratings, a decision that has since been met with mixed reactions.

The switch to Saturday was intended to increase visibility and attendance, capitalizing on the weekend's leisure time. Yet, O'Neill and other critics argue that this move has diluted the Derby's unique character, making it just another event in a crowded sporting calendar. O'Neill believes that returning to a Wednesday would help restore the Derby's distinctiveness and might reignite public interest by creating a midweek spectacle that stands out on its own.

Epsom's course is renowned for its challenging nature, likened by O'Neill to a rollercoaster ride with its steep climbs and sharp turns, particularly at Tattenham Corner. This distinctive track demands exceptional skill from both horse and jockey, adding to the race's allure and prestige.

The Derby remains a cornerstone of English flat racing, celebrated for its history and the high calibre of competition it attracts.

Do you have a view? Write to our letters page.

Images credit: @EpsomRacecourse

Epsom Derby week read?

7 August 2024



A tale of triumph and tragedy, dreams and disasters aptly describes the life of **Bernard Dillon**, as detailed in a new book by **Stephen Fernane**. This captivating biography delves into the extraordinary journey of Dillon, who won the prestigious **Epsom Derby** in 1910 on **Lemberg**. The 2024 Epsom Derby takes place on Saturday 1st June.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Dillon on 1910 Derby winner Lemberg Agence Rol - Gallica Digital Library Public Domain

For the first time since Bernard's death in 1941, a book captures his astonishing rise to success and his subsequent fall from grace due to heavy drinking. From a talented apprentice to a shrewd professional, Bernard Dillon won the Epsom Derby and the Grand Prix de Paris, epitomizing a life of sporting triumph and human tragedy.

In 1901, at the tender age of thirteen, Bernard left Kerry with dreams of becoming a jockey in England. Remarkably, within three years, he had become the most popular sporting personality in both Britain and Ireland.

Stephen Fernane reveals that his fascination with Bernard's sporting achievements and the overshadowing sadness of his later years inspired him to write this book. The fact that Bernard's story is not widely known also motivated him.

As reported in the Irish Independent on 25th May the author said;

"Discovering Bernard's career and learning about all he achieved is what inspired me to write it. The inner demons that led to his demise in later life are just as fascinating. To think that very little is known about someone as colourful and complex as Bernard Dillon is astonishing," Stephen said.

The book, titled *The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby*, nods to Bernard's birthplace at Caherina in Strand Road, Tralee, in 1887.

"I want to bring Bernard home for the book launch. To bring his story back to where it all started, and present it to people who might not know about him. That is the best tribute I can give him. Bernard is a 'Narie' for sure, which is why the Kerins O'Rahilly's GAA Club is the appropriate venue. It's his spiritual home as he was born only a few yards from the clubhouse," Stephen explained.

Bernard Dillon's journey from 1901 to 1911 was anything but smooth as he grappled with celebrity and adversity. Sadly, his downfall included domestic abuse and the mistreatment of his wife, the famous music hall artist Marie Lloyd.

Bernard and Marie met in 1905 and began a turbulent relationship. They were Edwardian England's first celebrity couple, with Marie eighteen years older than Bernard. However, notoriety came at a cost. Bernard's downfall began when he lost his jockey's licence in 1913 over gambling allegations, marking the end of his reputation as a superstar.

Stephen believes it was essential to write Bernard's story due to the fragmented way it exists in the archives. With Marie Lloyd being the more famous personality, information about Bernard's life is usually viewed through the lens of Marie's biographers rather than Bernard's perspective.

"He wrote his memoir in 1922 which has largely been ignored until now. While he does not explain the more violent side to his personality in the memoir, I was able to solve this by reading through many court sittings he appeared before," Stephen said.

"Even though the court charges are upsetting to read, my aim is to show Bernard's opposing sides - not just him as a famous jockey. There are examples of closeness and intimacy between the couple that have never been written about before now," he added.

"There is a chapter about Bernard and Marie being incarcerated at Ellis Island in 1913 because they were unmarried. It's staggering to imagine two of the most famous people in Edwardian England being detained with hundreds of immigrants.

"They were the Posh and Becks of their time, for sure. As for Bernard's active service during WWI, a judge accused him of engaging in more violence in London than on the Western Front! Nothing was ever straightforward in Bernard's life from the time he left Tralee in short pants," Stephen explained.

Stephen sums up Bernard's life as 'totally unorthodox' and emphasizes that the book is about more than just horseracing.

"I wouldn't want anyone to get the impression the book is solely about horses. Significant though they are in Bernard's life, there is an undertone to the book that symbolizes a tragic love story between two people trying to deal with fame and

infamy," he said.

"This is a global story that started in a quiet Kerry street and extended to far-off places like America, South Africa, and the Middle East. I just felt it was time for Bernard's story to be told in his own words. I think the book is fair to him and shows that no matter how successful we are in life, we are vulnerable to self-destruction," Stephen said.

The Life and Times of Bernard Dillon: The Narie that Won the Derby will be launched on June 6.

The book is priced at €15 and is available at www.buythebook.ie/bernarddillon.

Top image: By Leslie Ward - Published in Vanity Fair, 12 September 1906, as "Men of the Day" Number 1031. Public Domain and background By Hywel Williams, CC BY-SA 2.0

Building bridges across the Borough

7 August 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times welcomes the third Mayor to be appointed since we started. For the year 2024/2025 Councillor Steve Bridger (RA Stamford Ward) has the honour and burden of being the Borough's number one citizen. We wish him and his wife Carol, the Mayoress, a hard-working and enjoyable year. Here is our annual Mayoral interview.

Q. The main thing I want to discuss was charities, I see that you are championing 3 charities in your Mayoral year, could you expand upon why you chose these particular charities?

Mr. Mayor: I am supporting Epsom and Ewell Phab, Puffins and the Ruxley Foundation.

PHAB

We had a disabled son, Richard, who unfortunately was diagnosed with Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy when he was 3 and sadly passed in 2018 aged 34. He and his brother Matthew both attended Phab and they thoroughly enjoyed the full integration and raising awareness of disability. This has made Matthew understand disability to become the person that he is by having time for everyone regardless of their position in life.

PUFFINS

Puffins helps disabled people swim and play games and unfortunately the equipment (hoists etc.) were not available in the Rainbow centre when Richard could have attended.

Ruxley Foundation

During our married life my wife, Carol, and I came upon extreme financial hardship and we are fully aware of the issues and stress that this can create within a family situation and the Ruxley Foundation can at least assist in one area to alleviate some of this.

Q. Next question I wanted to ask was what are your priorities for your year in office?

Mayor: Raise awareness of the Borough and the importance of the selfless roles that numerous residents play in supporting all the charities and associations. Without them the world would be a different place.

Q. What do you think could be improved about the Borough?

Mayor: Whoever you talk to then there is a story of what can be improved and why. Only by listening to the residents in my role as Mayor do you hear of the real areas of concern. I will pass these back to the Officers and Committees to hopefully be able to action some of them.

Q. What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

Mayor: Meeting the volunteers and local small business owners and seeing how these can work together in creating a better environment for everyone and show what a great place Epsom & Ewell is to live.

Q. If you were just named your favourite sport's team's manager, who is the first player you would sign?

Mayor: I do not follow any sports, teams etc. as do not have time!

Q. What hobbies of yours might suffer during your busy Mayoral year?

Mayor: All of them as I put my energy and time into the Mayoral role! - they are DIY, programming, designing web sites, electronics and recycling old items into something useable around the house and to help others. I will miss being part of the Epsom Repair Cafe which I attend every 3rd Saturday each month.

Q. Any other particular message to our readership?

Mayor: I hope that I can live up to and exceed their expectations in my role. I will be pleased if people just come up to me for a chat, I am an ordinary person and have been extremely fortunate to have been offered this position and for that I can thank the residents for showing their trust in the fact that I have shown that I am proud of where I live and will assist wherever and whenever I am able to - I am usually around most days in Epsom unless at an organised event, working at home or meeting!

Please support the many events that my charities have put together and to remember that all monies raised will be donated to charities within the borough. "Local Charities for Local People."

6 out of 11 Conservative MPs leaving Surrey

7 August 2024



Michael Gove MP for Surrey Heath has brought the total Conservative MP retirees in Surrey to **SIX** out of the **ELEVEN** all present Conservative held **Surrey** constituencies.

On 5th February **Kwasi Kwarteng** the Conservative MP for Spelthorne announced he will not stand at the upcoming General Election.

With Paul Beresford MP for Mole Valley, Dominic Raab MP for Esher and Walton, Crispin Blunt MP for Reigate and Banstead and our own **Chris Grayling** MP for **Epsom and Ewell**, all having confirmed they are not going to run, this leaves 5 Surrey Conservative MPs still standing.

One can expect Jeremy Hunt MP for South-West Surrey, who serves in the Cabinet, to seek re-election. Jonathan Lord MP for Woking, Ben Spencer MP for Runnymede and Weybridge, Angela Richardson MP for Guildford and Claire Coutinho MP for East Surrey are assumed to be still up for the fight.

Epsom and Ewell Conservatives have already put in place their new prospective Parliamentary Candidate, **Mhairi Fraser**, an anti-corruption lawyer.

She will be challenged by **Helen Maguire** of the Liberal Democrats, **Gina Miller** of the True and Fair Party and **Steve Mckenna** of the Green Party and **Mark Todd** for Labour. It is understood a Reform Party candidate will stand but despite asking one of the Party's street canvassers to get in touch with Epsom and Ewell Times, we have heard nothing to confirm.

Related Reports:

[Surrey's Tory MPs exiting the County](#)

[Conservatives adopt new contender for Parliament](#)

[Grayling not to contest a seventh election](#)

[Esher & Walton up for GRaabs](#)

[Surrey's longest sitting MP to stand-down](#)

Out of the starting gates in Epsom and Ewell's political Derby

7 August 2024



Today British Prime Minister **Rishi Sunak** announced a General Election will take place on July 4th.

Epsom and Ewell Times asked all the known candidates for their reaction to the news:

Mhairi Fraser, standing for the **Conservative Party** responded: "Epsom has been my family home for almost twenty years. The day after the election, it still will be. I have lived here, I have worked here, I have commuted from here; I have a personal interest in the success of Epsom, Ewell, Ashted and Leatherhead, and I know what it takes to deliver that success.

From protecting the Green Belt, to tackling crime by securing a more visible police presence, to regenerating our high streets, to improving our transport links - I have a plan, and I have the commitment to deliver on it. And throughout it all, I promise to run a clean campaign, as I have from day one. I have built my career over the last decade as an anti-corruption lawyer, and I will bring the same integrity to our politics. That is the first of many promises I will make to you, but not the last I will deliver on."

Helen Maguire PPC for the **Liberal Democrats** said: "Hard-working families in Epsom, Ewell, Ashted, and Leatherhead are sick of the same old unfair and divisive two-party politics which is currently tearing our nation apart. They are looking for real change and a positive future, which I am committed to working to bring. Our community have had enough of this Conservative government refusing to help them through the cost-of-living crisis, whilst also allowing our local NHS hospital and local schools to crumble, and sewage to be poured into our rivers.

This Conservative government is out of touch and out of time, and this announcement is long overdue. I am honoured to be fighting on behalf of my local community to rid Epsom, Ewell, Ashted and Leatherhead of the Conservatives, who have taken us for granted for years. In Epsom & Ewell, it's a clear choice between a fair deal with the Liberal Democrats or more chaos with the conservatives. Enough is enough, this community needs change now."

Gina Miller, leader of the **True & Fair Party**, said: "The decision to call a general election on 4th July is a concession to the inevitable, acknowledging that the time has come to face the electorate's scrutiny. This summer, we are casting our votes to end this dismal chapter of our nation's history and begin a new era with leaders who truly represent us. As I stand for election in Epsom and Ewell, I am ready to bring the voices of our community to the forefront and demanding a government that prioritises the wellbeing of its people above all else."

Mark Todd, Chair of the **Labour Party** (a Labour candidate is yet to be confirmed) said: "At last, the country has got what it wants. Now it's time to choose between more decline under the Tories or a greener, brighter future with Labour. Your local Labour party is here to serve you and we promise that if our candidate is elected they will serve the community with all their heart. They'll be open, accessible and always try to help."

Stephen McKenna of the **Green Party** said: "Like the vast majority of the population I am delighted that the official end date of this Conservative Government has been announced!

Greens everywhere are hoping for a transformation of national politics in this election, a turning point which will resolve the cost of living crisis, introduce innovative new policies for the environment, for a new greener economy, for net zero retrofitting of our homes and a programme of new social housing as well as better public services. This is a time for real change in our society."

In the run up to the election the Epsom and Ewell Times will be interviewing the candidates and staging hustings.

Epsom and Ewell's new Mayor

7 August 2024



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has appointed Councillor **Steve Bridger** (RA Stamford) as the new Mayor for the year 24/25. In a ceremonial meeting Tuesday 14th May, speeches were made to propose the new Mayor, to thank the outgoing Mayor, and by both the incoming and outgoing Mayors themselves.

Councillor **Phil Neale** (RA Cuddington) proposed his appointment. He said "I hope I will achieve at least one of these requirements," referring to the traditional brevity and humour expected in such speeches. Cllr Neale detailed Cllr Bridger's extensive background, highlighting his early career in the family-owned wholesale fish business and his long tenure at Tesco, where he achieved notable success. "Steve proudly states that he managed every department... all except working the tills," Cllr Neale quipped. He also mentioned Cllr Bridger's dedication to family, particularly his support for his late son Richard, who battled Duchenne muscular dystrophy.

Councillor **Chris Ames** (Labour Court) paid tribute to the outgoing Mayor, Councillor **Rob Geleit** (Labour Court), lauding his achievements over the past year. He highlighted the Civic Celebration of Culture as a significant event and praised Mr Geleit's fundraising efforts. "A charity dinner brought a year of fundraising for his three well-chosen charities to a successful conclusion," Cllr Ames remarked. He also expressed eagerness to have Cllr Geleit return to his duties with

the Labour group, emphasizing the importance of his presence in the upcoming general election.

Councillor Rob Geleit reflected on his tenure with gratitude, sharing various highlights from his year as Mayor. “I’ve had a fantastic year serving Epsom and Ewell and its people,” He expressed deep appreciation for his consort, Tina, and the support team, particularly Lolli from the Mayor’s office. He recounted memorable events such as the Derby, Christmas carols at Downview Prison, and the Buckingham Palace garden party. He proudly announced that over £15,000 had been raised for his chosen charities, exceeding expectations. “We managed to keep it all together until the end, which may or may well be unprecedented,” he said, praising the charity committee’s efforts and in particular the dedication of Cllr **Dr. Graham Jones** MBE (RA Cuddington).

In his address, new Mayor Councillor Steve Bridger expressed excitement and gratitude for his new role. He acknowledged the challenges and opportunities ahead and looked forward to serving the community alongside his wife, Carol.

Cllr Robert Leach (RA Nonsuch) will serve as Deputy-Mayor.

Image: L to R Cllr Robert Leach (Deputy Mayor) , Mayor Steve Bridger, CEO Jackie King. The New Mayor takes the chair in Council chamber. Credit EEBC YouTube

Annual audit of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council

7 August 2024



The annual Grant Thornton Auditor’s Report on the workings of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has delivered a positive assessment of its performance across financial sustainability, governance, and value for money, despite acknowledging the ongoing challenges the Council faces. The report was formally presented and noted at the Council meeting of 14th May.

Financial Sustainability: The report highlights that the Council operates in a challenging financial environment with prudent short and medium-term planning. While financial stability remains dependent on continual savings plans, the forecast indicates a need to deliver approximately £1.4 million in savings by 2027/28. The auditors emphasized the importance of finding alternatives to using reserves to manage budget gaps, noting no significant weaknesses in financial sustainability arrangements.

Governance: The Council’s governance structure was praised for maintaining appropriate arrangements and compliance policies. An updated Risk Management Strategy and adherence to CIPFA’s Good Governance Framework were noted as strengths. However, the auditors recommended prioritizing the completion of management actions and reviewing the composition of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee to potentially include independent members.

Value for Money: The Council’s efforts to ensure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness were aligned with delivering value for money. Recommendations were made to develop a partnership governance framework and to address underperformance in processing minor planning applications, despite improvements seen in 2023.

Overall, the audit reflects positively on the Council’s operations, suggesting continued disciplined financial management and strategic governance enhancements.

Criteria	2022/23 Risk assessment	2022/23 Auditor judgement on arrangements	2021/22 Auditor judgement on arrangements
Financial sustainability	No risk of significant weakness identified.	G Our work did not identify any areas where we considered that key or improvement recommendations were required	A No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but two improvement recommendations have been made.
Governance	No risk of significant weakness identified.	A No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but three improvement recommendations made	A No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified but two improvement recommendations raised.
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness	No risk of significant weakness identified.	A No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but one improvement recommendation made to support more effective partnership working arrangements.	G No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified and no improvement recommendations raised.

G	No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified or improvement recommendation made.
A	No significant weaknesses in arrangements identified, but improvement recommendations made.
R	Significant weaknesses in arrangements identified and key recommendations made.

The four key recommendations in more detail and the responses of EEBC management:

Grant Thornton Recommendation 1: Timely Internal Audits.

The auditors suggested that internal audits focusing on financial controls should be completed before the end of the financial year to aid the Head of Internal Audit in forming their opinion.

EEBC Management Response: Acknowledging the importance of timely audits, management noted past challenges due to staff turnover and long-term sickness, which have now been resolved. With a fully resourced team, management is confident in meeting the audit schedule, with progress monitored by both the Strategic Leadership Team and the Audit & Scrutiny Committee.

Grant Thornton Recommendation 2: Monitoring Framework for Audit Actions

The council was advised to develop a framework to monitor management actions identified in internal audit reports, ensuring these are completed by the agreed due dates to enhance clarity and accountability.

EEBC Management Response: Management emphasized that a robust monitoring framework is already in place, with the Business Assurance team logging all actions and requiring quarterly updates from Heads of Service. Additionally, new performance management software has been procured to further improve monitoring capabilities.

Grant Thornton Recommendation 3: Audit & Scrutiny Committee Composition

Auditors recommended reviewing the composition of the Audit & Scrutiny Committee to exclude Strategy & Resources members for independence and considering the appointment of independent members.

EEBC Management Response: Management revealed that a review of the committee's operations is already planned following a Corporate Peer Challenge in March 2024. The audit recommendation will be considered during this review in consultation with relevant members.

Grant Thornton Recommendation 4: Partnership Governance Framework

To enhance partnership working, the council was advised to develop a governance framework to guide and evaluate the success and effectiveness of these collaborations.

EEBC Management Response: Management expressed a commitment to positive partnership working, acknowledging recognition from the recent Corporate Peer Challenge. This recommendation will be considered in conjunction with the Action Plan resulting from the Peer Challenge.