#### Council's financial reservations

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's finances came under the spotlight at a meeting 13th July of the Strategy and Resources Committee. Chair **Neil Dallen MBE** (RA Town Ward) opened the item stating "from history we are very good at keeping our books and the auditor often praises us for a good job done." Later he reassured Cllr **Alison Kelly** (LibDem Stamford) that "We are no where near Woking or other councils that are in trouble. We have been very prudent. We have had some hiccups and the reserves have been used as they are supposed to be to resolve those hiccups. We are in very good shape."

Cllr Chris Ames (Labour Court Ward) asked about buying properties for housing the homeless. Cllr Dallen advised that the Borough was currently supporting 70 to 80 families in temporary accommodation, a situation that the Council needs to resolve. An officer stated that there was no risk in the Council purchasing ordinary residential accommodation as that could be sold when no longer needed, but "homelessness specific accommodation" had risks and the demand outstripped supply. No definition of this term was asked for or provided.

Officers reported the Council receives significant income from the car parks in the Borough it operates. The financial year 2022/2023 saw a reduction in income from the Ashley Centre car park on account of the loss of the House of Fraser department store. Income was also reduced from the Hook Road car park. The introduction of charges for parking in the Stoneleigh Parade offset those reductions a little.

While acknowledging that "reserves should not be used to fund day to-day services on an ongoing basis, as reserves would eventually become depleted without a plan for replenishing them", a Report to the meeting confirmed: "The 2023/24 budget plans to use about £2.4m from the Council's reserves to balance, which was considered a reasonable approach in the short term, as this use of reserves has enabled the Council to assess the financial environment post pandemic and cost of living crisis, before taking major decisions around the future of service delivery."

However, in a note of caution it was reported: "The Council's external auditors, **Grant Thornton**, whose 2021/22 Annual Auditor's Report (dated May 2023) recommends that the Council needs to set a timeline for how it will develop longer term saving plans that will ensure reserves are not further depleted".

At 31 March 2023, the Council holds £2.2m (subject to audit) of uncommitted un-ringfenced revenue reserves.

The Government is promising a Fair Funding Review, not before 2025/2026, to re-assess the distribution of government and business rates funding between Councils. When complete, it is expected to favour unitary and upper tier councils, ahead of districts such as Epsom & Ewell Borough Council.

Officers reported to Councillors that in 2016, central government introduced Negative Revenue Support Grant as part of EEBC's four-year settlement. The settlement identified that in 2019/20 the Council would have to make an on-going payment back to central government of £624,000, known as Negative RSG. However, after significant lobbying from affected councils including EEBC, government decided to remove Negative RSG from annual settlements.

The delay of the Fair Funding Review means that Negative RSG continues to be excluded from EEBC's settlement, however, the risk still remains that Negative RSG will feature as part of the future Fair Funding Review calculation when this is eventually introduced.

It was stated that the highest service financial risks are considered to be the impact of increased inflation on the Council's costs and income streams, and the potential for increased demands for housing and homelessness prevention next year. In particular, the cost-of-living crisis is expected to impact on any new Pay Policy. The current forecast includes an estimate of 3% for the staff pay annual cost of living increase, however, recent public sector pay settlements for 2023/24 have been significantly higher than 3%.

With the projected shortfalls in the coming years Officers are to be tasked with identifying further efficiencies, although these are becoming harder to achieve after over a decade of austerity.

Epsom and Ewell Times reported on the proposal in The Draft Local Plan (now paused) to sell off the Town Hall in the Parade and move into offices in East Street that the Council owns. The meeting noted that should the move go ahead the Council would need to generate a net annual income/cost savings in the region of £600,000 from the remaining Town Hall site if it wishes to replace foregone commercial income from its East Street owned offices.

Also on the agenda was a proposal to spend £150,000 on consultants to advise on how the Town Hall site should be developed. Cllr **Robert Leach** (RA Nonsuch) commented "We are bringing in consultants every time we need to know the time of day". He believed that there was sufficient expertise within the Council. The officer explained he was part of a two man team that did not

have the time or expertise. Cllr Jones supported the proposal as the Council could not afford to get this wrong. The motion was carried with Cllr Leach supporting it in the end.

Related Reports:

The Epsom and Ewell Town Hall plan A new Town Hall for Epsom and Ewell? Anyone for tennis? If you pay.

#### Derby disrupter doesn't quite go down

Ben Newman ran onto the Epsom racecourse seconds after the starter gates opened on the 3rd June 2023 Derby flat-race. Though the horses were still out of sight by the time several security and police officers dragged him off in front of the Grandstand, his act was prosecuted as a public nuisance.

Appearing in custody before Recorder David Ockelton at Guildford Crown Court he was sentenced today (6th July).

The court heard from Wendy Cottee prosecuting that it was only the swift action of security and police that ensured the race itself proceeded undisturbed. Nevertheless, it was clear from video and audio footage that many members of the public were "seriously annoyed". She also told the court that Newman had sent an appeal on social media calling for a large number of sympathisers of "Animals Rising" to join him in his protest. An appeal the Judge commented had not been successful.

Defending Mr Nick Goss said that Newman was passionate and well intentioned. He did not intend to create danger but only to protest. His time in custody since 3rd June had been a "salutary lesson" and caused him to reflect on his actions.

Newman has been arrested over the last year in connection with various sporting events and was on bail with a condition not to attend public sporting events on 3rd June. Mr Goss stated that none of these investigations had led to any criminal charges.

The Judge said to Newman "The proud liberties of our constitution have limits – you went beyond those limits. There was a clear danger to police and security. You could not predict how long it would take them to remove you."

"The offence is serious with a maximum of 10 years. However, I will make the sentence as short as possible. It will be 18 weeks and it will be suspended for 2 years."

The court ordered Newman to undertake 80 hours community service and to pay costs of £1800 and a victim surcharge of £126.

#### Green Belt development objections excluded

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Draft Local Plan proposes housing developments on Green Belt land. Prominent local objectors to building on Green Belt land have discovered that their objections have not been counted.

The Council undertook a public consultation on the Draft Local Plan from 1 February to 19 March 2023. Residents could submit their responses using an online questionnaire or emailing or writing. If emailing or writing it would then be a matter for local government officers to judge whether the responses were for or against various proposals in the Draft Plan.

**Yufan Si**, a leading light in the local protest group **Epsom and Ewell Green Belt**, wrote to the Council and strongly objected to Green Belt development. Yet, her response has not been classified as a "No" to the questionnaire's 8th question: "Do you support Development in the Green Belt?"

**Alexander Duval** has complained that his clear online objection to building on **Horton Farm** has not been judged by EEBC to be an objection. He said: "Q.15 of the consultation questionnaire asked 'Do you support Site Allocation 6, Horton Farm?' My answer started with 'I strongly disagree with the development of this site' and was followed by the rationale for this view.

"I believe it is clear from this statement that I do not support the site allocation of Horton Farm. Notwithstanding this, my response is not classified as 'No, with suggestions detailed below'; indeed it is not classified at all."

He added "This issue occurs frequently regarding classification of my own responses, and also in many of the responses that I have looked at from other residents, all of which appeared to be against building on the Greenbelt."

Nevertheless, preliminary analysis by Ms Si of samples of the 1736 responses indicates as much as 85% of respondents objecting to development on Green Belt land.

Both Yufan Si and Alexander Duval have written to EEBC and Councillors demanding a review of the classification of responses to the consultation on the Draft Local Plan.

The responses to the consultation can be viewed on the internet on THIS LINK.

The progress of the Draft Plan has been paused. At the last meeting of 15th June of the Council committee dealing with the Plan a new timetable for progressing the process of adopting a new plan for Epsom and Ewell was promised in due course.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council counters the complaints. Read our further report:

Green complaint not black and white

Related Reports:

Motion to pause Local Plan process

Public meeting on Local Plan dominated by greenbelters.

Pause for thought on paused Plan

and many more....

### New Epsom theatre very open for business

Set amidst rolling lavender fields, the **Lavender Theatre** will open for its inaugural summer season this July in **Epsom**. The theatre is located at 139 Reigate Road, Epsom KT17 3D

The 250-seat open air theatre will be home for an annual season of plays and musicals with a truly elegant backdrop. Based at Mayfield Lavender in Surrey, the theatre has been co-founded by director **Joe McNeice** (producer/director of 'DIVA: Live From Hell!'), Mayfield owner Brendan Maye and Jonathan Muir.

The inaugural season will open with Irving Berlin's classic musical 'Annie Get Your Gun' from July 17, with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, original book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields as revised by Peter Stone, with new direction and choreography by Simon Hardwick ('My Fair Lady').

The launch of the theatre will see the completion of a significant investment into the Epsom site, which already boasts a coffee bar, shop, and a full service glasshouse restaurant due to open alongside the theatre this summer.

"This will be more than just a visit to a theatre," commented Joe McNeice, "Audiences will be able to grab a picnic to enjoy among the blossoming rows of lavender as the sun begins to set, before taking their seats in our covered auditorium to watch a show under the stars."

Since opening in 2006, the Mayfield Lavender Farm in Banstead has grown into a major summer destination for tourists and locals in South London, and this year the team are opening the gates to a theatre at their sister location in Epsom.

Lavender Theatre Artistic Director **Joe McNeice** worked behind the scenes at London's immersive 'Great Gatsby', and was Regent's Park Open Air Theatre's Visitor Services Manager until 2022, after graduating from the University of York in 2018.

"The whole place looks incredible, just walking about the site is a real treat for all the senses," McNeice added, "so our shows have to compliment their surroundings and match the sophistication that the natural landscape has set for us."

Speaking of his plans for 'Annie Get Your Gun', **Simon Hardwick** said: "The show will be a rip-roaring staging of the well known Broadway musical in a very raw and kinetic production that evokes the energy of Buffalo Bill's original touring celebrations of the Wild West. The Lavender Theatre will be a dream destination; an environment in which to enjoy a West End-standard production under a hazy summer sky."

The theatre, privately funded and managed by **Lavender Productions Ltd**., will produce its own shows with plans to see the summer season expand year on year with diverse and engaging programming.

McNeice said: "With no public funding or grants to help us achieve this mammoth project, we are relying solely on our Box Office income to build the Lavender Theatre into a profitable business, but we believe that creating a new producing theatre, a proper landmark location for the arts in Surrey, is something worth the investment, for both the local community and the wider industry.

"I'm really passionate about developing new shows, particularly musicals. The location is perfect because it's actually very close to London, but far enough away to have its own identity, which will give us the opportunity to develop work without the vast expense and pressure that comes with opening new shows in the capital. It's an incredibly exciting opportunity."

Tickets for the inaugural season are on sale today at lavendertheatre.com.

#### **ULEZ driving old cars to Epsom market**

**Epsom** has the highest number of second-hand cars for sale per 10,000 people, followed by Winsford and Preston. Hatchbacks are the most common type of second-hand car, accounting for 38% of all listings. The Ford Fiesta, VW Golf and the Ford Focus are the most common second-hand car models.

New research reveals the UK towns and cities with the highest number of second-hand cars for sale.

The research, commissioned by car finance refund experts Undisclosed.co.uk, looked at more than 400,000 used car listings from AutoTrader, in order to find the areas of the UK with the highest number of second-hand cars per 10,000 people.

With The Mayor of London's Ultra Low Emission Zone expanding to **Epsom and Ewell**'s London Borough borders with Sutton and Kingston many local residents are changing cars to avoid the charge.

Comfortably in first place, with 549 second-hand cars listings per 10,000 residents, is Epsom. The Surrey town sits at the top of the list, cementing itself as the second-hand car capital of the UK. The data shows that there are 1,729 second-hand cars for sale in Epsom.

With 498 second-hand cars for sale per 10,000 residents, Winsford is close behind in second place. The data shows that the Cheshire town boasts 1,699 second-hand cars for sale.

In third place, is the Lancashire city of Preston, with 348 second-hand cars for sale per 10,000 residents. The first city to appear on the list, Preston has a total of 3,955 second-hand cars for sale.

Fourth place belongs to Peterborough, with 318 second-hand cars for sale per 10,000 residents, and ranking in fifth place with 294 is Stirling.

The remainder of the top ten features Wakefield in sixth place (253), Oldham in seventh place (236), Canterbury in eighth place (234), Blackburn in ninth (231).

Rounding off the list in tenth place is Stafford, with 227 second-hand cars listings per 10,000 residents.

Hatchbacks were found to be the most common type of used car, accounting for 38% of all listings (164,910 listings), while SUVs were the second most popular, accounting for 33% of listings (143,842 listings).

Rank	Place	Second-hand cars for sale per 10,000 residents
1.	Epsom	549
2.	Winsford	498
3.	Preston	346
4.	Peterborough	318
5.	Stirling	294
6.	Wakefield	253
7	Oldham	236
8.	Canterbury	234
9.	Blackburn	231
10.	Stafford	227

A spokesperson for Undisclosed.co.uk commented on the findings, saying:

"This research offers valuable insight into the areas of the UK which see a disproportionately high number people trying to sell off their vehicles. The more saturated the second hand car market is in a given area, the more tricky is to be to sell, with many potential buyers being less willing to travel further afield in order to secure a slightly better deal."

Related reports:

Can you beat the ULEZ charge?

Challenge to ULEZ gaining grounds

Many Surrey motorists will be paying the ULEZ charge.

Surrey Council's ULEZ talks ongoing with TfL  $\,$ 

Image: Wilsons car dealers in Kiln Lane Epsom. One of the country's largest second-hand forecourts.

#### Meet Epsom & Ewell's new Mayor, Robert Geleit.

Epsom and Ewell Times welcomes the new Mayor. Labour Councillor for Court Ward, Robert Geleit.

**EET**: The main thing I wanted to discuss was charities, I see that you are championing three charities in your Mayoral year, could you expand upon why you chose those particular charities?

**Robert Geleit**: I chose to champion these three charities because I want to help make sure each one of them receives sufficient funds to be able to carry on what they are doing so they can continue positively impacting our community.

**Age Concern Epsom and Ewell** was an easy choice because of the essential services they offer our pensioners: practical support, help in accessing services and opportunities to increase quality of life.

**Citizens Advice Epsom and Ewell** have faithfully continued to offer desperately needed advice services in the Borough. I have seen personally the impact it has had in Court Ward as volunteers advise people how to access benefits they qualify for, how to best seek employment, how to deal with money and credit issues, their consumer rights, immigration issues and how best to tackle relational issues with neighbours or family (or anyone else). Often people don't know where to start when it comes to tackling these things and CAEE is a wonderful resource.

Last, how could I not support **Love Me Love My Mind**? They are a small local charity offering support to those in our community with mental health difficulties, including providing information, offering depression support groups and a drop-in group that offers a weekly meal and all sorts of social and educational opportunities. I have suffered with mental health problems myself, so

mental health support is near and dear to my heart.

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

**Robert Geleit**: I so enjoyed my year as Deputy Mayor and I'm enjoying being Mayor even more. I want to work hard serving the borough and have fun! I intend to be promoting the ward I represent as Councillor, Court Ward, since it has a lot to offer. And I really want to offer young people in Epsom something to do that builds and grows positive community. Watch this space!

**EET**: What do you think could be improved about the Borough?

**Robert Geleit**: Youth provision. When I was growing up on the Longmead Estate in the eighties there were all number of offerings for us. I remember the Ace Disco in particular. Now there is so little offered for our youth. This needs to change. There must be more we can do.

**EET**: What are you most looking forward to in your new role?

**Robert Geleit**: I'm really looking forward to Armistice day. Last year I had the privilege of laying a wreath at St Martins and found it really moving. This year, to have the opportunity as Mayor to lay a wreath at St Mary's in Ewell is going to be a once in a lifetime opportunity.

EET: If you were just named Fulham's manager, who is the first player you would sign?

**Robert Geleit**: I really don't follow sport. But, like my father who was a lifelong Fulham supporter, I do go to Craven Cottage on the odd occasion. If I had to sign a player I think I'd sign up my mate Dodgy to play in goal for Chelsea just before they played Fulham - then he could be Fulham's secret weapon as he let in loads of goals!

EET: What hobbies of yours might suffer during your busy Mayoral year?

Robert Geleit: So much of my spare time has been spent on being a good Councillor (or Mayor!) that I don't have much time for hobbies. However, in the past I tended to flip between working on hardware and software projects. Sometimes I still manage to find the time for the odd bit of soldering. My main passion is working with old fashioned valves to create sublime sound systems – I could actually make a living out of it but I'm saving that for if I ever lose my seat  $\square$ 

**EET:** Thank you very much Mr Mayor. We hope you enjoy your year in office.

Related Reports:

Epsom and Ewell's 7th Labour Mayor?

Meet Epsom & Ewell's new Mayor, Clive Woodbridge. (2022-2023

Image: Robert Geleit at the Epsom Derby Races June 2023.

## Ex MPC, now Epsom PPC, tackles Surrey PCs

**Epsom and Ewell** Liberal Democrat prospective parliamentary candidate and former Royal Military Police officer, **Helen Maguire**, is pushing Government to spend more on policing in Surrey given the "dire" state of policing in the County.

Using figures culled from various public sources by the LibDems, Ms Maguire points to the 1,412 burglaries that went unattended in Surrey last year, as another example ".... of the Conservative Government suggesting it is tough on crime with the facts telling a different story".

Figures uncovered by her Party show that of the 2,768 burglaries reported in Surrey, the police only arrived at the scene in 1356 instances – accounting for just 48.99% of cases. The number of unsolved burglaries in Surrey also soared, with 2195 cases being closed without a suspect even identified. This is equivalent to 79.3% of all cases.

The Liberal Democrats are calling for a new "Burglary Response Guarantee," which would create a guarantee that all domestic burglaries are attended by the police and properly investigated.

This will require a return to proper community policing, the LibDems urge – where officers are visible, trusted, and have the time and resources needed to focus on solving crime. Yet since 2015, Ms Maguire claims, the Conservatives have taken over 4,000 Police Community Support Officers off the streets, while they look set to have broken their key promise of having recruited an extra 20,000 police officers by the end of March 2023.

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"The number of PCSOs has fallen to just 69 by the end of March – down from 136 PCSOs just over a year ago in February 2022. It's worse in **Epsom and Ewell** where we should have 8 and now have half of that number. That's hardly a good track record for a (Tory) Party which makes out to be supportive of policing! Hardly surprising then that so many burglaries in our community are not being attended by police officers. No family should be denied justice after suffering the distress and trauma of being burgled", said Ms Maguire.

"Car theft is also a scourge across the county with a staggering 79.2% of car thefts going unsolved last year with just 5.3% resulting in a charge or summons. Lib Dem analysis, based on the latest Home Office statistics on crime outcomes, showed that a grand total of 1503 car theft cases in Surrey were closed in 2022 without a suspect even being identified – equivalent to 4 car thefts going unsolved every day.

"The priorities of this government are clearly not on our public services with our police officers, like the NHS, being starved of resources. In such a dire situation, enough is enough – we need a change of regime – one that puts the focus on our communities, on law and order, and the health and wealth of our people," said Helen Maguire.

"Many families across Surrey now feel unsafe in their own homes, because this Conservative government has left our police forces overstretched and under-resourced. It means far too many victims are being denied justice and far too many criminals are getting away with it.

"Meanwhile, it has been revealed that the Surrey Police budget for 2022/23 was underspent by at least £7.9 million, enough to pay for the entire 5.1% council tax increase imposed by the Police and Chief Commissioner Lisa Townsend for 2023/24."

Surrey Police responded to Ms Maguire's claims:

Exclusive to the **Epsom and Ewell Times** a spokesperson for Surrey Police rebuts the LibDem candidate's claims:

"We are committed to deploying officers to all home burglaries. We recognise how invasive and traumatic it can be to be a victim of burglary, and this is why we are already investing significant resources in preventing and tackling these offences, alongside providing the appropriate support and advice to victims.

Each of our three divisions in Surrey has its own proactive team that reviews all burglaries in that division. These teams monitor ongoing burglary trends and patterns, identify hot spot areas and target prolific and repeat offenders and organised crime networks to ensure that patrols are directed in a targeted and most effective way.

Changes to how burglaries are classified, which were introduced on 1 April 2023, will enable officers to give a greater focus on home burglaries and help to meet the NPCC pledge of attending all home burglaries.

Burglary offences had previously been divided into two categories of "residential" and "business and community". A residential burglary previously included sheds, garages, outhouses and summer houses, as well as the dwelling itself.

The changes will mean that residential burglaries are split into two categories – residential burglary of a home and residential burglary of an unconnected building. All sheds, outhouses and garages with no connecting door to the home will be classed as unconnected buildings.

Our figures show that we have solved 81 more offences than the previous 12 months and so far have had 125 less offences (106 less offences between April 2023 and today v April 2022 and June 14/06/22).

Work also remains ongoing to prevent burglaries from occurring in the first place by ensuring effective prevention measures are in place. Many of the residential burglaries reported are shed or garage break-ins and we continue to run awareness-raising campaigns in our local communities to remind homeowners of the steps they can take to avoid becoming a victim.

More advice on protecting your home/outbuildings from burglary can be found on our web site https://www.surrey.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/protect-home-crime/

In some cases, there may not be enough intelligence or positive lines of enquiry for police to act on. This does not mean that a crime is closed indefinitely or that intelligence or information is ignored. This information will be collated and monitored to identify emerging crime hotspots and any trends or patterns.

If an investigation is closed, and we then receive information to link an offender at a later date we will always pursue this to seek closure for victims.

The public can also help in the pursuit of offenders by reporting suspicious activity, and also by reporting to the police those selling stolen property or those involved in burglary offences via 101, by webchat on our website https://surrey.police.uk/online and https://www.surrey.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/cor/tell-us-about-existing-case-report/ or anonymously via the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Residents are also able to upload video footage and images that they think could assist our burglary investigations through the use of a public CCTV submission portal https://surrey.police.uk/suspiciousactivityportal "

And on the claims about reductions in PCSOs the police spokesperson continued:

"In 2022, to contribute to savings across the force, we reduced the number of Police Community Support Officers in Surrey Police to 96, 22 posts fewer than our previous staffing level of 118 full-time equivalent PCSOs. This reduction did not involve redundancies and achieving this staffing level did not result in a reduction in overall numbers in our Safer Neighbourhood Teams; we maintain a strong blended mix of police officers and PCSOs in these key frontline posts in every borough.

In September 2022, Surrey Police employed 88 PCSOs. This is lower than our desired number of PCSOs, so it is inaccurate to say that 35 PCSO roles have been cut by the Force. We are actively recruiting to bring our establishment level back up to 96.

We know how important a visible police team with local knowledge is to residents in each of our boroughs. A trusted, knowledgeable, and proactive local policing presence is just as important to us, and PCSOs are a valued and integral part of that."

Adding to the local force's rebuttal Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey **Lisa Townsend** said: "The suggestion that policing in the county is in a 'dire' state is once again entirely misleading – the reality is that Surrey Police is now the biggest it has ever been.

"The Force has not only met but exceeded its target for extra officers under the government's programme to increase numbers by 20,000 across the country. An extra 395 police officers have been added to the ranks since 2019 – this is 136 more than the target set by government for Surrey which is fantastic news for residents.

"Last year, in order to help achieve its savings target - Surrey Police made an operational decision to temporarily halt the recruitment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). "These posts were replaced with new warranted officers and there were no redundancies or loss of numbers to Surrey Police's frontline teams.

"PCSOs continue to play a crucial role in policing our communities – recruitment has been reopened and the Force are seeking applications right now. We expect their numbers to back to the previous levels within three years.

"Over the last year, Surrey Police have achieved an increase in the number of residential burglaries solved and have since coupled this with a commitment to attend all reported house burglaries in Surrey. The outcome rate for residential burglary in Surrey remains above the national average.

"I'm proud that Surrey is the safest county in the south east, and the fourth safest county in the country."

What is your experience of policing in Epsom and Ewell? Write to us at Epsom and Ewell Times. Via the contact page or by email to admin@epsomandewelltimes.com

#### Stretching Epsom taxi ULEZ exemption

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's **Licensing and Planning Policy Committee** decided Thursday 15th June to put out to public consultation a change to licensing requirements for taxis seeking operating licences from the Council. The change will require applicants' vehicles to meet the ULEZ charge exemption criteria as set by the Mayor of London for the ULEZ zone. That zone is due to be expanded to Epsom and Ewell's London Borough borders (i.e., the boroughs of Sutton and Kingston) on 31st August ths year.

Cllr **Julie Morris** (LibDem College) welcomed any measure that pursued the Council's climate change agenda but was concerned on the devastating impact the requirement may have on some drivers. She gave as an example a driver near retirement who could not afford to change his vehicle. Is there discretion she asked?

An officer said all policies had to have some discretion or legal challenges could be made. However, he did not address the example given but mentioned the large Cadillac limousine he had seen recently. The Mayor of London's ULEZ policy has some exceptions to cater for such special party cab-hires.

Cllr **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley) in the chair stated that the draft policy would be open to amendment in the light of responses to the consultation and the matter would be returning for decision by the committee on a future occasion.

Related reports:

Emissions a taxing issue for Council

## Pause for thought on paused Plan

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Licensing and Planning Policy Committee reviewed the state of play with the Draft Local Plan at a meeting Thursday 15th June.

The progression of the Draft Local Plan (the framework for local planning decisions of the future) was paused in March following an outcry about its Green Belt development proposals. Michael Gove MP, the Secretary of State responsible for planning matters, is yet to deliver on the clarifications sought to his pre-May local election indications that local authorities would have greater control over housing targets.

The meeting was chaired by Cllr **Steven McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Langley) who advised that EEBC was bound by the housing target of 573 houses per annum as extrapolated from 2014 data. A report to the meeting confirmed that if 2018 data was relied on that target would be reduced to 253.

Officers reported on the workstreams continuing on the Draft Local Plan. These included the vetting of the 1650 responses from individuals and organisations received during the public consultation period of the now paused Draft Local Plan. Officers are redoubling their efforts to identify brownfield sites for development including Kiln Lane and Longmead areas of Epsom and Ewell.

Cllr **Kieran Persand** (Conservative Horton Ward) welcomed the work being done on brownfield development and called for Green Belt to simply be excluded from the Draft Local Plan.

Cllr **Julie Morris** (LibDem College Ward) drew attention to the Environment Act coming into force in November this year. Major developments require to prove a 10% gain in bio-diversity. An officer explained that this gain is measurable by a pre-development audit and post-development audit according to an established "metric". Developers can establish the gain from on-site or off-site "off-sets". Rather like carbon trading. Minor developments will be subject to the 10% bio-diversity gain requirement from April 2024. Cllr Morris argued that the new legal requirement should inhibit Green Belt development.

Cllr **Robert Leach** (RA Ewell Court), having served on the Planning Committee in the 20th century, was tired of it all and regarded the estimated half-million being spent on the process as a waste and questioned the benefit to residents. However, he acknowledged the legal requirement to have a Local Plan. He also predicted, after having read the Privileges Committee report on Boris Johnson in the morning, a change of government by the time EEBC settled its Local Plan. The councillor implied a new Labour Government would rigidly impose housing targets.

Cllr McCormick explained that a revised timetable for the progression of the Draft Local Plan will be submitted to the committee in due course. Meanwhile, all councillors will be invited to special briefings on the Draft Local Plan process and this would be especially important for the several new councillors elected in May.

Related Reports:

Motion to pause Local Plan process

Public meeting on Local Plan dominated by greenbelters.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council Draft Local Plan.

#### **Epsom choristers go south for the Summer**

This year, **Epsom Choral Society**'s summer concert will take you on a journey of discovery with two exciting British 20th century works on Saturday 24th June 2023 in St Andrew's Church, Cheam.

From green and leafy Surrey, Epsom Choral Society travels firstly to **Brazil** to enjoy the jazz rhythms and sparkling piano of **Constant Lambert**'s popular 1927 work The Rio Grande.

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In the second half, the singers cross the Atlantic to Africa with David Fanshawe's African Sanctus (1972), a work which combines the traditional Mass with an original soundtrack of African music recorded by the composer during his travels up the

Jane Fanshawe, David's widow, will attend the concert and will give an introduction and her personal memories of African Sanctus. David Fanshawe (1942-2010) was an English composer and self-styled explorer with a fervent interest in world music. His best-known composition is his choral work, African Sanctus, written in 1972

# EPSOM CHORAL SOCIETY AFRICAN SANCTUS David Fanshawe

# THE RIO GRANDE

**Constant Lambert** 

# Saturday 24th June 2023 at 7:30pm

Julian Collings | conductor
Lisa Swayne | soprano
Marion Lea | piano
Peter Jaekel | piano
Percussion ensemble

St Andrew's Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam SM2 7HF

Tickets: £18, £9 (students and U18s) www.epsomchoral.org.uk/tickets Box office: 01372 727078 or 07522 111219



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African Sanctus features soprano soloist, Lisa Swayne, and the soloist playing the fiendishly virtuosic piano solo in The Rio Grande is ECS's very own Marion Lea, a formidable pianist who next year celebrates 50 years as the choir's accompanist! Marion will also be joined by Peter Jaekel for duets from Walton's Façade. The concert will be conducted by Epsom Choral Society's Musical Director **Julian Collings**.

Chairman **Isobel Squire** said: "This is an exciting end to our season, and we look forward to transporting our audience from a gentle English summer to the dynamic rhythms of more southerly climes."

The concert takes place at St Andrew's Church, Northey Avenue, Cheam on Saturday 24th June 2023 at 7.30pm.

Entry is £18, or just £9 for students and under-18s.

Tickets are available via Epsom Choral Society website www.epsomchoral.org.uk/tickets

Epsom Choral Society has been singing for 100 years with around 90 singers. It puts on at least four concerts each year which attract a loyal following. Epsom Choral Society is a friendly choir – it does not require auditions but does aim for high performance standards. Rehearsals are on Wednesday evenings under the baton of their Musical Director, Julian Collings.

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