

Surrey Prof. gets £2M for AI driven clean energy

20 April 2023



The University of Surrey's Professor **Jin Xuan** has won a prestigious Open Fellowship from the **Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC)** to develop the next generation of clean energy devices using advanced artificial intelligence.

As well as using electrochemical technology to explore established applications like green hydrogen production and CO2 reduction, Prof Xuan will also develop future technologies, with a particular focus on cleaner, greener fertilisers.

Prof Xuan said:

"Manufacturing fertiliser to help crops grow is hugely carbon intensive, but if we can achieve a breakthrough on the difficult electrochemical reduction of nitrogen to generate ammonia, we could make significant steps to address this.

"The answer lies in artificial intelligence to design the complex electrochemical devices, but many existing algorithms in this area don't offer explanations for how the AI comes to its conclusions. The relation between the inputs and outputs is a mystery, but I plan to open the 'black box' to find results which are reliable, explainable and transferable."

The five-year fellowship will enable Prof Xuan to develop Explainable Artificial Intelligence tools and models which lead to an automated loop of materials design, manufacturing and testing of electrochemical devices. Prof Xuan will work with industrial partners from Siemens PSE, Intelligent Energy and Johnson Matthey.

Prof Xuan said:

"My ambitions for this research are huge and can only be achieved with long-term support like this. The flexibility offered to me through this fellowship will enable me to shape my research as findings emerge, following the solutions which reveal themselves through my work, in partnership with other academics and industry. I'm extremely grateful to the EPSRC for this support."

President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Surrey, Professor **Max Lu**, said:

"Jin exemplifies Surrey's values of inspiration and innovation. He is ambitious about solving global challenges, working collaboratively with interdisciplinary researchers and innovators. We're very proud of him for winning this fellowship."

The Great Epsom Bike Off raises money for the Children's Trust

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On Saturday 15th April, Epsom based PR agency, The Oracle Group, and its partner charity, The Children's Trust, held **The Great Epsom Bike Off** at **The Ashley Centre** in Epsom raising an extraordinary figure of nearly £700. Inspired by the agency's Chief Development Officer, **Clare Sanderson**, running the London Marathon 2023 to raise vitally-needed funds on Sunday 23rd April, the event saw the two organisations and members of the public cycle the distance of the London to Brighton Cycle Ride.

Leading multi-service communications agency, The Oracle Group chose The Children's Trust as one of its charities of the year. The Children's Trust is the UK's leading charity for children with brain injury and neurodisability. Based in Tadworth, Surrey, it delivers rehabilitation, education and community services through skilled teams for children, young people and their families.

Throughout the event, volunteers took part in a challenge to cycle 54 miles on two bikes loaned by **Pure Gym Epsom**, to complete the distance of the London to Brighton Cycle Ride. Journalist and news presenter, **Nicholas Owen**, who is an ambassador of The Children's Trust, also attended the event and helped the team reach the target mileage.

Supported by **GoEpsom** and **The Ashley Centre**, the event included a wide range of activities for the local community to enjoy including performances by young dancers from local dance school, the **Terri-Jayne School of Dance**. Visitors also enjoyed face painting by Bee Happy Facepainting, a Meet and Greet with Ashley Bear and The Children's Trust's Mascot, and lots of activities available on the children's crafts table.

A group of children supported by The Children's Trust came along to the event with their carers and families, enjoying the activities and dance performance. Throughout the day some of the families' stories were shared on a big screen and a few who had previously been helped by The Children's Trust also stopped by to enjoy the event.

Partnerships Manager **Kat Caddick** comments: "We are incredibly grateful to The Oracle Group for organising this brilliant event and to all of the organisations and individuals who have generously given their time and donations. Some of our amazing children and their families had a lovely time and it was a great opportunity to raise awareness of the work we do and why donations are so vital. We would also like to thank Clare for her brave commitment to running the marathon, the dancers from Terri-Jayne's School of Dance, our face painter and GoEpsom."

Clare Sanderson, Chief Development Officer at The Oracle Group comments: "We are delighted that this event has been such a success. We have been working hard over the past few months to plan today and couldn't have done it without the generous donations and help from local businesses. The work that The Children's Trust does is phenomenal and I am excited (and a bit apprehensive!) to run the marathon for them this weekend. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the charity throughout the year."

The partnership has already seen The Oracle Group volunteer in The Children's Trust's charity shops in Reigate and Redhill, where two teams competed to raise the most money. Over £2,000 was raised on this day and more fundraising plans are in the pipeline for the rest of the year.

Surrey Police secretly recorded public's calls with officers

20 April 2023



You probably knew 999 calls are recorded but did you know your conversations with individual Surrey Police Officers were being secretly recorded without you knowing? Surrey Police has escaped a fine for its mass breach of privacy and has received a serious reprimand from the UK's data authority. The Information Commissioner Office issued yesterday the press release below.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has issued a reprimand to Surrey Police following the rollout of an app that recorded phone conversations and unlawfully captured personal data.

In June 2020, the ICO became aware that staff members across both police forces had access to an app that recorded all incoming and outgoing phone calls. 1,015 staff members downloaded the app onto their work mobile phones and more than **200,000 recordings** of phone conversations, likely with victims, witnesses, and perpetrators of suspected crimes, were automatically saved.

The ICO considered it highly likely that the app captured a large variety of personal data during these calls and it considered that the processing of some of this data was unfair and unlawful. Police officers that downloaded the app were unaware that all calls would be recorded, and people were not informed that their conversations with officers were being recorded.

The app was first made available in 2016 and was originally intended to be used as recording software by a small number of specific officers, but Surrey Police and Sussex Police chose to make the app available for all staff to download. The app has now been withdrawn from use and the recordings, other than those considered to be evidential material, have been destroyed.

The ICO has applied its revised public sector approach to this case - instead of issuing a £1m fine to both Surrey Police and Sussex Police, they have each received a formal reprimand. The ICO's approach aims to reduce the impact of fines on those accessing public services and to encourage greater data protection compliance from public authorities to prevent harms from occurring in the first place.



"Sussex Police and Surrey Police failed to use people's personal data lawfully by recording hundreds of thousands of phone calls without their knowledge. People have the right to expect that when they speak to a police officer, the information they disclose is handled responsibly. We can only estimate the huge amount of personal data collected during these conversations, including highly sensitive information relating to suspected crimes.

"The reprimand reflects the use of the ICO's wider powers towards the public sector as large fines could lead to reduced budgets for the provision of vital services. This case highlights why the ICO is pursuing a different approach, as fining Surrey Police and Sussex Police risks impacting the victims of crime in the area once again.

"This case should be a lesson learned to any organisation planning to introduce an app, product or service that uses people's personal data. Organisations must consider people's data protection rights and implement data protection principles from the very start."

- Stephen Bonner, ICO Deputy Commissioner - Regulatory Supervision

Recommendations

The ICO recommended that Surrey Police and Sussex Police should take action to ensure their compliance with data protection law, including:

- Deployment of any new apps should consider data protection at the very beginning and document the process. A specific team should consider the method and means of data processing, with remedial action taken to ensure processing is compliant with current data protection legislation prior to the app being deployed.
- Instruction and data protection guidance should be issued to staff in respect of the use of any apps, with officers required to confirm that issued guidance has been read and understood.
- Review existing policies and procedures to ensure that adequate consideration has been given to data subject rights during the processing of personal data and special category data.
- Review the content of data protection training, particularly in respect of law enforcement processing.

The ICO has asked Surrey Police and Sussex Police to provide details of actions taken to address these recommendations within three months of the reprimand being issued.

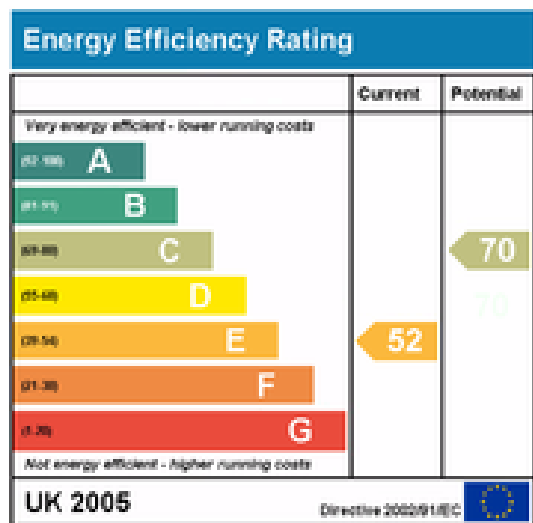
Epsom and Ewell tenants paying for energy inefficient homes?

20 April 2023



55% of inspected rented homes in **Epsom and Ewell** are below Grade C in Energy Performance ratings. Landlords are required to obtain Energy Performance Certificates for their rentals. To obtain a certificate an independent expert must inspect the property. In an analysis of inspections across the country between

2018 and 2022 Epsom and Ewell's figures are consistent with the country average. 5% of those below grade C are not going to be able to rise to a C grade in the future because of structural limitations.



The Government has plans to make a C grade mandatory for all rental properties from 2025. The most energy efficient homes are graded A and the worse G. Those tenants living in sub C standard homes are paying more for their heating due to poor insulation. Insulation was the most frequently recommended improvement measure for private rental properties, making up 35% of all recommendations. On average tenants could save one third on their fuel bills if landlords brought their properties up to the C grade.

Inspections for EPCs involve an assessment that looks at heating, windows and doors, insulation and other structural factors, estimating how much it will cost to heat and light the property, what its carbon dioxide emissions are likely to be and how to improve the rating.

Jonathan Winston, occupier support manager at the **Carbon Trust** said "14% of UK emissions arise from residences, homes. That means the reductions that need to be made there are very significant in order for the UK to meet its legally binding net zero target by 2050. The emissions are quite difficult to tackle, particularly around heating. There's a major need to decarbonize our heating sources."

Chris Norris, Director of policy at the **National Residential Landlords Association** said "I think there's an awful lot of misunderstanding and uncertainty about what landlords need to do in terms of energy efficiency.

"But the future proposals are to get to a C or above, because the Government have got this Net Zero target for 2050. The problem is, they consulted on those new rules about three years ago, they closed that consultation two years ago in January 2021, and they've never actually confirmed what new rules will be.

"You've got lots of landlords that are actually quite open to making changes to their properties, or making decisions at least about what they need to do, but they really don't know what path to take and they can't commit to those spending decisions until we find out exactly what the Government wants to do."

He added: "At the moment the Government is doing very little to support landlords to make these changes. They've not even given us the target or the deadline for what we've got to do."

Rachelle Earwaker, senior economist at the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation**, said: "Living in a home with a poor EPC rating has a range of impacts on the tenants. Homes are colder, often damper. They are much more expensive to heat. At the moment in the energy crisis, that has had a massive impact.

"What our research has shown is that 35% of low income private renters across the UK said they couldn't afford to keep their homes warm even before the recent winter that we've just had, and we know that a quarter were in arrears with the energy bills in October and November, again before the winter."

You can check any property's EPC status on this [Government link](#).

Related Reports:

[Cllr Gulland: Insulate & Generate - two key aspects to include in the Local Plan for Epsom & Ewell](#)

[Is this Epsom Couple getting their heating for free?](#)

Turn up to turn downturn in turnout!

20 April 2023



In an exclusive for Epsom and Ewell Times we report on voter turnout in the last four Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Elections. 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019. The May 2015 Council election was held on the same day as the UK Parliamentary General Election and the turnout for the local election was much higher as a result. The next election in Epsom and Ewell will be held on Thursday 4th May.

Excluding the 61% 2015 turnout the average turnout across the Borough between 2007 and 2019 was 38.19% of the electorate, with the lowest turnout last time in 2019 with just 32.83%.

Consistently the Wards with the lowest turnouts have been Ruxley, Court and Town. Ruxley having the lowest since 2007 of just 25.23% in 2019.

The highest turnouts are in the richer wards of Woodcote, College and Stamford. Though these wards are also more closely contested and that can explain their higher turnouts as well. The highest recorded since 2007 being College Ward in 2011 with just over 59%. (Again the General Election year of 2015 excluded.)

However, Court Ward is also one of the top three contested Wards in the Borough and that is why it features in the Epsom and Ewell Hustings for three Wards that takes place on 26th April. [CLICK HERE](#) for details.

Will the requirement for photo ID see a further decline in voter turnout in Epsom and Ewell?

Related reports:

[Worrying about voter ID law](#)



No photo – no vote!
Click [HERE](#) for the full analysis.
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