

Opposition unite against division of opposition

19 January 2023



Epsom and Ewell opposition parties are united against the Parliamentary intervention of the “True and Fair Party”. Prospective parliamentary candidate **Gina Miller** opened her campaign office in Epsom and Ewell this week, promising to set up shadow MP surgeries to help residents struggling through the cost-of-living crisis. The office is based at Regency House, 17 West Street, just off Epsom High Street. In the coming weeks and months, Gina will hold shadow MP surgeries face-to-face and online, from the office and in locations across the constituency.

Gina famously defeated the Government twice in the Supreme Court when the Conservatives attempted to unlawfully override and then shut Parliament. Ministers’ disrespect of the law, entitled attitude and lack of care for the electorate led Gina to form True & Fair. The party campaigns against political corruption and highlights the lack of accountability in our system.

Gina, who is also Leader of the True & Fair Party, said: “In October, True & Fair announced its first slate of election candidates. They are standing in constituencies where traditional opposition parties have struggled to mount a serious challenge to the Conservative incumbent in recent elections. Epsom and Ewell voters can unite under my candidacy, which will be shaped by their aspirations and address their concerns.

“There was a net decline of 300 registered business – far above the national average – in Epsom and Ewell last year, according to the House of Commons Library. I urge any resident who is facing a problem, hardship or unfairness to visit our shadow MP surgeries so that my team and I can help them.”

Commenting on Gina Miller’s decision to stand for Parliament in Epsom and Ewell, **Helen Maguire** PPC for the Liberal Democrats stated: “Realistically, we believe the Liberal Democrats are the only party who are able to take this Blue Wall seat from the Conservatives. The constituency of Epsom & Ewell needs an alternative to those who are bringing this country to its knees and so we have put together a committed team with new members joining all the time. The Liberal Democrats were runners up at the last election, but now believe we can close the gap given the Conservatives disastrous record in Government. The strength of our organisation, changes to the constituency’s boundaries, and a hard-working candidate, will enable us to ensure change for the better in this area.”

Mark Todd, Chair of Epsom and Ewell Labour Party stated: “I’m sorry to say that Gina Miller’s candidacy is likely to split the opposition vote and let the Conservative MP back in. It will do more damage than good. The local party Labour is currently forecast to win the seat at the next General Election. There is no need for her to intervene here. The local Labour party have 500 members and 3 councillors who actually live here. Our members volunteer at the local food bank, plant trees, are actively saving a local community centre, write the talking news, work in the local NHS and mental health services as well as in other local voluntary organisations. They’re out knocking doors every weekend and have been holding advice surgeries here for decades helping the local community. Gina Miller doesn’t live here, she advertises herself as living in London. For Gina, Epsom & Ewell is just a publicity stunt. For us, it’s our community and we’re determined to win it from Grayling at the next election”

Chris Grayling, MP for Epsom and Ewell runs regular surgeries for constituents. The Conservative Party’s website maybe out of date in stating: “These are currently held virtually due to the current COVID-19 restrictions (sic). If you are a constituent and would like to arrange a 15 minute appointment, please contact the Constituency Office on 01372 271036.”

Financial literacy for young in Epsom and Ewell

19 January 2023



Citizens Advice Epsom & Ewell (CAEE) has successfully delivered the first Financial Literacy Course to **Epsom & Ewell High School** (EEHS) to over 100 year 12 students. The course helps young people understand about money, loans, credit, how to stay out of debt and even how to save.

Every year, CAEE sees many people with serious and complex debt problems. It believes prevention is better than cure so are keen to deliver financial literacy training to as many young people as possible across the borough.

The six week course held last term was funded by Surrey County Councillors **Steven McCormick** and **Bernie Muir** together with **Alex Coley**, trustee of local charity **The Ruxley Foundation** and funding from the **Aviva Community Fund**.

Photo: James Newman, Headteacher; Marian Anghileri, Money Adviser CAEE; Cllr Alex Coley, Chair of Trustees of The Ruxley Foundation (funder); Cllr Steve McCormick (funder); Cllr Bernie Muir (funder); Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP; Louise Curd, Publicity & Fundraising Manager CAEE; Hilary Egan, Head of Sixth Form, EEHS.

Hannah Cobbold, Assistant Headteacher of EEHS said: “This financial literacy project has not only provided the students at EEHS the skills they need to be financially aware in the future, but also an understanding of the importance of being financially literate. We were extremely impressed with the time and energy that Citizens Advice put in to collaborating with the school to create a scheme of work which was student friendly and also informative.”

A celebratory assembly was held to conclude the course where each student received a certificate and a contact card to enable easy contact to Citizens Advice in case of future money worries.

One EEHS student said: “On behalf of the sixth form and as a student here I want to give our gratitude towards the council for including us within this supportive pilot scheme. From this programme we’ve all been able to take away something positive; specific to each of us which we can implement into university and many other aspects in our future; whether that be learning about tax , loans, mortgages , credit cards; being scam aware and much more!”

“The sessions are one we’ll never forget; as we’ve all taken the first step to become our own money managers and we know that if we ever need; no matter the severity; we can turn towards Citizens Advice. Thanks again for all your support.”

Lisa Davis, CEO of CAEE said: “We are grateful to Epsom & Ewell High School and all the funders for enabling us to deliver this pilot project and look forward to continuing our work with EEHS to similarly support future students. Its success means that we can work towards securing funding to roll out this important messaging about managing finances to other schools in the borough in order to reach as many of our young people as possible”.

Any schools or individuals interested in supporting or delivering the project can contact CAEE via its website www.caee.org.uk

10 mile Epsom Downs run and photos for charity

19 January 2023



The race known as **The Tadworth 10** was held on **Sunday 8th January 2023 at 11.30am**, started and finished at **Epsom Racecourse**. The race is a scenic and challenging 10 miles, 2-lap course comprising 50% road and 50% tracks & grass and was supported by around 700+ runners of all abilities. Much of the proceeds from the race go towards assisting two local charities. The **Sunnybank Trust** that supports adults with learning disabilities in North East Surrey to live without prejudice and have confidence, opportunities and control over their own lives. And the **Woodland Trust** that plants trees and preserves woodland and created the 650 **Centenary Wood** in Langley vale, Epsom.

William Caruana a senior runner of **Epsom and Ewell Harriers** came 12th in a time of 1 hour 6 minutes 47 seconds, with **Jeremy Garner** of **Epsom Oddballs Running Club** close on his heels 4 seconds behind.

Local photographer **Steven McCormick** followed the event with thousands of images covering every bib number. The photographs are for sale with proceeds going to the same charities.

See his website [HERE](#)

Surrey University levelling up

19 January 2023



Vocationally minded local students get a boost as the University of Surrey is set to accept T Levels. A more diverse pool of students will be able to enjoy access to a world-class education at the University of Surrey, as it announces that it will now accept the rigorous new vocational T Level qualifications for selected programmes.

The move follows a joint task group with Farnborough College of Technology (FCoT), providing the T Level provider perspective. Starting in the 2023/24 academic year, several undergraduate programmes across Chemistry, Nursing and Midwifery, and Bioscience programmes will accept T Levels.

Photo: Surrey University campus. cc Tanya Hart

Professor **Osama Khan**, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic from the University of Surrey, said: The University of Surrey has always been a leader in employability – with its graduates being amongst the most employable in the UK. Embracing the continued revolution in vocational qualifications is a natural move for us as we continue to marry the very best in teaching and learning with the strongest possible links with employers and industry.

T Levels are new 2-year courses which are taken after GCSEs and are broadly equivalent in size to 3 A Levels. Launched in September 2020, these courses have been developed in collaboration with employers and education providers so that the content meets the needs of industry and prepares students for entry into skilled employment, an apprenticeship or related technical study through further or higher education.

T Levels offer students practical and knowledge-based learning at a school or college and on-the-job experience through an industry placement of at least 315 hours – approximately 45 days. The courses are available at selected colleges, schools and other providers across England.

A University of Surrey student arriving with us through the T Level route and completing an industrial placement as part of their studies with us will graduate with years of experience in the workplace – setting them up for a flying start to a successful career.

Virginia Barrett, Principal CEO at Farnborough College of Technology, said: “The University of Surrey has been working with us to understand these new, employer-led qualifications, and we are pleased to see that they will now enable many of our T Level students to progress onto their degree programmes. Our T Level students are frequently among the most driven and career-focused at our Ofsted Outstanding college. The T Levels we offer have been introduced to match the local jobs market, so we are confident that the combined offer of studying locally at FCoT and the University of Surrey will be a great benefit to both students and their future employers.

“Also, our own University Centre at Farnborough offers learners from all T Level programmes a progression route into higher education, including a range of accelerated degrees, higher national qualifications, and higher-level apprenticeships, all taught on-site at Farnborough. I invite all those considering their post-16 options to visit our next Open Event to explore their T Level options with us, safe in the knowledge that these can lead to fantastic opportunities within higher education, employment, and apprenticeships.”

T Levels are an alternative to A levels, BTEC, apprenticeships and other post-16 courses.

To explore FCoT’s range of T Levels, visit www.farn-ct.ac.uk/t-levels.

The cost of advising on the cost of living

19 January 2023



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

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

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

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

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

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

You can donate via this link:

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

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

The seasonal goodwill of Epsom and Ewell

19 January 2023



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

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

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

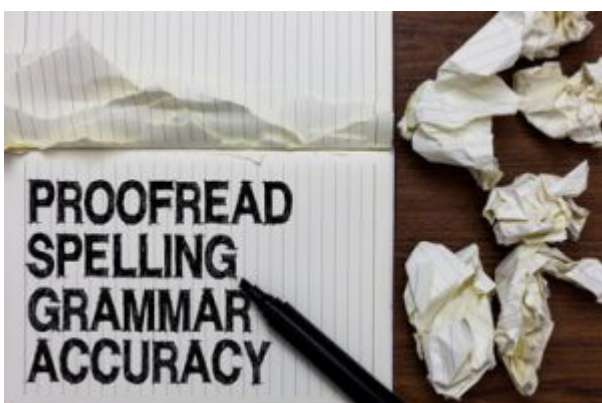
Around £6000 was raised for local charities, which included the youth organisations who helped.

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

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

Two petition river pollution correction

19 January 2023



Epsom and Ewell Times refers to our reports:

River “Bogsmill” blights Borough 30 June 2022

and

Local sewage uploaded 12 December 2022

In the second report we stated the first “Labour” sponsored petition had expired. Epsom and Ewell Times apologises to Mark Todd and the local Labour Party. The petition raised by them on change.org is still live. The link may have been temporarily broken when we checked on 12th December 2022. The link to that petition is [HERE](#). The second report provides a link to a more general petition to tackle river pollution nationwide raised by Liberal Democrats.

Epsom and Ewell Times will always publish justified corrections when we are in error.

Local poverty moves 12 year old to give up pocket money

19 January 2023



Merland Rise church caretaker told LDRS* reporter: “Last week a young girl, about 12 years old, came and knocked the door. She’d gone to Asda with her pocket money and spent it on food for the food bank. I was nearly in tears.”

Decision makers need to listen to the “lived experience” of people using food banks to tackle the root causes of poverty, according to one organiser. **Tadworth’s Merland Rise church** is home to a weekly food bank, as well as being one of Surrey County Council’s warm hubs, where people can go if they are struggling to heat their own homes.



Image: Staff, volunteers and councillors at Merland Rise church, which holds a weekly food bank and warm hub. Emily Coady-Stemp

While uptake on the warm bank had been slow, the modern church was still a hive of activity when the LDRS* visited in late November to talk to some of those involved. The food bank has seen a rise in its users, and has moved downstairs to a bigger room in the church, while organisers are sure that as people use the church for other activities, the news will start to spread about the warm hub.

The building, where warm hub visitors can get a tea or coffee and a hot meal, is large and modern, and used for many community activities. Its administrator **Christina Lane** said she probably takes the building for granted given she goes to church there every week. She recognised that many people were struggling at the moment, and didn’t want anyone to feel embarrassed about coming down. “There’s no shame, we just have to club together,” she said.

Jen Barnard is strategy lead at **Good Company**, which was established this year and is an umbrella organisation working with several food banks, the **Epsom and Ewell Refugee Network** and the **Epsom Pantry** among others.

She said there had been a rise in numbers of people using the food bank, compared to pre-pandemic levels, and that 10,000 food parcels have been given out this year across the five food banks in Banstead, Leatherhead, Tadworth, Epsom and Ewell.

Offering advice to those who visit on all aspects of their life, Ms Barnard said people may be referred on for mental health support, help with applying for disability benefits or advice on reducing energy consumption.

A key part of the work, she believes, is in listening to users and looking at what changes might help them.

“It seems like a small thing,” she said, “but listening to people and understanding that everyone is an individual, everyone is unique. And a willingness [is needed] to try to think in new ways, and trying to really hear what people are saying and respond to it.”

She said the organisation’s aim was to work towards a poverty-free future, but in the meantime to support those who needed it. “Very much a part of our strategy is participation and trying to bring together people with lived experience with decision makers, trying to say: ‘We can make changes locally that are going to improve people’s lives,’” she added.

Andrea Lewis is the Merland Rise church caretaker, who helps run the building including the many events that go on there, from the food bank to birthday parties, exercise classes and more. Speaking before December’s cold snap hit Surrey, she said the warm hub hadn’t really “kicked off” but she thought the word would spread as more people visited the church, including for a Surrey County Council bingo event taking place that afternoon.

Word spreading throughout the community also means people are being brought together at a time when many are struggling. Surrey County Councillor **Rebecca Paul** (Conservative, Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood) and Reigate and Banstead Borough Councillor **Rod Ashford** (Lower Kingswood, Tadworth and Walton) both recognise that people get a lot out of volunteering for projects such as the food clubs that run in the borough.

The borough council scheme offers people discounted food for an annual subscription of £1 and £2 payment to attend each week, giving people more ownership of the situation. Cllr Paul said: “In an ideal world we would hope that we wouldn’t have to do this. It does strengthen communities, it’s building the social fabric that these things are going on.”

The warm hub is open on Tuesdays from 10am-6pm, though it won’t be open on December 27.

*Epsom and Ewell Times BBC partner - Local Democracy Reporting Service.

Cover image - for illustration only.

Recycling for food

19 January 2023



A group of environmental volunteers in Surrey is helping support its local community by recycling items that the council cannot accept through their kerbside recycling bin collections.

Catherine Banks, Founder of Tadworth TerraCycle, has signed up to a number of free recycling programmes offered by TerraCycle, collecting items including cheese packaging, Baylis & Harding products and packaging, and biscuit and snack wrappers that would ordinarily be destined for landfill or incineration. For each item of waste the group sends to TerraCycle, they are awarded with a monetary donation to the charities of their choice.

Pictured: Catherine Banks from Tadworth TerraCycle with two young volunteers and some of the items they have collected so far

The group has been raising money for charity since 2019 but recently its members have been prompted to donate funds to **Epsom and Ewell Foodbank** where they will be used for purchasing and sorting food and distributing it to those who need it most. More than £300 has been raised for the foodbank so far by collecting waste from the community via a public drop-off location in Tadworth.

The Trussel Trust reported that deliveries of aid parcels were up 14 percent compared with pre-pandemic levels, amounting to more than 2.1m parcels in the year to April 2022, and with the growing cost of living crisis facing the UK, this number is likely to increase in the coming months.

Catherine explained: *“We initially signed up to the TerraCycle programmes as a way to inspire the children at the local primary schools. By teaching them the importance of recycling and taking care of the environment at a young age we can ensure that the Earth will be in safe hands with future generations.”*

“One of the schools we work with decided they would like to support the food bank and unsurprisingly all the other schools agreed it was a good idea. The cost of living crisis is affecting so many people and giving to the foodbank is the best way to help those most in need.”

As well as the foodbank, the group also donates to other good causes including funding books for local schools and donating litter picking equipment to the local community group, and in the last 6 months more than £1,000 has been donated to the Dementia Society.

Catherine continued *“This really is a worthy cause so we encourage the entire community to get involved and drop these items at Tadworth Terracycle, 36 Bidhams Crescent, Tadworth. The more we recycle together, the more money we can raise for those who need it.”*

The free recycling programmes which the group has signed up to include the Cathedral City Cheese Packaging Free Recycling Programme, the Baylis & Harding Free Recycling Programme and the Pladis (McVitie’s and Jacob’s) Biscuits and Snacks Free Recycling Programme.

The items the group sends to TerraCycle are recycled by shredding, cleaning and turning into plastic pellets which can then be used by manufacturers to create new plastic products such as outdoor equipment – reducing the need to extract new resources from the planet.

Related reports:

Reaching recyclables others cannot reach

Epsom students put Xmas style in Centre

19 January 2023



Fashion Imaging & Styling students studying at **Epsom’s University for the Creative Arts** (UCA) have created a festive window display for the town’s Ashley shopping Centre.

The local students created work that interpreted the festive season through cutting-edge fashion styling and eye-catching photography.

Their work was inspired by colour themes, seasonal climate, festive paraphernalia, and clothing – from wearing a wrapping paper design, referencing traditional tartans, or joining the ski elite.

“Collaborating with local shops and retail allows us to play an active part in the Epsom community. It will give residents the chance to view and share in the creative journey of our young creatives,” said Martin Sparkes, a senior lecturer at UCA Epsom.

The Ashley Centre’s Manager added: *“The Ashley centre is the heart of the town of Epsom for retail, and it is important that we work closely with the community. So, we are delighted to be able to collaborate with these talented students by giving them the opportunity to showcase their talent, as well as learn more about the retail industry from the shopping centre.”*

The window installation will be up until the end of January 2023.

