



## Register to vote deadline for elections

The deadline to register to vote in May's local elections is approaching. Those who need to register, including those who have recently moved house, need to do so before midnight on April 17.

Local elections are being held on May 4 across the country, including for councils across Surrey.

All 11 district and borough councils in Surrey are holding elections, some for a third of their councillors and some for the whole council. There is also a by-election for Surrey County Council in the Walton South and Oatlands division, following the resignation of Cllr Tony Samuels.

Councils have started sending out poll cards to voters, anyone who has not received one or who has recently moved may not be registered to vote.

Registration should take around five minutes on the gov.uk website, and though people may be asked for their National Insurance number, it is possible to register without one.

Registering anonymously is also possible for those who do not want their name to appear on the electoral register.

May's elections will be the first where all voters will need to bring photo ID to vote, with only certain forms being accepted. Those without the necessary photo ID, which includes passports, driving licence and an Oyster 60+ Card, can apply for a free voter ID document.

While online registration is the quickest way, voters can also print off a paper form to be sent to their local Electoral Registration Office, which is the relevant district or borough council.

To check if they are registered to vote, voters also need to contact the electoral services team at their local council.

Voters must be aged 18 or over on election day and be a British, Irish, European Union citizen, or Commonwealth citizen with permission to enter or stay in the UK, or who does not need permission, as well as being registered to vote.

Image - Runnymede Council.

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Epsom and Ewell Times adds: For guidance on photo ID read our report [HERE](#) "No Photo, No Vote".

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[Worrying about voter ID law](#)

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## Turn up to turn downturn in turnout!

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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## Worrying about voter ID law

Voter disenfranchisement and how to overcome it was discussed at **Reigate and Banstead Borough Council** Thursday 30th March as the authority wound up its business ahead of the May 4 elections.

The country goes to the polls in a little over a month amid the “biggest change to the electoral process in decades” as people will be required to present valid photo identification before casting their ballot.

Councillor **Ruth Ritter**, during questions from members at the March 30 full council meeting, asked what measures were in place to feed back on its impact on turnout.

She said: “At a time when voter turnout for local elections in Reigate and Banstead Borough Council was as low as 29 per cent in one ward last year and voters need to be encouraged to partake in democracy. Voter ID is the biggest change to the electoral process in decades, and it will affect voters in polling stations at the upcoming elections on May 4. It is therefore important that we have assurances that voters aren’t being disenfranchised by this significant change.

“With that in mind, will the returning officer be gathering data on how many people are unable to vote at polling stations due to not having appropriate ID so that this data can be fed back to national government?”

Last time the average turnout for the borough was 35 percent two power cent higher than the national leverage last year.

Responding was **Mari Roberts-Wood**, managing director at Reigate Borough Council whose responsibilities include increasing participation in elections.

She spoke of the “extensive communications about the massive changes to electoral law” and how the council had been targeting hard-to-reach groups such as younger voters and the elderly.

Ms Roberts-Wood said: “We can always do more and should do more and with the introduction of voter ID we need to do more than ever.”

Councils, she said, would also be collecting data from polling stations about the impact of the legislation and sending that to the electoral commission – who will be collecting the data centrally.

A report on its impact is expected to be published in November this year.

She said: “This data will include the number of voters who are essentially refused a ballot paper due to suspected forgery or impersonation, or they failed to answer the statutory required questions, they showed the wrong ID – there are 23 different types of ID that you can show on May 4. For those who don’t have one of those or don’t have any ID at all we will be collecting that data. Also recording those asked to show their ID in private and those who are refused a ballot paper but returned with a valid ID. We’re trying to capture as much as possible.”

She added that it was an “opportunity to collect a lot of data to understand the impact of these changes and hopefully increase our reach coming forward”.

Reigate and Banstead Council has a voter ID section on its website that people can use to ensure they can vote on May 4.

Related reports:

No photo – no vote!

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## No photo - no vote!

You need photo ID to vote in person at the upcoming 4th May local elections. In an important announcement from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council the new Government rules are explained.

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The UK Government has introduced a requirement for voters to show photo ID when voting at a polling station at elections. If you do not show ID then you will not be issued with a ballot paper. This new requirement will apply for the first time at the local elections on Thursday 4 May 2023.

You may already have a form of photo ID that is acceptable. These are some of the main ones you can use:

- passport
- photo driving licence (full or provisional)
- blue badge
- Older Person's Bus Pass, Disabled Person's Bus Pass, Oyster 60+ Card, Freedom Pass
- identity card with PASS hologram (Proof of Age Standards Scheme)
- biometric immigration document
- defence identity card
- national identity cards issued by an EEA state

You can use photo ID if it's out of date, as long as it looks like you.

The name on your ID should be the same name as you are registered to vote. If it is not then you should take along other proof of name change such as a marriage certificate or deed poll.

There will be more information on your poll card about other acceptable forms of photo ID or you can find out more on the Electoral Commission website <https://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/i-am-a/voter/voter-id> or call their helpline on 0800 328 0280.

If you don't already have an accepted form of photo ID you can apply for a free voter ID document, known as a Voter Authority Certificate. You can apply for this online at the Voter Authority Certificate Service <https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-photo-id-voter-authority-certificate> or contact Electoral Services for a paper form.

The deadline to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate for elections on Thursday 4 May 2023 is by no later than 5pm on Tuesday 25 April 2023. You need to be registered to vote before you apply for a Voter Authority Certificate.

You do not need photo ID if you vote by post.

### BOUNDARY CHANGES

The Local Government Boundary Commission completed its review of all Epsom & Ewell electoral wards in 2022 and the changes they made will apply at the elections on 4 May.

Poll cards for the elections on 4 May will be going out from 27 March and will contain information about which ward you are in and the location of your polling station. You should check your poll card when it arrives to see if you need to go to a different polling station since you last voted.

For more information about the election including all official election notices please visit <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/council/elections-and-voting>

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## Low turnouts see political changes in Surrey

The Liberal Democrats have taken two seats off the Conservatives in Surrey County Council by-elections. Winning by just 15 votes, a vote in the Sunbury Common and Ashford Common division took place on Wednesday November 30), with the Liberal Democrats beating four other candidates to be elected.

Harry Boparai got 735 votes, with the Conservative candidate Naz Islam in second place with 720 votes. The by-election was held



following the death of Councillor Alison Todd, which was announced in September. With a turnout of 17.5 per cent, the votes for each party broke down as below:

Harry Boparai, Liberal Democrats 735 (elected)  
Naz Islam, Conservative 720  
Khalid Mustafa, Labour Party 383  
Rory O'Brien, Reform UK 144  
Helen Couchman Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition 63

Councillor Todd's death following a terminal lung cancer diagnosis in 2021 was announced in September. Colleagues on the council described the county and former Spelthorne borough councillor as a "strong and determined" councillor who wanted to use her own experiences to "make the world a better place".

In May 2021, Cllr Todd was elected for the Conservatives with 1,509 with the second place Liberal Democrat getting 610 votes.

The result represents a 17 per cent swing to the Lib Dems, with no Green or Independent candidates standing, as there was in the 2021 election.

The Liberal Democrats took another Conservative council seat in Surrey after a by-election on Waverley Borough Council.

Dave Busby won the Chiddingfold and Dunsfold by-election on Thursday (December 1) with 652 votes, with the second place candidate getting 297 votes.

The Conservative candidate for Chiddingfold and Dunsfold, Ian Mitchell, was suspended on Monday (November 28) and stood as an independent, though ballot papers had already been issued listing him as a Conservative. A spokesperson for the South West Surrey Conservatives said an investigation was pending regarding a social post "that could be considered to be an inappropriate use of social media".

The association said in a statement: "Given this, we have suspended Mr Mitchell from the Conservative Association pending an investigation into his conduct that may potentially lead to disciplinary proceedings being taken."

No Green candidate stood in the Waverley by-election, and the result represents a 43 per cent swing to the Lib Dems since the 2019 election.

The borough council's Lib Dem leader Cllr Paul Follows (Godalming Central and Ockford) said: "I am ecstatic by the result, further strengthening the progressive coalition at Waverley Borough Council that I have the honour of leading with the addition of a fantastic, local, and hard-working new councillor.

"This is also a huge win and swing in a part of our borough in which the Conservatives have long just assumed the vote was theirs."

The election took place following the death of Cllr John Gray, who died in September, having been a councillor since 2015.

The full results were as follows:

Dave Busby, Liberal Democrat: 652 (66.6 per cent) Elected  
Ian Mitchell, Independent: 297 (30.3 per cent)  
Rebecca Aitken, Labour 30 (3.1 per cent)

There are now 16 Liberal Democrat councillors on the county council, of a total of 81 seats.

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## Council's secret strategy on public resources?

Epsom and Ewell's powerful **Strategy and Resources Committee** went into secret session on four items of public interest at its meeting Tuesday 15th November. The four items were:

1. INCOME GENERATING OPPORTUNITY
2. COST OF LIVING PAYMENT
3. LAND RETENTION
4. COMMERCIAL PROPERTY UPDATE

In each case the secrecy was justified on the following ground:



"... the business to be transacted/nature of the proceedings..... deals with information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Committee and third parties and the public interest in maintaining the exemption currently outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information."

However, the Committee did not close the meeting during discussions on the motion to close. During that discussion **Councillor Eber Kington** (RA Ewell Court Ward) revealed in public that the "income generating opportunity" related to a crematorium.

**Councillor David Gulland** (LibDem College Ward) argued that the proposal "is an interesting development which would benefit from a wide-ranging discussion with our residents ... I feel we're trying to be too secretive...we should be open with what we're trying to achieve with our assets." The Interim Chief Executive, responded that "the reason this is a restricted item is because it's a commercial opportunity and we need to protect our negotiations...with potential suppliers, etc". However, **Councillor Kate Chinn** (Lab, Court Ward) agreed with Cllr. Gulland. "Part of making the business case is to see if there's a need for it in the borough," she said. "Surely the easiest way to do that is to ask the residents."

It was at this point that Councillor Kington made the statement that "I want to get as much as I can out in the open. But what we have here is the Council looking at a possibility of a crematorium." He went on to defend the proposal to exclude press and public: "[If this] is a runner, it would have to come back to this committee and it may well be that that will be the time when it will be a public document. We don't want to give anyone the heads up that this is what we are planning. In most cases, we will put things not on pink paper if we can help it." [Ed. "Pink paper" is the colour of secret papers.]

The Residents' Association majority on the committee agreed with Councillor Kington and excluded press and public from any further details of this and the other three items.

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At the same meeting:

## VOTER ID LIKELY FOR 2023 - BUT COUNCILS MAY HAVE TO PICK UP THE BILL

Following public consultation, a new polling station is expected to be in operation for the borough elections in 2023. This is to be situated in the arts centre at the newly refurbished Horton Chapel and will serve the residents of the new Horton Ward. This new ward will comprise the four former hospital sites of Clarendon Park, Livingstone Park, Manor Park and Noble Park, plus some roads that are currently in Court Ward around the northern end of Hook Road.

Receiving the detailed report that included this information Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (Residents' Association, Stoneleigh Ward), asked about the Council's preparedness for the introduction of voter id at polling stations. "There will be a lot of communication from the government about this," the council officer replied. But he went to say that it will be a challenge getting it ready because the Council will be able to issue identity slips where people don't have photo identity.

Councillor **Liz Frost** (Residents' Association, Woodcote Ward) followed this up by asking about the cost implications of this for the Borough Council. The Interim Chief Executive, stated that "there are discussions going on with government at the moment ... At the moment, the proposal is that local councils will fund ID cards ... It's an ongoing discussion."

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## Improving local voter access

A review of all polling districts and polling places in Epsom & Ewell is taking place following the recent boundary review by the Local Government Boundary Commission.

The purpose of the review is to ensure that:

- All electors have reasonable access to voting facilities
- Polling places are accessible to all electors including those with disabilities

The 2022 review started on Monday 12 September and views are invited from electors within the district as well as from persons or bodies with expertise in relation to access to premises or facilities for persons with any form of disability.

There will be a change to some of the polling stations residents' use as a result of the review.

More information on this review including maps showing proposals can be found here: <https://www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/council/elections-and-voting/electoral-boundaries>



Councillor Neil Dallen, Chair of the Strategy and Resources Committee at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council said: "We're pleased that this review will facilitate more accessible polling places in Epsom & Ewell. We hope anybody with personal, or professional expertise in this area can take the time to share their views before the deadline of 17 October 2022 at 5pm."

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will be directly contacting:

- The Member of Parliament for Epsom and Ewell, Chris Grayling.
- Surrey Coalition of Disabled People ([www.surreycoalition.org.uk](http://www.surreycoalition.org.uk)).
- All Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillors.
- All Surrey County Councillors for the borough.
- Election agents who acted at the 2021 County Council elections.
- Candidates who stood in the 2021 County Council elections.
- Registered political parties who regularly field candidates at all elections in the Borough.

Comments must be made in writing and be emailed to: [electoralservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk](mailto:electoralservices@epsom-ewell.gov.uk) or posted to:

Electoral Services (Polling District/Place Review), Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, The Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 5BY.

The deadline to respond to this review is 5pm on 17 October 2022.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council regularly reviews its polling districts and polling places. The last full review took place in December 2019.

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## West Ewell hustings test candidates

Marion Morrison (LibDem), Mark Todd (Labour, leaning on the RA candidate's empty chair), Keiran Persand (Conservative). Monday 4th July 2022, All Saints Church West Ewell hosted the West Ewell Borough Council Ward by-election hustings. Local residents go to the polling stations on Thursday 7th July to elect a new Councillor. Each candidate paid tribute to the late Residents Association Councillor Clive Smitheram for his long and valuable public service. See Epsom and Ewell Times obituary [HERE](#).

Alan Williamson, the Residents Association candidate, did not attend due to a work commitment. He works in the financial services sector. However, you can see all candidates' responses to Epsom and Ewell Times questions [HERE](#).

The hustings candidates were quizzed by voters on tackling anti-social behaviour and improving policing, the urgency of getting approved a Local Plan, improvements to transport and local road congestion. The audience was very pleased to have the opportunity to hear and question candidates but were disappointed that Mr Williamson could not attend. There was unanimous support for the Epsom and Ewell Times plan to hold hustings in every ward in the 2023 Epsom and Ewell Borough Council elections.

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## West Ewell By-election candidates' answers

Epsom and Ewell Times asked each candidate a series of questions. Here are their answers.

### **Epsom and Ewell Times - Tell us a little about yourself. The non-political?**

**Alan Williamson** - I am a 58 year old married man with a grown-up son. Since graduating from university I have worked in the financial services industry. For the past three years I have a committee member of West Ewell & Ruxley Residents' Association. I made it known that I was interested in standing for the borough council. Outside work I follow football and rugby, love reading, walking and cycling and spending time with my wife Lucia.

**Marian Morrison** - I've lived in the borough for over four decades and my son attended local schools. My working life has been spend in the public sector, both NHS and local government so I have a fair understanding of health and council matters. My professional roles range from quality and complaints to council committee work. I'm recently retired and went back to being a





student at Nescot which was a great thing to do. I regularly attend a local church Ewell.

**Mark Todd** - I'm a local dad and businessman, and I've lived in the area for over 12 years. I'm part of the Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board that protects and preserves local trees and Treasurer of the Epsom Wells Community Association that is saving and renewing a local community centre. For work, I co-founded a large internet business in which I played a leading role for many years. I'm currently starting a new business.

**Kieran Persand** - I was born and raised in Epsom and Ewell, attending local schools. My background is law but I'm very passionate about education, the environment and mental health. Any spare time I get, I love playing sp

### **How long have you lived in the Borough?**

Alan Williamson 11 years

Marian Morrison 46 years

Mark Todd -12 years

Kieran Persand - All my life - 24 years.

### **Do you live in the West Ewell Ward?**

Alan Williamson - Yes

Marian Morrison - No but I do live nearby in West Ewell.

Mark Todd - I live close by in Epsom - I know the ward very well

Kieran Persand - No

### **Why are you standing?**

**Alan Williamson** - I am a firm believer in local decisions being made by local people without the constraints of national party politics. Epsom & Ewell is one of the most desirable neighbourhoods, with one of the best run councils in the whole country. By electing me as a Residents' Association councillor we can keep it that way.

**Marian Morrison** - I stood in the West Ewell ward in 2011 and received 500 votes and wish to stand again. It's important for voters to have a choice of candidates and I believe council decision making is more effective when there is a good opposition.

**Mark Todd** - To give a voice to local residents who have been ignored for too long. To demand improvements to the roads and pavements and to help fix the awful problems of raw sewage going into the local Hogsmill river. Having a Labour councillor as well as the two RA councillors would give W Ewell a stronger voice.

**Kieran Persand** - There are issues that are constantly being overlooked such as housing/developments, the green belt and crime. It is crucial that the Council has a strong opposition to push things forward. It's been shown what a conservative councillor can do locally, seen with the work Cllr Muir did to help keep the Wells Centre open.

### **Which Council Committees would you like to serve and why?**

**Alan Williamson** - My primary interest would be in the Strategy & Resources Committee. I see this as underpinning the whole scope of council activity and requires the best-qualified candidates. My background in economics, financial services and committee work equips me ideally for this. I could also have interest in Community and Wellbeing.

**Marian Morrison** - Having worked in Surrey for the NHS and a nearby London Borough I'm familiar with aspects of health services, and planning and would be most interested in Planning, Community and Well-being, Health Liaison and Environment and Safer Communities committees.

**Mark Todd** - Community and Well-being - to help create a healthier, happier community. Environment and Safe Communities - our green spaces and trees need protecting to stop West Ewell becoming a concrete jungle.

**Kieran Persand** - Licensing and Planning Policy Committee - the lack of a Local Plan is hindering the development of the Borough massively. The local conservative group have formulated a plan which is well thought out and one which will improve the Borough.

Strategy and Resources Committee.

### **What do you think of the decision to spend £225,000 on the Epsom Town Centre Masterplan?**

**Alan Williamson** - I welcome the availability and deployment of funds for this purpose. If Epsom town centre is to retain its vitality and attractive ambience it must use best practice to consider the way forward using strategic tools and resources.



Expenditure such as this is warranted under the circumstances.

**Marian Morrison** – Epsom and Ewell needs to work together with residents to identify ways in which we can provide for future needs and at the same time ensure Epsom is a vibrant place for people to live, work and visit. Whilst this is a significant cost, good, sound planning for the needs for the next decades is vital for a good future.

**Mark Todd** – I think it's a lot of money and my understanding is more is actually being spent on it £350,000+. We do need a good plan to create a better, greener town centre fit for the future and I fully support this. I hope that the money will be well spent and I'd be keen to be involved in its management.

**Kieran Persand** – I think a masterplan to guide development in the Town Centre is needed but £225,000 is an awfully huge amount of money to be spending at this moment in time. I hope that it is not mismanaged and that something positive comes out of it.

### **Do you think the ULEZ should be expanded to or nearer West Ewell's borders?**

**Alan Williamson** – I do not feel that at this point there is widespread public support for extending the ULEZ to West Ewell's borders. Whilst this decision is not solely ours I think residents should make their feelings known on this. I would be personally oppose such a development at this stage.

**Marian Morrison** – Whilst I'm supportive of reducing emissions, due to the proximity of the Chessington Spur being so close to West Ewell many residents will be impacted with charges incurred by short cross boundary car journeys. In my view the main driver for change is to provide income to support the massive costs of Transport for London

**Mark Todd** – As a local councillor here we would have no influence on the decision. No one wants to pay more tax; however we do also need to get old vehicles off the road that create dangerous toxic fumes. Fumes that poison our lungs and, according to one charity, kill 25 times more people per year than car crashes.

**Kieran Persand** – No – many families and local businesses would suffer, especially with the increase in the cost of living. The expansion would be too burdensome. The roll out would also be very costly with the increase in spending on cameras and the enforcement infrastructure that would be needed. That money could be spent on better things which would help tackle air pollution.

### **One question beyond the Borough. Do you support the policy of sending refugees to Rwanda?**

Alan Williamson – No. More suitable policies must be found.

Marian Morrison – No. This approach won't stop desperate people.

Mark Todd – No

Kieran Persand – No.

### **Anything else you would like to say?**

**Alan Williamson** – Having attended school in the borough I feel an affinity with the area that has motivated me to seek election. I have been active in organising a Neighbourhood Watch in my street (Revere Way), and I have coordinated a formal petition to the management company for the estate concerning their service provision.

**Marian Morrison** – Liberal Democrats have a good track record in local government as demonstrated by two neighbouring boroughs, Sutton and Kingston, both close to West Ewell. People of West Ewell think carefully and consider voting for change.

**Mark Todd** – The local Labour Party in West Ewell has 30 members and in voting for me you're not just voting for Mark Todd but for the local Labour team to have influence and help the local area. If elected, we will not let you down and I will work with the Residents' Association councillors to create a better West Ewell.

**Kieran Persand** – None.

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## **West Ewell by-election, our Q&As and your hustings**

On Thursday 7th July 2022 voters in the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Ward of West Ewell have the opportunity to vote for the candidate who will take the seat held for many years by the late Cllr Clive Smitheram of the Residents' Association.





The candidates are Marion Morrison (Liberal Democrat), Kieran Persand (Conservative Party), Mark Todd (Labour Party) and Alan Williamson (Residents' Association).

**Q and As** You can read the candidates' answers to Epsom and Ewell Times' questions [HERE](#)

## HUSTINGS

Epsom and Ewell Times is holding an election hustings that **three of the four candidates** will attend. Alan Williamson (Residents Association), who works in the financial services sector, has advised that he is working that evening and cannot attend. The hustings will start at 7 pm on Monday 4th July at All Saints Church, 7 Church Rd, West Ewell, Ewell, Epsom KT19 9QY and will last one hour.

Attendance in person is encouraged but you may participate online if you register in advance [HERE](#)