

Who will pay for Epsom’s leisure centre “better deal”?

19 July 2025



Dear Editor,

Your excellent article on the Council’s decision to appoint a new operator for the Rainbow Leisure Centre raises important questions about what residents can expect. One crucial point not yet disclosed by the Council is that prices for residents are likely to rise — because the new provider, Places Leisure, has agreed to pay the Council more for the right to operate the Centre, and this additional cost will almost certainly be passed on to users.

The decision-making process, described by the ruling Residents’ Association as “transparent”, was anything but. It began with a now-familiar request for councillors to enter confidential session, shutting the public out of a decision that affects thousands of local families.

At consecutive meetings of the Community and Wellbeing Committee — on which I sit — and then the Strategy and Resources Committee, councillors were asked to approve the administration’s preferred supplier, Places Leisure, over the incumbent GLL/Better and another bidder. We were told that failure to agree would result in the Centre’s closure from 1 October. This ultimatum was presented as a matter of legal necessity under procurement law, but no explanation was provided as to why earlier action had not been taken to avoid such a stark choice.

The selection process itself raises concerns. A confidential paper outlined how bids were scored. Quality and commercial factors were supposedly given equal weight. On quality, GLL/Better scored higher than Places Leisure, with clear criteria applied. Yet for the “commercial” element, GLL was given a score close to zero — with no explanation offered for how this figure was reached. The absence of transparency on such a critical aspect of the scoring process undermines confidence in the outcome.

It was made clear that Places Leisure would pay the Council more for the right to run the Centre and would commit to making some “investment”. However, this came with a catch — a “change to the fees which the operator would look to charge”. In plain terms, residents will be paying more so the Council can generate more income from the Centre.

This is not how important decisions affecting public services should be made. Epsom and Ewell residents deserve better than secretive processes and rubber-stamped choices. I urge the new Leader of the Council to reflect on this episode, and to commit to greater transparency, genuine scrutiny, and open debate on future decisions — especially those involving public assets like the Rainbow Leisure Centre.

Cllr Rob Geleit

Labour, Court Ward
Epsom & Ewell Borough Council

Editor’s Note: *This letter reflects the views of the author, an elected councillor. While it refers to matters that may or may not have been discussed in a closed session of the Council, we have published it in the public interest, given the implications for public services and local accountability. We invite the Council to respond if it wishes to clarify any aspect of the decision-making process.*

Related report:

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Has Woking gone barking mad?

19 July 2025



People in social housing will soon need to ask for permission before getting a dog as Woking Borough Council looks to adopt a formal pet policy. The new nine-page list of rules regarding pet ownership is being drawn up to give the council greater enforcement powers should people’s pooches start to play up. These include clear guidelines spelling out that residents in social housing must notify the council when they get a dog and complete the dog registration form, that dogs must be kept on a lead in all communal areas, and that they must not defecate on balconies or any shared spaces. Guidance on how to keep pets will also be updated to help mitigate noise problems.

In private housing, renting with pets is at the landlord’s discretion. However, when the Renters’ Rights Bill becomes effective, tenants will have stronger rights. Landlords must consider each pet request fairly, and if they refuse them, there needs to be a reasonable justification. Officers told the Monday, July 14 communities and housing scrutiny committee it has been an on-going challenge dealing with cases of nuisance pets and that the new policy should strengthen the council’s hand. Committee chair Councillor Tom Bonsundy-O’Bryan said: “Noise nuisance from dogs barking (is a problem) and a real high percentage of those came from dogs being left outside at night time. You can see why the noise of barking at night time is more of a pain. The RSPCA also advises against letting dogs sleep outside, the vast majority of time it’s bad as they are social animals. It’s just really bad to let dogs sleep outdoors overnight.”

The council says it understands the benefits of keeping a pet, particularly on people’s mental and physical wellbeing, but that it needed to ensure animals do not cause nuisance to other residents or damage property. Households will generally be given permission to keep up to two dogs and two cats in a council-owned or managed house, and either one dog or cat in a flat. Anyone who wishes to have additional pets will need written permission.

Award-Winning Epsom Town Masterplan Shines Spotlight on Council’s Planning Priorities

19 July 2025



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council’s Epsom Town Centre Masterplan has been named “Best Plan” at the Royal Town Planning Institute’s (RTPI) South East Awards for Planning Excellence 2024. The win brings regional recognition to the Council’s efforts in shaping the future of the town centre — but it also casts a renewed spotlight on the long-standing delays in finalising a borough-wide Local Plan.

The RTPI judges praised the Masterplan’s participative and innovative approach, its use of digital consultation tools, and its firm emphasis on sustainability. The plan was commended as a model of non-statutory planning excellence, particularly impressive given it was not prompted by legislative requirement but by what the judges described as “a strong desire to make a better place.”

The planning team achieved an unprecedented level of local engagement, with 1,979 consultation responses — almost 3% of the borough’s population — including many residents participating in a council consultation for the first time. This level of public involvement far exceeds the national average of 1%, according to RTPI data.

Councillor **Peter O’Donovan**, (RA Ewell Court) Chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, described the award as “reflective of the hard work and expertise” of the planning policy team, highlighting the central goal of “making Epsom an even better place.”

The Masterplan, developed with consultancy firm David Lock Associates, provides clear development parameters for key town centre sites including the Ashley Centre, Hook Road, Depot Road car park, and Hope Lodge. It also outlines placemaking objectives, environmental improvements, and key design principles aimed at preserving and enhancing Epsom’s historic core.

A Tale of Two Plans

While the award marks a triumph for the Town Centre strategy, it also contrasts sharply with the ongoing delays and controversy surrounding the borough’s statutory Local Plan. The Local Plan, which is essential for long-term housing and infrastructure development across the wider borough, has faced repeated postponements, public protests, and uncertainty over Green Belt protections.

Epsom and Ewell Times has reported extensively on the Local Plan’s troubled progress — from stalled timelines and passionate public campaigns resisting proposed housing developments on cherished green spaces. The Local Plan was officially submitted to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government for independent examination. This significant step, taken on 10 March 2025

Observers may see the Masterplan’s success as both a sign of the Council’s planning capability and a reminder of its failure to deliver its statutory planning framework in a timely manner. The Masterplan may now proceed to the national RTPI Awards for Planning Excellence later this year, but it remains a non-binding vision — its implementation depends, in part, on a coherent Local Plan to support infrastructure and development across the borough.

Until then, residents can celebrate Epsom’s win on the regional stage, while continuing to ask: when will the borough-wide plan finally materialise?

Epsom Town Centre Masterplan now advances as a finalist for the RTPI National Awards for Planning Excellence, to be announced in October. The awards ceremony is scheduled for 26 November 2025.

Related reports:

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Epsom and Ewell will judge change at their leisure

19 July 2025



When Epsom & Ewell Borough Council announced that **Better** will hand over management of the Rainbow Leisure Centre to **Places Leisure** in October 2025, many locals who have experienced booking glitches, understaffed gyms, and declining poolside conditions breathed a silent sigh of relief. The question now: how quickly will the promised improvements materialize?

Why the Council Doesn’t Run Itself

The council does not manage leisure centres directly—instead, it contracts out operations. That’s why swathes of public facilities across the borough, including the Rainbow Centre, are run by third-party providers. The rationale? Private operators like Better specialise in facility management, class programming, and membership administration. But that also means the council steps back, paying providers rent and oversight rights in exchange for promised upkeep and performance.

Transparency and Value for Money—Still in Question

Although the council has described Places Leisure as a “social enterprise,” it has offered no specifics about terms: contract length, rent paid, baseline investment, or expected improvements remain undisclosed. Without that data, taxpayers and users have no firm guarantee of value—simply a brand change.

Councillors have stressed that this switch aims to bring greater “community focus” and better reinvestment of any surplus—hallmarks of the social enterprise model. Yet sceptics point out that social enterprises aren’t automatically

transparent: some still report hefty executive pay packets. In particular, the CEO of **Places for People** the ultimate owners of Places Leisure reportedly earned £565,426 in 2023-2024 , raising eyebrows among voters who wonder.

A Closer Look at Places Leisure’s Reputation

The local press release paints Places Leisure as a community-minded organisation, but reviews from employees and users tell a different story. Feedback on sites like Indeed and Breakroom varies significantly. Some praise friendly culture and flexible working, while others warn of poor management:

“Management loved to bully young lifeguards... poor pay”

“Awful communication, awful leadership... spend too much time fixing their mistakes”

On Trustpilot, users have lodged complaints about broken equipment, overcrowded classes, and appalling changing-room hygiene—low-grade experiences raising legitimate concerns over upkeep standards as they transfer from Better to Places Leisure .

The Case of the ‘Midnight Lane-Booking’ Mystery

Among the most frequent user frustrations at Rainbow Centre is the so-called **midnight lane-booking blackout**—where lane reservations vanish at midnight, impairing swimmers’ schedules. While formal documentation is scarce, social media posts and member forums share similar experiences, consistent with online complaints directed at Better about buggy booking systems. Whether this was down to software limitations or internal policy remains unclear—but users will expect Places Leisure to fix this fundamental flaw.

A Moment for Accountability

This handover is more than a change of logo: it’s a test of the council’s commitment to local services. Users are invited to watch the roll-out carefully, demanding updates, realistic targets, and transparent accounting. Social enterprise status sounds progressive—but without openness, it can be nothing more than a sticker on the door.

The Bottom Line

Epsom & Ewell’s move away from Better reflects mounting pressure from dissatisfied users. But who wins—the community or the balance sheet—depends on what happens once the ink is dry. Will we get a truly improved Rainbow Centre, or just a rebranded disappointment?

Time—and transparency—will tell.

Image: Credit Mertbiol Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication

New planning laws threaten Surrey countryside?

19 July 2025



Fears of “irreversible damage” to Surrey’s countryside have prompted calls to change a new planning bill currently going through parliament. Surrey County Council members have unanimously agreed to call for the central government to change a “deeply damaging” planning bill. Councillors voted in favour of an amended Green Party motion, highlighting serious concerns about the environmental implications of the potential legislation at a full council meeting on Tuesday (July 8).

The Planning and Infrastructure Bill currently going through Parliament aims to streamline the planning system to speed up the delivery of new homes and big infrastructure projects. But part of the bill includes the removal of some environmental red tape which the government argues is gridlocking the process. Councillor Jonathan Essex (Green Party/Redhill East) put forward the motion, stating: “If passed, this parliamentary bill will cause tragic, irretrievable and avoidable damage to Surrey’s countryside. We must not let this Bill dismantle decades of progress in nature protection, including removing key principles of environmental governance from the planning system.”

Surrey cabinet member for the Environment, Cllr Marisa Heath (Conservative/Englefield Green) supported the motion. She said the council is in favour of building new homes but “not to the detriment of the existing environment and residents”. Cllr Heath praised Surrey MPs who had already taken a stand and voted against the bill in parliament but hinted there was still more work to do.

Key concerns raised by councillors focused on part three of the bill which outlines a mechanism that would allow developers to bypass current environmental rules by putting money into a nature restoration fund. But the fund could be

used at a later date to create environmental improvement elsewhere in Surrey or beyond, according to Cllr Heath. She stressed that once the fee is paid, concreting over green spaces can go ahead with the developer measuring the potential harm to the site during the planning process, how irreversible or long-lasting it may be.

Cllr Essex's motion demanded the government "sufficiently amend" the relevant part of the bill. He said: "If Surrey's beautiful countryside is to be protected Section 3 of this Bill must be scrapped." The government has said the bill does not weaken environmental protections and will actually improve environmental outcomes and nature recovery.

Councillors from across the political divide came out against the possibility of developers side-stepping key ecological safeguards to drive through house building. They claimed it would neither bring in the finances needed nor deliver the environmental healing nature needed. Cllr Essex claimed the bill "waters down habitat protections" to sites of specific scientific interest (SSSIs) and other protected areas in Surrey like Colony Bog and Bagshot Heath, Brookwood Heath and Chobham Common. He added the new rules will chip away protection granted to individual species such as bats, newts, wild birds and water voles.

Rather than green interests slowing down growth, Cllr Essex argued planning delays are driven by under-resourced planning authorities, infrastructure bottlenecks, and industry-led viability constraints. He said: "I am not sure how Rachel Reeves was able to keep a straight face when blaming newts for the failure to build homes when a third of homes given planning permission in the last decade, that is 1.4 million, were not built."

Surrey Wildlife Trust has slammed the bill in its current form as 'a licence to kill nature' as well as the Office for Environmental Protection claiming it waters down the existing laws designed to protect the environment. A statement from the government read: "Crucially, the Bill will also ensure that vital protections for the environment remain in place and through a more strategic approach we can deliver more for nature and not less. Current rules in the National Planning Policy Framework are clear that development resulting in the loss or deterioration or irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees, should be refused. This will not change through the Planning and Infrastructure Bill."

Surrey Hills National Landscape, Frensham Ponds (Image Natural England/ LYDIA2)

Ashtead development objectors hit a cul-de-sac

19 July 2025



"Surrey's biggest cul-de-sac" will be built after hundreds of new homes were approved next to the M25. Developers Wates was granted planning permission to build up to 270 homes to the south of Ermyn Way in Ashtead by Mole Valley District Council's development committee. The plans, which include 108 affordable properties, a community building, and space for Gypsy and Traveller pitches, were green lit by six votes to five with two abstentions much to the disappointment of many who attended the July 2 meeting.

Wates, though, said the scheme would go a considerable way to alleviating housing pressure in the area. Director of planning, John Tarvit, said Wates had been working on the proposals since 2014 with both the council and planning inspector agreeing it was a sustainable site. He added: "Mole Valley is one of the least affordable places to buy a home with about 680 households currently on the waiting list. This planning application represents a real opportunity to offer young people and families the chance to either own a home or with affordable rent securing a stable place where they can thrive."

The still-to-be-determined final layout will include a purpose-built community building with potential for a children's nursery, 30 acres of open space with green corridors and children's play areas, and cycling facilities. The developers will also make a financial contribution towards Surrey Connect - an on-demand bus service.

The item was not without its controversy with committee chair, Councillor Jo Farrar-Astrop (Liberal Democrats: Capel, Leigh, Newdigate & Charlwood) recognising it was contentious and reminding members to stay focused on the planning matters. She would also, repeatedly, warn the public gallery over its outbursts before eventually clearing the chamber and moving onlookers to watch from a room next door.

Speaking against the plans was Steve Drake who urged the committee to reject the proposals as there was "only one route into the busy cul-de-sac" already congested with incoming school-run traffic. He said: "With this development the cul-de-sac would become almost 500 dwellings with over 1,000 vehicles, doubling the traffic load on Ermyn Way." Worse, he said, was that the council had earmarked a further 140 homes for the site meaning it would eventually grow to more than 600 dwellings. Dave Beresford of the Ashtead Residents Association said: "Adding 580 residents would be unsustainable, the character of the area will certainly be harmed."

Nearby schools have told the council there is enough capacity to take on the expected increase in children moving into the area. Cllr Gerry Sevenoaks (Independent: Ashtead Park) said: "It will have a devastating impact, increasing traffic

pollution and loss of biodiversity but more importantly there would be a devastating impact on the residents living close to this development. He added: “Given that this is going to be the largest Cul de Sac in Surrey I wonder what those emergency services feel about coming down the road to be clogged with traffic and trying to actually get people to hospital or deal with fire.”

280 homes plan for Ashtead (Image Wates)

Public Meeting to Debate Epsom and Ewell’s government future

19 July 2025



A public debate later this month will ask whether Epsom and Ewell Borough Council could soon be abolished — and whether such a decision might happen without any vote or public consultation.

The event, titled “*Here Today, Gone Tomorrow? Devolution Explained*”, will take place at 7.00pm on Wednesday 23rd July 2025 at St Joseph’s Catholic Church St Margaret Dr, Epsom KT18 7JQ. It is free to attend and open to all residents and businesses.

The meeting is organised by **Rotary Connections**, a local initiative of the Rotary Club aiming to bring together businesses, civic groups, and the wider community.

The panel will include local councillors:

Eber Kington – Residents Association and Surrey County Council and former long-serving Councillor on EEBC.

Bernie Muir, deputy chair of Surrey County Council, Conservative, who also serves on Epsom and Ewell Borough.

Steven McCormick – Residents Association serving both EEBC and Surrey County Council.

The discussion will be chaired by **Lionel Blackman**, local solicitor and a director of the Epsom and Ewell Times.

The debate comes amid growing speculation over local government reorganisation in Surrey. Proposals in recent years have raised the prospect of scrapping all district and borough councils in favour of one or more large unitary authorities. Such a move would end the independence of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, which has served the community since 1937.

Supporters of unitary reform claim it could bring savings and efficiency. Opponents argue it risks reducing local accountability and weakening the borough’s unique identity.

After initial addresses from each speaker organisers say the meeting will follow a “Question Time” format, allowing the public to pose questions directly to councillors on what these changes might mean for services, representation, and the future shape of local democracy.

Entry is free.

Related reports:

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[Epsom and Ewell Considers New Community Councils as Local Government Shake-Up Looms](#)

[Epsom and Ewell Borough Council out – Community Council’s in?](#)

and many more – search “local government reorganisation”.

SENDing Pupils to Epsom’s Mainstream Schools?

19 July 2025



The national conversation around how best to educate children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) has intensified, following proposals by Labour's Stephen Kinnock to increase the number of SEND pupils placed in mainstream schools. The aim, he says, is to promote inclusion and reduce the pressure on stretched specialist placements. But as the Government looks to reshape the SEND landscape — and amid growing concerns about funding — the question for residents of Epsom and Ewell is this: should more children with SEND be placed in local mainstream schools?

The borough is home to a number of schools that already provide dedicated support for pupils with SEND. Epsom and Ewell High School hosts a Hearing Resource Base and also runs an alternative curriculum aimed at meeting the diverse needs of learners. Epsom Primary and Nursery School is one of the local institutions to benefit from Surrey County Council's 2023 expansion of SEND provision. That county-wide investment pledged 6,000 additional specialist school places and introduced 85 new SEND resource base places within mainstream schools, part of a broader £240m commitment to address rising demand across Surrey.

The local impact of that investment is still unfolding. While there has been clear progress in infrastructure and placement availability, there is no publicly available data to confirm whether Epsom's schools currently have the capacity to take in significantly more SEND pupils — or how those decisions might affect classroom dynamics and resource allocation.

However, concern is growing that national policy may now be moving in the opposite direction. In June 2025, reports emerged suggesting that the Treasury is pressuring the Department for Education to identify "efficiency savings" in SEND budgets, amid wider efforts to reduce public spending. According to coverage in *Schools Week* and *The Guardian*, Government ministers have privately discussed potential curbs on local authority SEND funding, with one official describing existing growth in education, health and care plan (EHCP) numbers as "unsustainable." While no official announcement has been made, campaigners fear that this signals a shift towards cost-saving measures that could restrict access to specialist support or delay assessments.

This emerging tension between inclusion and austerity has alarmed SEND advocacy groups. They warn that increasing mainstream placements without matching increases in funding and staff training could place significant strain on already overstretched schools — and risk setting up both SEND and non-SEND pupils for failure.

Supporters of the mainstreaming model argue that it fosters an inclusive environment where all children can thrive together. They point to the benefits of breaking down stigma and allowing pupils with SEND to learn alongside peers, provided the right support mechanisms — such as teaching assistants, differentiated learning, and physical accommodations — are in place.

However, the debate is far from one-sided. Some argue that placing more SEND pupils into mainstream classrooms, especially where complex needs or behavioural challenges are involved, can stretch teaching resources and affect the learning environment for all students. There is no conclusive local data for Epsom, but nationally, parents and advocacy groups have voiced concerns that pupils without SEND may receive less teacher attention or experience disruption in classes that try to cater to a wide range of needs without sufficient staffing or training.

The reality is that the success of inclusion depends heavily on how it is implemented. A mainstream classroom with adequate resources, specialist support, and small group instruction may serve some SEND pupils well. But without those conditions — and without proper funding and planning — the risk is that no one in the classroom gets the education they need.

So far, neither Epsom & Ewell Borough Council nor Surrey County Council has issued a public position on whether more SEND pupils should be placed in mainstream settings, and there has been no formal consultation locally on the implications of national policy changes.

As families, teachers and policymakers await further clarity, it is vital to hear directly from the community. The *Epsom & Ewell Times* invites parents, educators, and students to share their thoughts. Do you believe more children with SEND should be placed in mainstream schools? What has your experience been with local provision — as a parent navigating the system, or a student learning alongside SEND peers?

This is a complex and nuanced issue, and any long-term solution must balance fairness, resources, and outcomes — not just for children with SEND, but for everyone in the classroom. Whatever direction policy takes next, one thing is certain: inclusion is not just about where children are taught, but how.

Image: Rosebery School, Epsom. Google.

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[Surrey SEND parents owed money](#)

[Epsom SEND case highlights a national problem](#)

Parishing Epsom and Ewell is unholy?

19 July 2025



I enjoyed your write-up of the latest meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, where you asked “Will the doomed Epsom and Ewell Borough Council rise from the ashes in other forms?” I would however suggest that the intention of the Residents Association (RA) clique that runs the council is to seek to continue its own existence as a relevant political force.

The RA has run the council since its creation and as Cllr Robert Leach (now the mayor) recently observed, feels that its dominant position means that it can do as it likes. [Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Faces Scrutiny Over Constitutional Reforms](#) > Epsom & Ewell Times

With the anticipated abolition of Epsom and Ewell as a borough council and effective merger with three or more neighbouring boroughs, the RA can see that its stranglehold will be broken. Its representatives may well be elected to a new unitary council, but they will likely be in a minority.

The paper at last week’s meeting that proposed what is called a Community Governance Review noted that “Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is one of the few District Councils within Surrey that is unparished”, meaning that there are no civil parishes or parish or other community councils.

Having been in charge for all these decades, the RA may wish to explain why this is the case. The answer to the *why now* question is obvious – to give the RA another host body to move to when its current host expires. Not that the RA clique doesn’t already have its fingers in a lot of pies locally.

There is also the *why not now* question, which the administration has skipped past. The report from last week notes that statutory guidance advises councils like Epsom and Ewell to avoid starting a community governance review if a review of local electoral arrangements is being, or is about to be, undertaken – i.e. the current situation.

Your article cites me as one of the councillors at the meeting who expressed doubts about whether information being given to residents will allow them to make an informed decision. I was specifically concerned that residents will only be consulted on the RA’s preference for new councils, despite recognition in the report that the government recently expressed a preference for the establishment of Neighbourhood Area Committees, which would operate within the auspices of a new authority.

Clearly these have been rejected as not suiting the RA’s purposes. For now we have to accept that the RA clique that runs the council can do what it likes, including spending £300,000 of desperately short funds on a process framed around its need to perpetuate its own relevance.

Cllr **Chris Ames** (Labour Court Ward)

Anti-slavery Parliamentarian portrait purchase

19 July 2025



Runnymede Borough Council has agreed to release thousands of pounds to help buy a “significantly important” oil painting for its museum. The painting is an oil on canvas portrait of Britain’s first foreign secretary and one-time leader of the Whig Party, Charles James Fox MP.

Mr Fox, who spent his final years in St Ann's Hill, Chertsey, was a strong supporter of parliamentary reform and advocated for religious tolerance and individual liberty. He was a particularly vocal campaigner for the abolition of slavery and introduced what was to become the 1807 Abolition of the Slave Trade Act which made it illegal for British ships and British subjects to trade in enslaved people.

The portrait has been offered to the museum for £5,000 and half of the money for its purchase will come from donations, with the rest from the council's museum after Runnymede Borough Council's corporate management committee signed off the move.

Emma Warren, curator of Chertsey Museum, told the Thursday June 19 meeting: "We've been given the opportunity to purchase an original oil painting, quite a large item, of one of the borough's, if not the country's, unsung heroes." She said the money would come from the museum's own fund which had been "built up over many many years and can only be used for the benefit of the museum's collections."

"In my time at Chertsey Museum, which is 23 years, we've only used the purchase fund four times which is why it's healthy. It's normally kept for items of significant importance which I believe this painting to be, given we only have a couple of portraits of Fox and no original artworks. I could talk literally for hours about him. He is important not just to Chertsey where he spent his final years living on St Anne's Hill. Normally I mention his debauched young life with the women and gambling but I was told to skip over that and concentrate on the important bit as to why he was our unsung hero."

Reports presented to the meeting said Mr Fox, who was known as the Man of the People, first came to Chertsey in 1783 when Elizabeth Armistead, who would become his wife, invited him to join her at her home in St Ann's Hill. The museum's collection features letters from Mr Fox and gives an insight into his life on the hill. He was said to have taken up sheep rearing and learned about planting requirements for crops.

Mrs Warren added: "He was a Whig politician, had an unwavering support for liberty and parliamentary reforms and anti-slavery principles. Many of his views were quite ahead of his time. He spoke out at length against anti-government overreach."

The image produced here is NOT the one the subject of this report.

Image: Joshua Reynolds portrait of Charles James Fox- pl.pinterest.com, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=48763729> This is not likely to be the portrait that is the subject of this article. We have been waiting for details from the museum.