

Long serving Councillor Clive Smitheram dies at 76



Clive Smitheram, Councillor for West Ewell, passed away on April 25th aged 76. Clive's health had been deteriorating in the last few months and last week was taken to Epsom Hospital for tests and was diagnosed with Sepsis.

Clive was a central figure in West Ewell having lived there for over 30 years with his wife Gill and family and although a proud Cornishman, Clive was someone who knew everyone locally and if he didn't know someone, he knew someone who did! Clive was a former police officer, having served 31 years in the service and was a retired community safety officer. As an active resident, it led to Clive being elected as a Resident Association Councillor for West Ewell serving for over 20 years, Clive was a former Mayor of Epsom and Ewell in 2010- 2011.

Clive was always happy supporting and providing advice to the residents of West Ewell and had a very proactive approach to getting things done. Clive always believed that central politics should have no place in local issues and that councillors should be "local people dealing with local issues". He believed this common-sense approach best served the community and its residents.

Clive served on many different committees during his time as a councillor, having been Chairman of Crime and Disorder, Licencing and Scrutiny, as well as an active member of the Planning Committee. Clive provided a wealth of experience and support to all colleagues and was a great mentor and listener, with a positive approach to problem-solving. Clive was an active member of All Saints Church in West Ewell and became a member of Epsom Rotary Club in 2011, becoming President in 2014. Clive was voted an honorary member in October 2020. In addition, Clive was a founder member of the town's twinning association with Chantilly in Northern France and this year marks the 25th anniversary.

Lastly, we have lost a special person and good friend and our thoughts are with his wife Gill, his children Chris and Claire and his four grandchildren.

This obituary was written by Councillors Barry Nash and Monica Coleman, both representing West Ewell.

For more news on the council, please [click here](#).

Council 'Stumped' for tree cash?



At a meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on Thursday 5th May 2022 Councillors voted for a controversial new £186,000 per annum tree maintenance contract with regular supplier Advanced Tree Services Ltd (ATS).

ATS is a family-owned and run Woking-based business employing in the region of 50 workers. The sole director is Daron Mitchell who has run the company since 1997. Profit and Loss accounts have not been filed with Companies House.

The Council is responsible for trees on its land and an Officer's report to Councillors stated that there are approximately 32,000 trees within the Borough. The Report is not clear if that is the number of trees on Council land or the Borough as a whole.

The Council is liable to persons injured by trees on its land if trees have not been inspected and maintained. The Council put a three-year contract for the Borough's tree maintenance out to tender and received four bids.

ATS will undertake the full range of tree inspections and maintenance works. The works are to be performed on trees located within the borough on the Council's land and co-managed sites - Nonsuch Park and the Downs. The contracted works include a tree inspections programme, tree planting and aftercare, tree maintenance, emergency callouts and Oak Processionary Moth control.

The annual cost of the previous tree contract was £81,000 plus a budget of £5,000 to address Oak Processionary Moth. The cost of the new contract is £185,000 per annum, an increase of £104,000.

Of this £104,000 increase, £59,500 can be linked to industry inflation as the contract has not been re-tendered for a number of years. The remaining £44,500 increase is due to new service requirements

The £185,000 cost of the new contract exceeds the Council's existing budget by £99,000. Officers proposed that the £59,500 increase due to industry inflation can be funded by the Council's "budgeted contingency for contract inflation". However, the unbudgeted £39,500 increase attributable to service enhancements will need to be found within the tree maintenance service's existing "budget envelope", or from "alternative service areas".

Not all Councillors were convinced that this shortfall of £39,500 could be found and questioned the wisdom of proceeding with the contract. Officers appeared "stumped" as to where the money will come from.

The motion was passed with 8 votes for and 1 against.

Read more of our council coverage [here](#)

Idling drivers in Epsom & Ewell face £40 fines



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has vowed to fine drivers who leave their engines running while stationary. Engine idling produces air pollution and increases the amount of toxic air that we breathe. The act enforces Rule 123 of the Highway Code, which states: *“You must not leave a vehicle’s engine running **unnecessarily** while that vehicle is stationary on a public road”*

Numerous studies have established that long-term exposure to air pollution reduces life expectancy, due to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases and lung cancer. Even short-term exposure affects lung function, exacerbates asthma and results in respiratory and cardiovascular hospital admissions. Every minute, an idling car produces enough exhaust emissions to fill 150 balloons with harmful chemicals, including cyanide, nitrogen oxide and tiny particles of poison.

The Royal College of Physicians believes that 40,000 people a year die early because of air pollution, with car idling being a contributing factor. Children and the elderly are particularly vulnerable. An idling engine burns fuel less efficiently than when the vehicle is moving and so produces more emissions. Because toxic gases from idling are emitted in the same place, localised air pollution is much worse, especially near schools. Research shows that exposing children to high levels of air pollution can stunt lung growth and cause behavioural and mental health problems.

Engine idling has been an offence since 1988 and Epsom and Ewell Borough Council is now taking action. Enforcement officers will ask drivers who are caught idling to switch off their engines. Refusal to do so will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £20, rising to £40 if not paid within 28 days. Councillor Neil Dallan, Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee said *“Idling is sometimes unavoidable but there are instances, such as waiting for a takeaway or when collecting children from school, when idling is not necessary. We don’t want to issue fixed penalty notices, and it will be the last resort, but we do want to enforce anti-idling regulations effectively to improve air quality”*.

More Council news:

- ## Epsom and Ewell’s Local Democracy Debate: What’s at Stake as Consultation Enters Phase Two



Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has launched the second stage of its Community Governance Review (CGR), inviting residents to give their views on whether two new parish-style bodies — Epsom ... [Read More](#)

30 December 2025

- ## Letters from local Councillors on Epsom and Ewell parishes



Posted in the order of receipt. From Cllr Alex Coley (Independent Ruxley) Dear Editor, It is disingenuous to go to residents with a consultation that shows a band D precept ... [Read More](#)

30 December 2025

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council celebrates its first Young Legends graduates



Epsom & Ewell Borough Council proudly marked the completion of its first Young Legends programme with a celebration event for participants and their families. Over the last nine weeks, over ... [Read More](#)

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Council losing “the plot”?



Is Horton Cemetery in Epsom about to be condemned for good by the Borough's own Burial Authority?

In a rushed special meeting of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on 5th May, Councillors will be asked whether to impose a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) against the private property speculator owner who has totally neglected for 40 years this burial ground of 9000 patients of the former five psychiatric hospitals of Epsom.

In a Council Officers' Report, Councillors have been advised that the compensation payable to the owner will be in the region of £1/4 million. The valuation is based on the market value of "woodland". The Report advises the owner will mount legal challenges against a CPO, leading to more expense for Council taxpayers.

Sheila Berry and Honorary Alderman Alan Carlson, former Mayors of Epsom and Ewell and now trustees of the **Friends of Horton Cemetery**, a Charity requesting the CPO, in a joint statement said: "If the owner gets the correct compensation a high value does not make it more likely that he will challenge a CPO than a low value." On the valuation, they state: "We have expert advice from both a chartered surveyor and a lawyer that the comparison with "woodland" values is erroneous. The Cemetery is unique and is subject to a wide range of legal restrictions rendering it virtually worthless as a land asset. There is no development value and no possible income value due to these restrictions. We hope the Councillors on 5th May will not be discouraged by this misleading Report in pursuing a long-overdue intervention. A CPO is necessary to rescue the Cemetery from oblivion and belatedly show respect to 9000 souls who died in our Borough."

You can attend the Council committee meeting on Thursday 5th May at 7.30 pm in The Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom or online.

UPDATE 6th May 2022: Marked as 4th on the agenda for the Strategy and Resources Committee of the Council on 5th May 2022, the item was declared withdrawn by Chairman Cllr Colin Keane. We understand that the Council will revisit the matter later in the year.

Council passes "Stand with Ukraine" motion, Labour amendment rejected.



On Tuesday night 19th April 2022, at a meeting of the Full Council of Epsom and Ewell Borough, the Council debated and passed a motion titled "Stand Together with Ukraine". It was a motion setting out to:

- Note the Commitments already made by the Government to house displaced Ukrainian families.
- Utilise the support funding provided by the Government to meet the welfare and care needs of Ukrainian families arriving in the borough via the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- Signpost those residents who house people displaced by this act of aggression to the information and support they are seeking.



Councillor Alex Coley (Residents Association - Ruxley Ward) authored the "Stand with Ukraine" motion

Cllr Alex Coley (Residents Association - Ruxley Ward), proposing the motion, stated: "In these worst of times for the Ukrainian people, we have seen the best of people in our Borough, who've responded with an outpouring of kindness and generosity." The motion was unanimously passed by the Chamber, with one amendment (rejected) being submitted by Labour Party Councillors, Kate Chinn and Debbie Monksfield of Court Ward.



Councillor Kate Chinn (Labour Part - Court Ward) authored the amendment

The amendment called on the Government to take in more Ukrainian refugees, to step up its humanitarian obligations and provide more support to European countries, who are taking the majority of refugees. Councillor Chinn said, *“The government has been dragging its feet on the biggest refugee crisis in a decade.”* The reception was frosty, with members describing it as “Confusing” and “Political point-scoring”. Cllr Liz Frost (Residents Association – Woodcote Ward) stated her uneasiness, telling the Council more leniency in refugee policy could lead to *“terrorists”* finding easier pathways into the UK. Cllr Coley responded by stating that the aims of the amendment were better addressed to the Home Affairs House of Commons Select committee who could *“look into some of the things that are happening that perhaps should be done in a fairer and more effective way”*, concluding that as a Borough Council, it isn’t their place to scrutinise Government policy.

The motion is an important message to Ukrainian citizens, some of whom will be relocating to Epsom under the Government’s Homes for Ukraine scheme, and an important reassurance of solidarity for Ukrainians already living in Epsom and Ewell, and beyond.

If you’re local to Epsom, and you’d like to help during the Ukraine Crisis, please get in contact with Surrey Stands with Ukraine and the Epsom Refugee Network, two fantastic community charities that are doing excellent work for disenfranchised people.

Have any thoughts on this motion? Let us know via email: admin@epsomandewelltimes.com, or through the contact form, found [HERE](#).

Not in my back-garden centre!



John Dipre of the Dipre family-run Marsden Nurseries Ltd, owners of the Epsom bordering Ashtead Park Garden Centre in Pleasure Pit Road, has applied to Mole Valley District Council to demolish this popular garden centre and restaurant and build on the site 26 two to four-bedroom houses.

Neighbours are up in arms and objections are mounting before the consultation deadline of 25th April passes. Objectors point out that recently the Council had removed the site from an area for potential development. It is said to occupy a sensitive area of the Green Belt as it separates Epsom from Ashtead. The roads around are narrow and bendy and already hazardous. Public transport is threadbare. The Langley Vale E5 bus every two to three hours that crosses Epsom is the only one apart from a weekday daily school service.

The Applicant, John Dipre, has been involved as Director of no less than 120 registered companies, most of which have been in homes, investments and property. He claims that the proposed development will be an improvement for nature as presently most of the land is tarmac and his plans will see trees, hedges and grassy areas grow.

No affordable housing is planned for the development.

The full plans can be seen via molevalley.gov.uk/planningsearch and enter MO/2022/0474

Issues relating to development, housing, planning, brownfield sites and affordable housing are addressed in an opinion piece exclusively for the Epsom and Ewell Times by Tim Murphy you can read [HERE](#).

If you are affected by a significant planning application email us or use the contact form and we will consider reporting on it.

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Council Report: Funding available for local projects



Image: CIL funded water fountain in Alexandra Recreation Ground.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council is inviting bids from the community for funding for public infrastructure projects which will benefit the borough.

Over the last four years, the Council has allocated £1 million to a variety of community-driven infrastructure projects in Epsom, Ewell and Stoneleigh. The projects, championed by residents, have included additional street lighting, restoration of public footpaths, new play and gym equipment in parks and a new bus shelter. Sustainability projects such as water fountains in borough parks have also been enabled by this funding.

Applications for the 2022/23 scheme are now open until 31 May 2022.

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows the Council to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in the borough and is used to support new physical and social infrastructure and also to improve existing facilities. Under current legislation, 80% of total CIL collected must be allocated towards borough-wide infrastructure and up to 5% towards administration.

In addition, at least 15% of levy receipts must be spent on priorities that have to be agreed with the local community. This 15% is often referred to as the ‘neighbourhood portion’ of the levy and ensures the community are fully engaged.

In Epsom and Ewell, residents and local community groups are invited to bid for these funds from the neighbourhood portion of the levy for projects within the borough, with successful bids selected by a committee of councillors.

Full details on how to apply for funding can be found on the Epsom & Ewell Borough Council website; www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/CIL15

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Council driving forward with electric chargers



Work has begun on the installation of Park and Charge electric vehicle charging points within Epsom & Ewell Borough Council car parks.

Hook Road car park is the first council car park to benefit from the scheme, with six new charging points currently being installed. These will allow people to pay for both charging and parking their electric vehicles at the same time.

Councillor Neil Dallen, Chair of the Environment and Safe Communities Committee said “The best travel options for the environment are walking, cycling or using public transport. The use of electric vehicles can be a positive contribution to air quality, as they emit fewer greenhouse gases and air pollutants than petrol or diesel cars.

“This new facility can help support drivers make the switch to electric vehicles. It can also encourage electric car drivers to visit the borough, supporting our local businesses, shops and amenities.”

The installation work is being undertaken in partnership with Joju Solar, a leading UK company for electric car charging point installation.

Councillor Neil Dallen added, ***“This initiative is being undertaken with a partner to ensure that the associated costs do not impact on council taxpayers who may want or need to use these new facilities”.***

Following completion of the Hook Road installation, work will then continue on Ashley Road car park and with other council car parks following later this spring. A total of 18 electric chargers will be installed with this number reviewed as use demands.

The installation work may involve some car park bays being fenced off temporarily and some short-term limited disruption to each car park. The council aims to keep disruption to a minimum and reduce any inconvenience to car park users.

The initiative forms part of the council’s aspirations to provide more sustainable transport options in the borough under the theme ‘smart and connected’.

<https://democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/documents/s15159/Four%20Year%20Plan%202020-2024%20Final%20copy.pdf>

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Rates demand puts temporary brake on Ukraine charity



UPDATE - Monday 11th April - EEBC: “Having reviewed the documentation and made the necessary checks, [the charity] qualif[ies] for the additional rate relief.” Good news for Ukraine.

Monday 4th April Ashley Centre based Surrey Stands With Ukraine received from Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, a demand for business rates of £1229 per month. Immediately the charity applied for discretionary relief as they have had to halt purchases of medical supplies. Local MP Chris Grayling has supported the waiver applied for. Thursday 7th a Council spokesman answered the Times: “There is a formal process we have to follow for charitable rate relief, I can confirm this process is underway. There will be no request for payment while we process this. I cannot give a specific date for completion but I can confirm this is being treated as a priority.” Nataliya Irvine of SSWU responded: “We understand a computer probably generated the demand but it needs an urgent human intervention to reach a decision. We appreciate and thank the Council for processing an application we made for a street collection licence very quickly, so we know they can.”

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Downs right investment

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, The Jockey Club and Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators are pleased to announce that work will soon be starting on significant improvements to amenities and infrastructure which will greatly enhance the visitor experience of the famous Epsom & Walton Downs.

A grant of £132,000 secured by the Council from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development is boosted by funding of £18,000 from The Jockey Club and £20,000 from the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators, and is specified for supporting the local economy by encouraging visitors.

Councillor Liz Frost, Chair of the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators, stated “I’m delighted that we’ve managed to secure significant funding to enhance what is a jewel in the crown of Epsom and Ewell.

“Epsom and Walton Downs, a key and beautiful location in the Borough, is private land which is available to the public for ‘air and exercise on foot’, providing that this does not interfere with the racehorse training, which takes place in the mornings, before 12 noon Mondays to Saturdays and until 9.30am on Sundays.

“The funding can be used for new amenities and projects only. It will provide a range of new signage, display and information boards with details of the wildlife, history and geography of this special area and some specially commissioned seating, picnic tables and bins. There will also be new markers guiding people on walking, cycling and riding routes, and a brass-rubbing activity trail”.

Councillor Frost added “Epsom & Walton Downs attracts huge numbers of visitors from near and far, especially during the last couple of years. It’s important that we maintain and protect the Downs in a way that allows people to discover the stunning views, wildlife and heritage while doing so safely and with due regard to other users”.

Work on the installation is due to start in April and there will be plenty of opportunities to see the project develop and follow events marking the completion of different parts of the programme – all in time for an official opening and to be in place for use and enjoyment over the Platinum Jubilee celebrations weekend and beyond.

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council, The Jockey Club and Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators are pleased to be working together to be able to ensure the Downs are accessed safely by the public with regard to racehorse training, are well maintained and continue to offer an unrivalled experience in nature.

Simon Durrant, General Manager at Epsom Downs Racecourse, said:

“The Epsom and Walton Downs are totally unique and as The Jockey Club we are committed both to the racehorse training community who use it as a place of work, as well as the local community for whom it is an important green space.

“I’d like to thank Epsom and Ewell Borough Council for their work in securing this important funding and we’re delighted to be contributing in our capacity as the landowner and a Conservator to continue to improve the Downs and make them a place which is safe and enjoyable for all.”