EPSOM & EWELL TIMES
For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

5th November 2026

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Are Epsom and Ewell's Interests Served by Postponing Democracy?

9 January 2025

The Conservative-led Surrey County Council's recent decision to seek a postponement of the May 2025 elections raises serious questions about the motivations behind this move. This decision, spearheaded by Councillor Tim Oliver, comes after the Conservative Party's near-total defeat in the July 2024 General Election and appears to be as much about retaining control as it is about facilitating local government reorganisation.

The argument put forward by the council's leadership—that elections would create a "zombie" authority that wastes public funds—is unconvincing. Elections are a cornerstone of democracy, not a bureaucratic inconvenience. By delaying them, the current leadership retains power at a time when its mandate to govern Surrey is at best questionable. Surrey's residents, many of whom voiced their dissatisfaction with Conservative governance at the ballot box just months ago, now face the prospect of being governed by a council that is effectively prolonging its tenure without public consent.

One cannot ignore the context of this decision. Central government's push for local government reform and devolution is not an altruistic initiative aimed at better serving communities. It is a cost-cutting exercise disguised as modernisation. The Government's stipulation that new councils must serve a minimum of 500,000 residents almost guarantees the dissolution of smaller, locally focused boroughs like Epsom and Ewell.

For Epsom and Ewell, the smallest of Surrey's 11 boroughs, this means the likely loss of a council that has served its residents with proximity and understanding for decades. What replaces it may be a sprawling mega-authority or a fractured, less accountable unitary structure. Either way, Epsom and Ewell risks losing its unique voice, with decisions about its future made by those unfamiliar with its needs and aspirations.

Equally troubling is the inclusion of Woking Borough Council's extraordinary debt—reportedly the largest in UK local government history—in the negotiations surrounding devolution. This financial calamity, created under Conservative rule, should be a cautionary tale about the dangers of poor governance, not an issue swept under the rug in the rush to reform. Why should other Surrey residents shoulder the burden of Woking's mismanagement? And why has Surrey's Conservative leadership not been more transparent about its plans to address this issue?

The proposal to postpone elections also conveniently consolidates power for a party facing an uncertain future. By delaying the democratic process, Surrey's Conservative leadership ensures it remains at the table during pivotal discussions about the future shape of local government, even as the electorate has made its dissatisfaction clear.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, like others across the county, is being swept into a centralised reorganisation process with little clarity about what it will mean for its residents. The likely outcome is the erosion of local democracy, with decisions affecting communities being made further away and by people with less understanding of local needs.

Surrey's leadership has yet to explain convincingly why postponing the elections is necessary. If their proposals for reorganisation are sound, why not put them to the test of public approval? Democracy is not an obstacle to progress; it is the means by which progress is legitimised.

Epsom and Ewell's residents deserve to have their voices heard in shaping the future of their local government. They deserve transparency about what reorganisation will mean for their services, their representation, and their community identity. Most importantly, they deserve the chance to vote on who should lead that process. Anything less is an affront to democracy and a betrayal of public trust.

The May 2025 elections must go ahead. It is time for Surrey's leaders to trust the people they serve and stop hiding behind bureaucratic excuses.

Epsom and Ewell Times

Related reports:

Local government reorganisation: What will it mean for Epsom and Ewell?

All change! Epsom and Ewell Borough Council approaching its final stop?

Surrey's Conservative leader wants to postpone May's poll reckoning

Tiers to be shed if Epsom and Ewell loses its Borough Council?

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Is Delay Defensible in the Fight to Protect Epsom's Green Belt?

9 January 2025

As Epsom and Ewell Borough Council deliberates its Local Plan in the face of imminent, significantly higher government housing targets, the council's slow-paced approach raises crucial questions about its strategy to protect our borough's green spaces. Led by the Residents' Association, the council is balancing on a tightrope between procedural rigour and an increasingly urgent need for action. But with higher housing quotas looming, is this balance tipping too far towards delay, at the cost of our precious Green Belt?

Nine opposition councillors have proposed an Emergency Full Council Meeting, arguing that swift action is essential to avoid a target increase to 817 new homes annually—double the current requirement. They rightly point out the risks to Epsom's character and environmental integrity. With development pressure escalating, the loss of even a small proportion of green spaces would have lasting consequences, affecting not just our landscape but also the local ecology and community fabric.

Residents' Association leaders, meanwhile, cite the need for strict adherence to regulatory procedures, with Councillor **Peter O'Donovan** (Chair of the Licensing Policy and Planning Committee, RA Ewell Court) cautioning against shortcuts that might render the plan "unsound" in the eyes of government inspectors. RA Leader Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (Stoneleigh) echoes this sentiment, emphasising the need for quality and robustness in the plan to withstand scrutiny. But, does adherence to every procedural step outweigh the immediate urgency to avoid a government-imposed target that could open up the Green Belt for development?

If every councillor claims to prioritise the protection of our green spaces, it's difficult to justify the RA's slow and careful approach. What would be lost by speeding up the process, even at the risk of minor regulatory issues? The Local Plan's objective is clear: it must serve the community's best interests by ensuring sustainable development, but without jeopardising the green spaces that make Epsom unique. Rushing to complete this plan before the higher targets take effect doesn't mean compromising on quality—it means acknowledging the urgency of our current position.

The RA's insistence on caution may reflect their commitment to procedural integrity, but in the face of a looming housing target that threatens everything they aim to protect, this stance appears increasingly illogical. The stakes are high, and with public consultation already delayed due to a halt in 2023, it is hard to see what further delay achieves. As **Janice Baker** of the Epsom Green Party rightly points out, legal pathways exist to expedite the consultation phase, saving precious weeks and potentially allowing the community to dodge the higher target.

In the end, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council must decide if this cautious approach truly serves our borough's best interests. Every resident who treasures our green spaces deserves a council that can act quickly and decisively in their defence. The council's commitment to procedural correctness is admirable, but it must be weighed against the real and immediate threat of intensified development. It's time to ask, "What are we willing to risk?" Because in this case, the greatest risk might just be the price of waiting.

Related reports:

Call to Epsom and Ewell Council to speed plan denied

Opposition Calls for Emergency Council Meeting Over Epsom and Ewell Local Plan

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Correction to our Epsom and Ewell Council reports

9 January 2025

We apologise unreservedly to Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's Chief Executive Officer Jackie King for an unintended publication of a report dated 26th September 2024 titled Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council's Handling of Local Plan, reporting on the 24th September 2024 meeting of the Licensing, Planning and Policy Committee.

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This report was overtaken by a report entitled Epsom Local Plan controversy heats up also reporting on the same meeting.

We attributed remarks to Jackie King even though she was not at the meeting. This part of the report has been repeated elsewhere on social media causing some concern in this sensitive area.

The first report was a draft that was intended to be discarded as it was clear that there was a muddle in interpreting the subtitles of the meeting. We do not usually report twice on the same meeting.

The report Challenges to Epsom and Ewell Council's Handling of Local Plan has now been unpublished.

Let us take this opportunity to appeal for new writers. You do not need a degree in English or Journalism. We can always reorganise the writing to a publishable standard. What we need is observers with time to provide us the facts of local matters. A Borough our size cannot sustain paid journalism. We rely on volunteers.

Democracy at work? Or strange mathematics?

9 January 2025

EPSOM & EWELL TIMES

For the first time in its history as a Parliamentary constituency Epsom and Ewell has a Member of Parliament who is not a Conservative. Undoubtedly the events, personalities and circumstances at the national level impacted local results. Controversies that swirled around recent Conservative Prime Ministers Boris Johnson and Liz Truss, the squeeze on living standards, the failure of Brexit to deliver on its promise to stem immigration, Conservative aides and Parliamentary candidates placing bets on the date of the General Election.

Nevertheless, there were some local factors that contributed to the change that happened in Epsom and Ewell. The neighbouring constituency of Esher and Walton witnessed former Conservative Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab's share of the vote slump from a peak of 63% in 2015 to 49.5% in 2019 with Monica Harding for the Liberal Democrats just 4.5% behind. She proceeded to win on 4th July. Esher's rise of her party must have given Epsom and Ewell Liberal Democrat's choice of Esher based candidate **Helen Maguire** belief that change was possible.

The Epsom and Ewell Liberal Democrats ran their campaign with an unrelenting belief that even in the Conservative stronghold of this constituency voters could change their allegiance.

The intervention of the Reform UK party impacted the local result on 4th July with its 5795 votes, which if cast for Chris Grayling's replacement **Mhairi Fraser**, might have seen the new Conservative candidate, being elected. Reform's previous incarnation as UKIP not standing in the General Elections of 2017 or 2019 after the 2016 EU referendum.

Local tactical voting appears to have been influential with the Liberal Democrats seemingly taking the anti-Conservative or protest votes where in earlier elections Labour has come second in Epsom and Ewell to the Conservatives in both 2015 and 2017. The Liberal Democrats moved to second place in the 2019 poll.

The headlines of a Labour landslide nationally mask the true expression of public opinion with Labour's 4th July 2024 share of the vote being only 2% higher than Jeremy Corbyn's 2019 "worst election result for Labour in history". In fact in 2017 Labour polled 40% of the national vote under Mr Corbyn's leadership. Labour's 2024 share of the national vote at 34% is the lowest of any British Government ruling with a majority in the House of Commons seemingly ever in history.

Where the translation of votes into seats in the Commons appears to be so wildly out of sync. it requires new MPs to work their socks off in their constituencies if they wish to maintain the loyalty of voters in 2024 to the end of the new Parliament and the beginning of the next one.

Watch Epsom and Ewell Borough Councillors at work

9 January 2025

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Not only can you watch online all Epsom and Ewell Borough Council and Council committee meetings live, you can also catch up on those you miss on the Council's YouTube channel.

The live online links can be found by navigating the pages of the Council website starting HERE. You will also find on those pages the agenda and background papers and minutes.

Not forgetting that the public gallery is always open for personal observation of proceedings.

Whatever grumbles you may have about your local Council it cannot be denied that its decision making is open to public inspection.

There are times when committees go into closed session and the Epsom and Ewell Times has challenged some of the secrecy. But at least you will be aware when they have gone into secret session and can challenge such decisions through the Freedom of Information Act.

The Epsom and Ewell Times champions accountability, transparency and democracy. The provision by the Council of windows for the public to its business, using today's technologies, is to be praised.

In a world in which authoritarianism and autocracy are gaining ground it is vital at all levels of British society that we value the liberties we have. We can demonstrate how much we do so by living our democratic ideals daily, not merely paying lip-service to them at periodic elections.

Differences of view held passionately can give rise to personal antagonism but where debates are conducted fairly, mutual personal respect should prevail. Democracy leads to better decision making and can be fun. The alternatives will never be fun for anyone.

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's transparency through public video recording is in itself a significant contribution to maintaining a higher quality of respectful debate.

Who should be moved?

9 January 2025

Today we have published a report about the case of a Reigate resident's rights to be moved away from nuisance neighbours.

Why should she move? Why do the rights of the nuisance neighbours to stay trump the rights of their victim to remain and quietly enjoy her residence?

Is it because it is easier and less expensive for the authorities to shift the innocent than it is to move the guilty?

The report recounts the failure of Reigate and Banstead Borough Council to do either. The Local Government Ombudsman, who investigated the victim's complaint, does not address the powers of the police or the Council or the social housing landlord to tackle the nuisance neighbours. The latter having powers to apply to a court for an eviction of the anti-social neighbours (if also their landlord).

The complaint of the victim was limited to her claim that the Council had failed to deal with her request for re-housing in an appropriate way. Hence the Ombudsman's investigation was carried out within the narrow tramlines of a re-housing application process.

The wider context of all the issues raised by this case are not addressed. E.g., the impact on the neighbourhood or a future resident taking the victim's place, of the nuisance neighbours remaining. The responsibilities of the Council , her landlord and the police, to use their powers to inhibit the nuisance. Those powers ranging from warnings and anti-social behaviour orders to evictions.

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Ruse within a ruse?

9 January 2025

Yesterday the full Council of Epsom and Ewell voted to pause the process of the Local Plan. Cllr **Eber Kington** (RA Ewell Court) proposed an emergency motion to delay the next stage for the Government's latest position on housing targets to be clarified. Expected some time after the local elections on 4th May.



Cllr Eber Kington

His arguments for the motion included the protection of the Green character of the Borough. He observed that the draft Local Plan conceded the need for using Green Belt to accommodate a proportion of the 5400 houses planned for. Yet, the Government's target is over 10,000. Therefore, Green Belt encroachment for the lower figure is a Green Light for Green Belt development for the higher figure.

He said that more work needed to be done on how brownfield sites could be used to provide the housing requirements.

In an unusual intervention Cllr **Alex Coley** (RA Ruxley) described the proceedings of the Council meeting as a pantomime. He argued that the timetabling of the Local Plan process is one for managerial direction and that Councillors were playing politics. Fitting his description of the proceedings he then made a somewhat dramatic exit stage left in a bit of a huff.

Cllr **Peter O'Donovan** (RA Ewell Court) opposed his ward colleague. He stressed the need for a new Local Plan. Delay would mean the Borough's resistance to inappropriate planning applications would be weakened.

All opposition Councillors (Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Labour) spoke for the motion. After Cllr **Bernie Muir** (Conservative Stamford) called for the ruling Residents Association to be "kicked out", she and her Party were targetted in responses by RA Councillors. Firstly, Cllr **Jan Mason** (RA Ruxley) suggested Cllr Muir had not long lived in the borough "just five years". On a dubious "point of order" Cllr Muir corrected this: "12 years actually".

Cllr Mason struggled on to make her point. A journey into a time nearly 50 years ago when the Council bought Longrove hospital land, thus preventing a 5000 housing development from taking place. Cllr Muir would not have known that, she said. Cllr Mason relied on this 1974 purchase to prove that the RA ruled Council do care about the Green Belt.

This brief spat passed and it was Cllr Kington in his reply to the debate who said that the Conservative Government should be "kicked out". This was because the Government insist on using 2014 figures to determine housing need when much lower numbers are yielded by a 2018 analysis.

Cllr **Steve McCormick** (RA Woodcote and Chair of the Licensing, Planning and Policy Committee) opposed the motion. He relied on the ability of the Council to respond to the public's views and amend the draft during the next 5 of the processes's 7 stages.

There were a significant number of empty chairs in the Council Chamber for this important meeting. Four Councillors voted against Cllr Kington's motion. It was carried by a large majority.

The motion passed is HERE in FULL.

This confusion in large part arises from Michael Gove MP and Secretary for Housing Development etc signaling an end to compulsory and centrally set housing targets. First indicated as long ago as May 2022. Then unstated when the Government confirmed its targets remained and then reinstated just a few months later. But no regulations or legislation have been introduced that lift the compulsion of the targets from local government planning obligations.

Cynical observers suggest that Gove's manoeuvres are a ruse to quell the flames of rebellion in the Tory shires and avoid defeats in upcoming local elections. Will we see actual legal change after 4th May?

In Epsom and Ewell was walk-out man Cllr Coley right to hint that the pre-election motion to delay is also for political gain?

A ruse within a ruse?

"That which we call a ruse by any other name would smell as bad."

Time will tell if words are matched by action.

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Housing need or desire?

9 January 2025

Epsom and Ewell Borough Council has embarked on a public consultation on its Draft Local Plan. The consultation ends on 19th March 2023. As we report today it appears that already the most densely populated borough in the County, the Council envisages a growth of new housing that also tops the target unit/KM sq density table.

The voluminous documentation supporting the draft Local Plan predicates the target volume of new housing units on “need”.

Epsom and Ewell is a most desirable place to live in. Served by three mainline London railway stations, close but not too close to the M25 and short journeys to the two main airline gateways to the world. We enjoy many publicly accessible open spaces including Epsom Downs, Epsom Common, Horton County Park and The Hogsmill Open Space. No wonder you hear new neighbours say “We came to Epsom for the green space and access to London”.

Controversially, the Local Plan proposes turning Horton Farm over to a minimum 1500 housing development. The question the Draft Local Plan raises is if piece by piece open countryside in Epsom and Ewell is given to housing will the place become less desirable? Should those who live here, born here, moved here ….. not now enjoy the space they live in, were born in or moved to? Should other boroughs with more space not carry a greater burden of meeting need? Should housing targets be a County wide responsibility? The three Councils of Guildford, Woking and Waverley joined forces in establishing housing targets through a West Surrey Housing Needs Assessment.

Is the Council catering for those who want to move here or for new generations born here?

The Council is providing the residents of the Borough with every opportunity to ask questions and make their views known.

We suggest you do so.

Filling the Gap?

9 January 2025



Thank you for reading the Epsom and Ewell Times in 2022. Throughout 2023 we are all set to continue to “fill the gap” in local journalism identified in the Government commissioned Cairncross Review of the press of 2019.

“*The challenges to public interest journalism are most acute at the local level.*” See Chapter 5.3 page 79.

The Epsom and Ewell History Explorer accounts for the demise of local news services and today its website confirms Epsom and Ewell Times as “The local newspaper providing Boroughwide current news”.

In 2022 we have reported consistently on Epsom and Ewell Council meetings. The first time this has been happening for 10 to 20 years. We secured a valuable partnership with the BBC’s Local Democracy Reporting Service. The only officially recognised press regulator in the United Kingdom is IMPRESS and we qualified to be regulated by this body in 2022.

To sustain our service we need to attract more readers. Many readers can be reached by connecting to our website through the social media of Facebook and Twitter. We publish on those platforms website page links to all of our reports. Please do what you can to help us promote Epsom and Ewell Times. Remember we welcome your letters, opinions, events, news, family and other official notices for publication.

We remain strictly an unpaid, not-for-profit, volunteer service. It’s the only way this can be done in a Borough our size.

Have a great 2023.

The Team at Epsom and Ewell Times

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Abstaining from responsibility?

9 January 2025



As exclusively reported by Epsom and Ewell Times today 10 Borough Councillors sat on 26th July's all-powerful budget setting Strategy and Resources Committee. On a crucial vote to establish a savings target of nearly £1/4 m from the "homelessness budget" for the next financial year, half the committee abstained, including one Councillor who spoke against the proposal.

Pressures on the Council's budget continue to mount with the projected deficit rising in the current financial year from £1.5m to £2m. The Council's ability to raise Council tax is strictly limited. Any increase above £4.95 on a Band D property (mid-range in value) requires a local referendum to authorise. Moreover, on the horizon for the Borough are the dark clouds of further Central Government redistribution of local tax revenues that is likely to see a diminishing proportion of business rates revenue being kept by Epsom and Ewell in favour of the County and poorer parts of the country. Epsom and Ewell is to receive the minimum grant from central Government under its "levelling up" agenda.

The Councillors had been provided with a detailed report by hard working Council officers setting out the figures and financial projections. Granted, Councillors do not have a crystal ball and as the committee's chair, Neil Dallen implies: "You're damned if you do (make hurtful savings) and you're damned if you don't (setting aside funds that could have been spent elsewhere)". All depends on the future demands on the homelessness budget which in turn depends on the unpredictable lives of people.

These hard decisions have to be made. This is what we elect our Councillors to do. To take ultimate responsibility. By local convention rather than rule the Chairs of the Council committees do not vote. So, on a minority participating tied vote of 2:2 the Chair took that hard decision and voted in favour of the target savings. Should he alone carry the burden of that decision? Was the abstention of the majority of the usual voting number an acceptable response to the financial dilemmas the Borough faces?

Epsom and Ewell Times is suitably Impressed

9 January 2025

Your new independent community news service is now officially recognised and regulated by **The Independent Monitor for the Press**. **IMPRESS** is an independent press regulator in the UK. It was the first to be recognised by the **Press Recognition Panel**. Unlike the Independent Press Standards Organisation (IPSO), IMPRESS is fully compliant with the recommendations of the **Leveson Inquiry**. IMPRESS regulates over 200 titles, consisting of a variety of independent local, investigative and special interest news publications across the UK. No national newspaper has signed up to the new regulator; most continue to be members of the unrecognised IPSO. Its founder is Jonathan Heawood and its current Chief Executive is Ed Procter.

"*IMPRESS is at the vanguard of a new, positive future for news publishers, ensuring quality independent journalism flourishes in a digital age. We help to build understanding and trust between journalists and the public – and provide the public with trusted sources of news.*"

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Epsom and Ewell Times

Richard Ayre
Chair of IMPRESS

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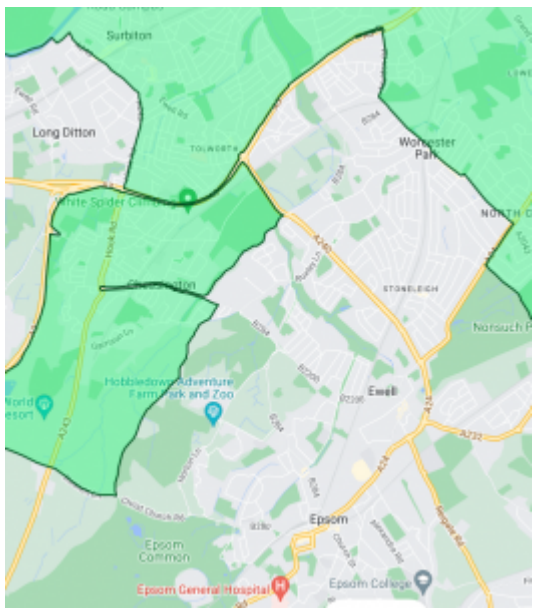
27/07/2022
Date

You can now be assured that the Team at **Epsom and Ewell Times** will continue to strive to meet the highest standards and that we are accountable to an outside body for our mistakes. Readers may lodge complaints to us in the first place and then to IMPRESS if the complaint is not resolved. Members of our own Team have protected “whistleblower rights” if they need to report a breach of standards.

Why not join our team of writers, photographers and contributors? You can give as big or as little as you like. We are all unpaid volunteers, filling the big gap that has grown in recent decades in quality local journalism.

Where to draw the line?

9 January 2025



Mayor of London’s proposal to expand the charging area for old and polluting vehicles to the borders of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell inevitably brings out the “not-in-my-backyard” responses from local residents. Let’s be clear. It is only residents with old polluting cars that will be effected. And, yes, that is likely to impact greatest on those on lower incomes, who cannot afford newer cars, let alone the very expensive electric ones. What should come first? The health of residents in neighbouring London Boroughs or the freedom to continue to use the more polluting cars kept in Epsom and Ewell? If the expanded ULEZ discourages the use of old polluting cars locally then there is also a health and environmental benefit for our residents too.

The health and climate benefits of the ULEZ are well established. So as a nation is it not equally inevitable that the ULEZs will continue to expand, together with legislation banning the old cars anyway? Should we yield willingly to the inevitable and spend the next year, before the expanded ULEZ is likely to be implemented (August 2023) helping residents to change their vehicles?

Continuity in a time of change

9 January 2025

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This week will witness the climax of Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and, Her Majesty's health permitting, the Borough of Epsom and Ewell will be privileged to receive The Queen, when she attends the Derby race-meeting on 4th June.

70 years of continuous service as the United Kingdom's Head of State is unprecedented. Equally unprecedented is Prince Charles's longest ever service as Heir Apparent to the British throne. Never before has anyone served such a long apprenticeship nor has a "handover" of responsibilities ever been so thorough.

Closer to home the Heads of the Council Administration of the Borough of Epsom and Ewell have served declining periods of service in a societal era of constant changes, career progressions and "movings on".

The post of Chief Executive Officer of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council, previously known as "Town Clerk", has been occupied by Douglas Grimes for 11 years (1973 – 1984), David Smith for 23 years (1986 – 2009), Frances Rutter for 8 years (2009 – 2017) and lastly Kathryn Beldon for 5 years (2017 – 6th June 2022).

Ms Rutter's departure was announced several months before her final day, presumably allowing for an orderly transfer of responsibilities to her successor. At the time of her leaving it was reported that her salary was £133,000 per annum. For such rewards, one would expect a requirement for the service of a reasonable notice period. What has happened today that a CEO on a Council taxpayers' funded salary of that magnitude leaves with apparently little more than 11 days' notice? Alternatively, with the aid of computers and central government-driven detailed operational guidelines, is it possible the Chief Executive post is now not so demanding? That a shorter handover or no handover period at all, is adequate? If so, is a salary of £133,000 or more still justified?

Whatever the answers we wish the departing CEO well for the future and good luck to her successor. If the Borough attracts a good one let's hope we see a return to long-service.

Editorial 25/04/22

9 January 2025

In February 2019 the Cairncross Review "A Sustainable Future For Journalism" was published. The Report stated the decline in public interest journalism was most acute at the local level. The Epsom and Ewell History Explorer website tracks the loss of our Borough's last dedicated local newspapers in the first decade of the 21st Century.

The Independent Community News Network states "Independent community and hyperlocal news outlets are fulfilling the traditional role of the fourth estate in local civic society, complementing the diverse range of news provision available."

In establishing the review former PM Theresa May said "Good quality journalism provides us with the information and analysis we need to inform our viewpoints and conduct a genuine discussion"

ICNN has 122 members from Armagh to Eastbourne. Most of these local news services are run as the Epsom and Ewell Times is: "For the community, by the community", though their organisation varies from one to another.

The Epsom and Ewell Times is politically neutral. As our values provide, *we seek to promote community cohesion and celebrate the positive activities, businesses, lives and events in the Borough while being fearless in reporting matters of controversy, ensuring opposing points of view are represented in a balanced and fair manner.*

Our news service is not run for profit and depends on local citizen journalists giving their time voluntarily. If you wish to join the team please contact us at admin@epsomandewelltimes.com

We hope you enjoy The Epsom and Ewell Times and will support us in the months and years to come. We rely on you and each other.

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