

Continuity in a time of change

30 May 2022



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

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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.