



Coroner visits Surrey cricket hero's mental decline

24 July 2025



Coroner's Inquest visits the loss of former England and Surrey batting great **Graham Thorpe MBE**, who died in August 2024 aged 55. Following an inquest held this week at Surrey Coroner's Court, his life and tragic death have returned to the headlines, casting fresh light on his legacy and personal struggles.

Born in Farnham, Surrey on 1 August 1969, Graham Thorpe rose through the county's cricketing ranks with prodigious talent and steely determination. He made his first-class debut for Surrey County Cricket Club in 1988 and quickly established himself as one of the most technically gifted left-handers of his generation.

Thorpe's early promise blossomed into a formidable career with Surrey, for whom he scored over 21,000 runs across formats. His stylish strokeplay, calm temperament, and ability to perform under pressure made him a linchpin for the county during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Surrey's return to success in the late 1990s—including their Sunday League title in 1996 and County Championship victories—bore Thorpe's fingerprints, and his bond with the club remained strong well beyond retirement. He later served as Surrey's batting coach, mentoring a new generation of cricketers at the Oval.

Thorpe made an instant impact on the international stage, scoring a century on his Test debut against Australia in 1993. Over a 12-year England career, he compiled 6,744 Test runs at an average of 44.66, with 16 centuries—cementing his place among the country's most reliable middle-order batsmen.

He was central to key series wins in the subcontinent, notably England's victories in Pakistan and Sri Lanka in 2000, and was named a Wisden Cricketer of the Year in 1998. His unbeaten 200 against New Zealand in 2002 was widely hailed as one of the finest innings of its era.

A naturally modest figure, Thorpe's contribution to English cricket went beyond runs. He embodied a quiet resilience and professionalism that won the admiration of teammates and opponents alike.

After retiring from playing in 2005, Thorpe remained in the game as a respected batting coach, including roles with Surrey and later as a key figure in the England coaching setup. He was part of the ECB's elite coaching team and served as a mentor to many of England's current generation of batters.

However, his career in coaching came to a sudden end in 2022 following the fallout from a video showing players drinking after a heavy Ashes defeat in Australia. Though not the subject of disciplinary action, Thorpe lost his role as England's batting coach soon after—an event that proved devastating.

This week's inquest at Surrey Coroner's Court revealed the full extent of Thorpe's mental health battle, casting a sombre shadow over his final years.

Thorpe had reportedly suffered from anxiety and depression since at least 2018. After the loss of his ECB coaching job in 2022, his condition deteriorated significantly. He became socially withdrawn, suffered from insomnia, and described feelings of shame and worthlessness.

His wife, Amanda, told the inquest that he had even asked her to assist him in dying, expressing an intention to seek assisted suicide in Switzerland. In April 2022, he attempted suicide and spent weeks in intensive care. Though he made a partial physical recovery, the psychological toll persisted.

On 4 August 2024, Thorpe tragically died after being struck by a train at Esher railway station. The coroner concluded that he had taken his own life. His family chose to speak publicly in the hope of raising awareness and encouraging open conversation around mental health in sport.

Surrey County Cricket Club paid tribute to Thorpe, calling him "one of the finest cricketers the club has ever produced." The club has honoured his legacy with a commemorative gallery at the Oval and moments of silence at matches.

Teammates and former England captains described Thorpe as a "warrior at the crease" and a "gentleman off it," highlighting both his cricketing prowess and quiet dignity.

Thorpe's story has also reignited national debate about the mental health pressures faced by elite athletes and the need for more robust support structures—both during and after their careers.

Graham Thorpe's life was rich in achievement, marked by loyalty to Surrey, excellence for England, and a deep love for the game. But his death also reminds us of the vulnerabilities behind even the most accomplished public figures.

As his family bravely noted, "Graham's legacy must be more than his cricket. Let it also be a call to look out for each other."

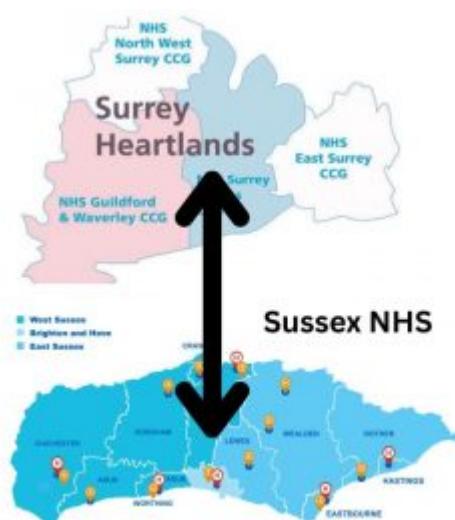
Thorpe is survived by his wife Amanda and their children. He remains, to many in Surrey and beyond, a hero of the game—and a symbol of the need to treat mental health with the seriousness it deserves.

If you or someone you know is struggling with mental health, contact Samaritans at 116 123 or visit www.samaritans.org.

Image: Graham Thorpe selfie in 2005. Attribution: Jguk at English Wikipedia Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported

Surrey and Sussex NHS Boards to merge

24 July 2025



Hundreds of jobs are at risk as two key NHS boards for Sussex and Surrey prepare to merge as part of a money-saving drive by the government. NHS Sussex and NHS Surrey Heartlands – two integrated care boards (ICBs) – are expected to have merged by next April, shedding many of the 1,350 staff who currently work at the two organisations. The changes are part of the latest round of NHS reforms which include the abolition of NHS England and the scrapping of independent patient voice watchdogs known as Healthwatch. Sussex ICB chair Stephen Lightfoot spoke about the forthcoming changes at Brighton and Hove City Council's Health and Wellbeing Board at Hove Town Hall on Tuesday (22 July).

ICBs bring together NHS organisations, councils and others to plan and commission health services in their area, with the aim of improving health and reducing inequalities. Mr Lightfoot, who will stand down in September, said that ICBs were told in March to halve their running costs – from £39.83 to £18.76 per head of population – by December. Further bad news followed when an analysis of national funding allocations suggested that Sussex was overfunded by £186 million. Mr Lightfoot said that NHS Sussex had a £4.5 billion budget for NHS services in Sussex but the analysis indicated that it should be £4.3 billion and was 4 per cent overfunded. Mr Lightfoot said: "That doesn't sound a lot on a percentage basis but £200 million is a significant sum of money. Over the next three years, when our demand continues to increase, we're going to have to reduce our expenditure. We're going to have to work very hard to make better use of the money that we have."

He said that this would not affect the budget for delivering healthcare throughout the area – but, he said, combining Sussex and Surrey was the only safe and reliable way to deliver sustainable services. Mr Lightfoot spoke about "the massive scale of this task (and) the huge impact it's having on our staff ... 1,350 people are worried if they've got a job. And of course a significant number of them will not have a job in the coming year." He added: "We're not alone. The government also confirmed it's going to rationalise all patient safety regulators. That involves Healthwatch organisations which are going to be closed, not immediately, but over the next 18 months to two years."

It would be the first time since 1974 that patients would be without a statutory independent voice, the meeting was told.

Sarah Booker-Lewis LDRS

Doctors' strike to hit Epsom Hospital

24 July 2025



Hospitals across South West London are bracing for disruption this week as resident doctors begin a five-day strike on Friday, 25 July. The week-long strike action by British Medical Association (BMA) members comes as the NHS faces one of its busiest summers in recent years, with a spike in emergency admissions driven by heatwaves and increasingly complex patient needs. Resident doctors – those who have completed their initial medical degree and are now in postgraduate training or gaining experience in non-training positions – were awarded an average 5.4% pay rise for this financial year, following a 22% increase over the previous two years. However, the BMA says wages are still around 20% lower in real terms than in 2008 and has committed to strike action in demand of "pay restoration."

The walkout will affect hospitals across England, including St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group (GESH). GESH medical professionals are warning the public to expect delays and to take preventative steps to avoid overwhelming already stretched services. "While we're doing everything we can to prepare, these strikes will cause huge disruption," warned Dr Richard Jennings, Chief Medical Officer for GESH. "Patients coming to an emergency department when it's not an emergency will be waiting longer, or even directed to another service," he added. Common reasons for hospital admissions during the heatwave have included respiratory issues, chest pain, shortness of breath and falls. Over 800 more people have attended emergency departments this summer compared to the same period last year. Between 1 June and 14 July, emergency department attendances at GESH rose to 37,167 – up from 36,328 in 2024 and 35,460 in 2023.

To maintain emergency services, consultants and other staff will be redeployed from routine care to cover A&E, operating theatres and hospital wards, resulting in many planned procedures being cancelled or delayed. Patients and staff at St Helier have already faced significant disruption this year, partly due to the hospital's ageing infrastructure. In January, a roof collapse in the phlebotomy unit forced the last-minute cancellation of several urgent blood tests. Despite the strike action, patients are urged to attend appointments unless contacted otherwise, and to continue seeking help in emergencies. The NHS is also asking the public to consider other services first, such as NHS 111 online, pharmacies or GPs, which are unaffected by the strike. "We have a difficult week coming up and we need members of the public to help us – whether that's using the most appropriate service for their health need or taking steps to prevent becoming unwell," Dr Jennings said.

Health Secretary Wes Streeting has criticised the strike, calling it "completely unjustified" and showing "complete disdain" for patients. However, BMA resident doctors committee co-chairs Dr Melissa Ryan and Dr Ross Nieuwoudt said they had tried to compromise with the government during talks, and that strike action was a last resort. They said: "We have always said that no doctor wants to strike, and all it would take to avoid it is a credible path to pay restoration offered by the government. We came to talks in good faith, keen to explore real solutions to the problems facing resident doctors today. Unfortunately, we did not receive an offer that would meet the scale of those challenges. While we were happy to discuss non-pay issues that affect doctors' finances, we have always been upfront that this is at its core a pay dispute."

The strike will run from 7am on Friday 25 July, until 7am on Wednesday 30 July.

Harrison Galliven – LDRS

Related reports:

Surrey braces for doctors' strike

Local NHS Doctors and Consultants striking

Plea ahead of doctors' strikes round 5



Big housing development proposed NW of Epsom and Ewell

24 July 2025



Over 2,000 new homes could be built on the Surrey border, to the right of Claygate and Esher, and above Epsom and Ewell. Plans for 2,003 new homes and a 104-bed care home are in the pipeline at Hook Park in Chessington, to the east of the A3 Esher Bypass and south of the A309 Kingston Bypass. If approved, residents say it could bring at least another 5,000 people into the area. Developers Poppymill Ltd envisions transforming the so-called derelict site into "a new family-friendly neighbourhood that centres around a huge public park and community spaces". Around 50 per cent of the new builds could be affordable housing, of mixed tenures and with more than 600 homes for families. The proposed development site covers approximately 50 hectares of land and includes Chessington Equestrian Centre, 'The Dell' building and former scaffolding yards.

But residents claim the land is actually green belt status, preventing the urban sprawl of Chessington into neighbouring Surrey and providing an important green space. While the site is green belt, Poppymill argued the land is "compromised and inaccessible to the public" rendering it 'grey-belt', the developer claims. Details on the proposal are scarce, but initial planning documents indicated new terrace houses could be between two-four storeys tall, and apartment blocks could range from four-eight storeys high. No concrete plans have been announced, but Poppymill Ltd. has submitted a screening request which outlines the potential scheme.

The developer has asked the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames Council for a formal opinion on what information it should supply for an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) - this is called 'scoping' - ahead of a planning application. But Elmbridge Borough Council has also been asked for their view on the application, given the massive potential development is close to the authority's patch. The prospective plans also hint at community space including room for retail or leisure uses, employment space, a public house, community centre and an active travel hub. Plans also include highway improvements such as a new vehicle access road from the Kingston Bypass and Clayton Road, pedestrian and cycle access and car and bike parking.

Residents who wish to comment on the scheme can do so on Kingston council's planning website. Comments are open until July 24, 2025.

Aerial view of the Hook Park site outlined in red. (Credit: Poppymill Ltd consultation website)

Public meet tonight on Epsom and Ewell Borough Council future

24 July 2025



A public debate **TONIGHT** 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 TONIGHT 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.

Julian Freeman, Liberal Democrat Councillor for EEBC

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:

[Guildford going for new Town Council? Whither unitary authorities?](#)

[Top-Down Power, Bottom-Up Pain: How Central Control is Killing Local Communities](#)

[New Epsom and Ewell Parish? Cherish or perish the thought?](#)

[Will the doomed Epsom and Ewell Borough Council rise from the ashes in other forms?](#)

[Two unitaries will save money says Surrey leader](#)

[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".

Nurse demands 24 hour rail tickets to avoid night-shift double costs

24 July 2025



A specialist NHS nurse is calling for urgent train ticket reform after revealing she spends over £200 a month commuting to her job at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Alicia Arias, a paediatric cardiac intensive care nurse, has launched a campaign urging rail companies to introduce 24-hour train tickets. Her Change.org petition has already gained over 24,000 signatures. Alicia moved from London to Woking a year ago to save on rent and live in a house, said her monthly commuting costs regularly exceed £200 - despite using a discount Flexi Season ticket. She said: "Why am I living in Woking paying all of this money for trains that are always delayed?!"

Working 12-hour shifts, often overnight, Alicia said she is forced to buy two tickets for each shift: one to travel in and another to get home the next morning, as existing train tickets expire at 4:29am. "We go for a horrible night shift, we don't have a break and then we have to pay for another ticket," Alicia said. "It's just not fair. It's making it fair with 24hr tickets." Working in paediatric intensive care, no day is the same. But every day can be gruelling. Alicia said: "I offer the treatment the last chance that kids have. It's really hard but it's really rewarding." As a senior nurse, Alicia said her job ranges from teaching and supporting other nursing staff, sometimes taking over the patients, as well as looking after her own patients. "We are always short and we are always busy," she said.

Although there are other hospitals in Surrey, Alicia said she never wants to leave her current job. "Working at Great Ormond Street Hospital is a great sense of achievement," Alicia said. "It's the best thing I've ever done - I love it." Originally from Spain, Alicia said she was shocked by how expensive and inflexible British transport is. Alicia said she moved to the UK 13 years ago, but the "cultural shock" of how expensive and inflexible British transport is has only really come in the last year of moving to Woking. She explained in Madrid you can get transport passes for bus, train and rail for £70 a month. When Alicia lived in central London, she would cycle to work. "I take my bicycle from Waterloo to Great Ormond Street which is really busy," she said. "I'm pretty sure I'm going to die on the bike one day."

"I have sometimes regretted [moving to Woking]," Alicia admitted, explaining how she is constantly juggling to find the cheapest way to buy train tickets. Alicia said the campaign is not only for nurses but everyone. "But not only me but the cleaners, the maintenance workers, people in the kitchen, people who have lower salaries than me who are struggling more," she said. "We're all NHS. Not only shift workers in Surrey but everywhere in the UK. Shift workers that pay for two tickets and they do it quietly. No, it's not fair." Another campaign which Alicia started at the same time is her petition for an NHS railcard which has also reached nearly 3,000 signatures on the House of Commons website.

A Department for Transport spokesperson said: "While we are not planning to introduce 24-hour return tickets, we are overhauling the complex fares system to make rail travel simpler and more flexible for passengers. We've already delivered ticketing innovations such as contactless pay as you go to additional stations in Surrey this year, giving passengers the best value ticket for their journey, with additional stations expected to get the technology soon."

Petition link: <https://www.change.org/p/make-train-day-tickets-last-24-hours-support-shift-workers>

House of Commons petition link: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/729126>

Hosepipe ban not reached Epsom and Ewell yet

24 July 2025



Frustration is growing towards Thames Water after it announced a hosepipe ban in parts of the South East just months after residents lived through a winter of "huge" leaks and sewage overflows. Thames Water has announced a hosepipe ban will kick in on Tuesday, July 22, covering all OX, GL, SN postcodes as well as RG4, RG8, and RG9, after the UK experienced one of its warmest and driest springs in over a century - followed by England's warmest June on record. Currently the ban only impacts towns bordering Surrey, but Thames Water has said it may need to add postcodes "if anything changes".

This year alone, residents in Surrey have endured water supply issues due to multiple pipe bursts, a report concluding water was "unfit for human consumption", and people putting up barricades to stop raw sewage flooding homes. For some, a hosepipe ban would be the last straw. Sir Jeremy Hunt, MP for Godalming and Ash, said: "Godalming and Ash is not included in the hosepipe ban so far, but I completely understand residents' frustration when they witness huge water leaks losing thousands of litres locally - Chilworth, Cranleigh, Ewhurst and Bramley in the last week alone - and yet Thames Water are asking us to use water sparingly brushing our teeth. I met with Thames Water CEO Chris Weston recently to press for investment locally because, although work is underway to improve water resilience, what is really needed is to connect our 'water island' area with the wider Thames water network - and to urgently replace those leaky pipes."

Thames Water says its drought plan is designed to ensure the taps keep running for customers' essential use while also protecting the environment. Water taken from the River Thames for the currently affected area is stored at Farmoor reservoir in Oxfordshire. If the warm, dry weather continues, the company anticipates reservoir levels will continue to drop. River levels are also below average, limiting how much can be drawn from the Thames while the hot weather also causes more evaporation.

Esher and Walton MP Monica Harding said: "The threat of a hosepipe ban shows how important investment in the basics is. Thames Water's current crumbling infrastructure can't protect us now, let alone in the future from climate change and population growth. Thames Water has failed miserably in providing the investment needed up to this point and have lost the public's confidence. The Government should grip the ongoing crisis at Thames Water, place it in special administration, make it a public benefit company, and replace Ofwat with a tough new regulator with teeth, to protect bill payers and give us the clean water we



all need."

Thames Water is also looking to secure future water supplies and said it was working on plans for a new reservoir in Oxfordshire, securing water supply for 15 million people across the South East, including Thames Water, Affinity Water and Southern Water customers. The company is also working on what it calls a vital drought resilience project in London which will be supported by water recycling.

A Thames Water spokesperson said: "Leakage is at its lowest ever level on our network, down 13.2% since 2020, but we know we have more work to do. The extended warm weather also brings increased risks of leaks and bursts due to pipe stress and shifting foundations in the ground. We've increased leakage teams in our region and we're fixing 650 leaks a week with our engineers targeting leaks with the greatest impact to local water supplies. We're also replacing 500km of water mains over the next five years to reduce leakage. We're using innovative technology and data to find and fix leaks faster. So far, we have installed almost 40,000 acoustic loggers on our water network to help detect leaks and expect to have 100,000 in place by mid-2027. We've installed over 1 million smart meters, which are critical in helping us to locate leaks at our customers' homes. We'll continue to roll out smart water meters to households in our area, installing or upgrading a further c.1,200,000 smart meters to homes and businesses by 2030."

Has Woking gone barking mad?

24 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.

Surrey's NHS backlogs high

24 July 2025



Around 10 per cent of Surrey's population is currently stuck in the NHS backlog, facing long waits for crucial operations and cancer treatments, according to local health leaders.

Despite efforts to address delays caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, thousands of residents across the county are still waiting well beyond the national target of 18 weeks.

At a recent Surrey County Council meeting, NHS bosses revealed that while progress is being made, more than 200,000 people are still awaiting care, with over 4,000 of them waiting more than a year across Surrey. New measures like harm reviews, waiting list checks, and the opening of Ashford Elective Centre are being implemented, but staff shortages, IT issues, and NHS strikes continue to pose significant hurdles.

NHS bosses reported the significant results to Surrey county councillors at an Adults and Health Select Committee meeting on July 11. Chairing the meeting, Cllr Trefor Hogg said: "Roughly 10 per cent of the entire population of Surrey is somewhere in that backlog."

He explained that every person whose treatment is delayed suffers, their family suffers, the economy suffers and the NHS suffers as the patient's condition worsens.

Frimley InTegrated Care Board, including Frimley Park and Wexham Park hospitals still has around 89,000 people waiting for treatment – and more than 4,000 of those have been waiting over a year.

Although a slight improvement from previous years, only 55 per cent of patients are being treated within the NHS national target of 18 weeks.

Meanwhile, Surrey Heartlands ICB, which covers hospitals like Ashford & St Peter's, Royal Surrey and Epsom, is further ahead.

Its waiting list peaked in 2023 but has since come down significantly. Around 143,000 people are waiting for non-urgent but important elective care operations.

NHS bosses said the total waiting list across Surrey Heartlands' three hospitals has decreased from a peak of approximately 162,000 in September 2023 to about 143,000 by March 2025. Still, nearly 61,500 patients are waiting more than 18 weeks for treatment, while over 2,000 people have been on waiting lists for over a year. These figures far exceed pre-pandemic levels, where waits beyond a year were rare.

NHS bosses said they still recognise that waiting over a year is a huge amount of time to wait but they are working on driving the delays down.

Surrey NHS bosses credited the success of bringing waiting lists down to a range of new systems. These included a new 'harm review' for assessing patients who



have been waiting over a year for surgery, waiting list validation to check there are no duplicates on the operations waiting list, and virtual consultations to monitor the patient's condition.

Surrey Heartlands has been fortunate enough to receive funding to open Ashford Elective Centre, focusing on trauma, orthopaedics and ophthalmology. So patients on a long waiting list at Royal Surrey Hospital, for example, can opt to come to Ashford elective centre for quicker treatment.

Both ICBs admitted there are still challenges including staff shortages, IT problems with new electronic health records, and the impact of ongoing NHS strikes such as the resident doctors.

Public Meeting to Debate Epsom and Ewell's government future

24 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:

Will the doomed Epsom and Ewell Borough Council rise from the ashes in other forms?

Two unitaries will save money says Surrey leader

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".

Fly-tipping in Epsom and Ewell part of national problem

24 July 2025



Organised criminal gangs are increasingly using fake waste removal companies to dump lorry-loads of rubbish across the UK — and Surrey is not immune.

According to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), over 47,000 large-scale fly-tipping incidents (involving tipper lorries or more than a van load of waste) were recorded by councils in England in 2022/23, costing local authorities more than £13 million to clear. Behind many of these cases are sophisticated criminal operations posing as legitimate businesses, advertising cheap waste clearance on platforms such as Facebook Marketplace and Gumtree.

"These aren't just one-off chancers," said John Roberts, Chief Security Officer at Kingdom Local Authority Support. "We're talking about well-organised groups using the same tactics repeatedly — setting up fake firms, offering cheap deals online, and then vanishing before anyone can hold them accountable."

How the Scams Work

According to Roberts, gangs offer low-cost rubbish removal services, load the waste into tipper trucks, and illegally dump it on green spaces, bridleways, industrial estates or roadside laybys — often under cover of darkness.

"They can disappear in a matter of hours. There's virtually no trace, no formal business records, and no accountability," he warned.



What many people don't realise is that residents who unknowingly use these services can still be fined — up to £1,000 in fixed penalties, or face unlimited fines if prosecuted — if they fail to obtain a Waste Transfer Note, which proves the waste was handed to a licensed carrier.

Fly-Tipping in Epsom & Ewell: A Local Problem

While the national picture is alarming, Epsom & Ewell Borough has seen its own troubling rise in fly-tipping.

In February 2024, a man was prosecuted for multiple fly-tipping offences across the borough, including in the World's End area. The Borough Council reported he was fined more than £2,300 after their investigations, using CCTV and physical evidence, successfully traced the waste back to him.

In 2023, the Council launched a targeted campaign to tackle what it described as "persistent" fly-tipping hotspots, including:

- Old London Road
- Hook Road
- Christ Church Road

Measures included surveillance cameras, warning signage, and public appeals.

A prior incident in 2021, covered by the Surrey Comet, showed men caught on camera dumping waste from a van near Horton Country Park — prompting public outrage and renewed calls for enforcement.

How to Avoid Illegal Waste Carriers

To avoid being scammed — and fined — residents are urged to take the following precautions:

- Check if the waste carrier is licensed with the Environment Agency: www.gov.uk/check-waste-carrier-registration
- Ask for a Waste Transfer Note. This document proves you handed over the waste legally.
- Avoid cash-in-hand deals and suspiciously low prices. Legitimate services charge based on volume and type of waste and hold valid permits.

How to Report Fly-Tipping in Epsom

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council encourages residents to report fly-tipping using the following methods:

Online: www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk/fly-tipping

Phone: 01372 732000

Include details such as the time and date, exact location, vehicle registration (if known), and photos if safe to capture.

A Shared Responsibility

"People often don't realise that even if they've paid someone to take the waste, they're still legally responsible for what happens to it," John Roberts said. "You've got to get that paperwork."

The message is clear: fly-tipping isn't just a public nuisance — it's a criminal offence, and everyone has a role in tackling it.

If you're clearing garden waste, disposing of old furniture, or hiring a skip, make sure you've checked who's collecting it.

Image from Pixabay licence free

King's Award for Epsom based business

24 July 2025



Penta Consulting, an Epsom-based provider of global technology talent and managed solutions, has been awarded the King's Award for Enterprise in International Trade 2025, one of the most distinguished honours for UK businesses.

The award recognises Penta's exceptional growth in international markets and its proven ability to deliver secure, compliant, and scalable solutions across the globe. This prestigious recognition places Penta among a select group of British companies demonstrating innovation, resilience, and commercial success on the international stage. Winners of the award were invited to a royal reception at Windsor Castle and gain the right to use the official award emblem for five years.

"This award is a testament to our people, our partnerships, and our passion for delivering results for our clients," said Paul Clark, Executive Chairman and Founder of Penta Consulting. *"It reflects our team's dedication to delivering with expertise, integrity, and a global outlook."*

Penta Consulting CEO Aminash Patel added:

"This has been our best year on record and we're in a great position to keep this momentum. We're proud of being recognised for our international business, but we also do everything we can to make an impact locally. We support Epsom Pantry, a local food bank, the Jigsaw Trust, and many other local causes. We're on an exciting trajectory, so we'd encourage anyone interested in technology job opportunities to continue to check our website."

The King's Award win comes as the latest recognition in an incredibly successful year for the Surrey business. Penta Consulting has also been recognised with several other accolades in the first half of 2025:

- **Sunday Times Top 100** - recognising Britain's fastest-growing companies
- **Sunday Times Best Places to Work** - medium-sized business category
- **London Chamber of Commerce and Industry SME Business Awards** - Best International Business and Overall Winner

About the King's Awards

The King's Awards for Enterprise were previously known as The Queen's Awards for Enterprise, and were renamed two years ago to reflect His Majesty The King's desire to continue the legacy of HM Queen Elizabeth II by recognising outstanding UK businesses.

About Penta Consulting

Penta Consulting delivers bespoke technology resource solutions to the global ICT industry. With 12 international offices, the company supports over 1,000 technical resources across more than 80 countries. Specialising in digital transformation, cloud, and AI, Penta's core services include Professional Services,



Managed Solutions, and Managed Resource for leading global technology brands.

Image: Paul Clark, Founder and Executive Chairman of Penta Consulting meeting His Majesty the King at Windsor Castle