

Ashtead heroes recognised by local Rotary

6 October 2024



Ashtead 'local heroes' were recognised for their outstanding service to the community at last night's 2024 Ashtead Rotary Community Awards.

Three awards were made, to people nominated by their peers, for outstanding services to the local community.

The **Individual Community Service award** was given to **Richard Garrard** who, in 2017 set up the Patient Participation Group with Ashlea Medical Practice. The Group was such a success that it won a national award in 2020. Richard is also Chair of Ashtead Good Neighbours, growing the Group to over 100 drivers who provide transport for medical appointments. He also led the Ashtead British Legion Poppy Appeal which raised £12,000 last year.

The **Group Service Award** went to the Trustees of **Ashtead Peace Memorial Hall (APMH)** whose centenary is being celebrated this year. The trustees and volunteers are committed to improving and maintaining the Hall which is an outstanding community facility for the Ashtead community.

The **Service above Self Community Award** was awarded posthumously to **John Woollatt**. John sadly passed away in May 2024. He was the Chair of the Trustees of Dyscover, a local charity for people suffering with aphasia, a complex language disability. John brought a business approach to Dyscover making it a progressive well-known local charity. He was also a very 'hands on' Chairman where no task was too big or too small.

Ashtead Rotary Club President Tony Webb said,

"The Charitable support that Ashtead Rotary Club receives from the local community through Ashtead Village Day, is immense. In large part this is down to individuals and organisations, such as those who we celebrate this evening, for the support they give to our local community."

"This evening, local community nominations have enabled us to go some small way to say a big 'thank you' to those who have undertaken such outstanding work. I would therefore like to pay tribute to them on behalf of Ashtead Rotary Club, and to all of those other volunteers in Ashtead who put in time and effort to help others in our local community".

Art, culture, and science collide in Surrey

6 October 2024



This November, the **University of Surrey** will open its doors to the public as it hosts two prominent research festivals: the **Being Human Festival** and the ESRC Festival of Social Science. As part of the Being Human Festival, the UK's only national festival dedicated to the humanities, Surrey will explore key themes related to identity, culture, and the human condition. This year's festival features a number of intriguing events, including:

- Landmarking through Music: Early Recordings Revealed: Listen to early recordings as heard by your great-grandparents! Connect with early 20th century music through wax cylinders and develop an understanding of their role within society at the time.
- Poetry Play! Performances and Workshops: Think you might be a poet? Do you love poetry? Or maybe you just don't get it. Are you puzzled or excited by the weird ways words work in poems? If you appreciate the power of language, we made this for you.
- Landmarking Surrey's Musical Heritage: Dame Ethel Smyth: Dame Ethel Smyth was a pioneering composer of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a prolific author of biographical writing about herself and

others, a leading suffragette, and for the majority of her life a resident of the county of Surrey.

Running concurrently is the ESRC Festival of Social Science, which focuses on the real-world impact of social science research. This year's festival at Surrey tackles a wide range of urgent societal issues, including:

- **Green Means Go? Tackling Surrey's climate emergency through deliberative democracy:** Discover the latest sustainability-focused research and innovation initiatives being led by the University of Surrey.
- **Bridging Digital Divides: Building dialogue on online safety between youth and parents:** Discover what the evidence really says about young people's digital lives and the challenges of online safety, parenting and digital citizenship.
- **The Role of AI in Modern Policing:** Key topics will include risk assessment, facial recognition, robotics, data mining, and cybercrime detection, offering a deep dive into the current applications of AI in policing.
- **Eco-Logic: How Can We Make Green Living Easy?** Discover surprisingly simple strategies that transform your daily routine into a sustainable one, without sacrificing comfort or convenience.

Professor Annika Bautz, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Sciences said:

"Both festivals are designed to be interactive, accessible, and thought-provoking. They offer attendees the chance to engage directly with cutting-edge research in ways that are relevant and relatable to all aspects of life. From workshops that let you create your own art or stories to expert panels exploring societal challenges, the festivals are an invitation to explore, question, and rethink the world around us.

"Whether you're passionate about the arts and humanities, curious about the social sciences, or simply looking to engage in meaningful conversations, these events offer something for everyone. The University of Surrey is proud to be a hub for these conversations, and we invite the public to participate in these exciting and enriching festivals."

Key dates:

- **ESRC Festival of Social Science:** 19 October – 9 November 2024
- **Being Human Festival:** 7-16 November 2024

For more information, a full list of topics and events, and to book your free tickets for any of the events, please visit: <https://buytickets.at/universityofsurrey3>

Epsom and Ewell's over 60s win multi-sports

6 October 2024



Wednesday 2 October saw the 16th running of the Better Club Games tournament at Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park's Copper Box Arena.

The annual event put on by charitable social enterprise GLL for the over-60s, saw over 400 older people from 20 local teams descend on the 7,500 seat venue – the 4th largest event space in London.

The 'Battle of the Boroughs' pits contestants from London and the south east in a diverse range of activities – all in friendly competition.

Darts, dominoes, short tennis, short-mat bowls, swimming, badminton, table tennis, cycling, walking netball and walking football all featured – with 200 people taking part in the walking sports held the week before in the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre and 100 in timed swims in local clubs throughout September.

Across all sports and locations, 700 older people took part.

In a tightly fought contest, Team Epsom & Ewell took the ultimate overall title – ahead of Waltham Forest in 2nd and Greenwich in 3rd. Epsom & Ewell were also winners in 2023 in the first gathering of the Better Club Games since Covid.

GLL first decided to put on the Better Club Games back in 2006 when it realised there was no major multi-sports activity in the UK which brought older adults together annually in the spirit of fun competition.

Competitors are drawn from Active Ageing Clubs facilitated by GLL in leisure centres; the activities chime with GLL's mission to improve health and wellbeing as a key community service through physical activity and sport.

Active ageing has since become a major public health priority with noted benefits to physical health, mental health and helping reduce social isolation in the UK's older population. In addition, keeping active reduces the burden on the NHS.

The 2024 Better Club Games Ambassador was actor and radio presenter Christopher Biggins, 76. He added some trademark fun to the proceedings, taking part in a candid Q&A and trying his hand at darts and table tennis.

'Better' is the brand name of the UK's leading leisure charitable social enterprise GLL. The company's ethos is to reinvest in local community health and wellbeing and the Better Club Games is a key part of this commitment.

GLL Deputy CEO Phil Donnay said: "It was inspiring to see over 400 participants at the Copper Box Arena turn out to take part in this year's running of the Better Club Games, compete and have fun.

"The importance of ageing well and living well is huge - both for individuals and wider society.

"As a charitable social enterprise, GLL are proud to show what older people are capable of through our Better Club Games.

"Congratulations to all those who took part and to our worthy winners - Epsom & Ewell."

Speaking from winning team Epsom & Ewell, semi-retired accountant Tony Gayle, 68, from Stoneleigh, took part in the table tennis, the Games enabling him to rediscover his interest in the sport. "The competitive element is fun but the most important thing is to enjoy the day. It's sociable - you see people you met at the Games last year."

Epsom & Ewell Team mate Phil Humphrey, 64, is a retired construction consultant who was involved with building the Stratford Olympic Park. This was his fourth Club Games and though he previously competed in table tennis, he has now switched to short tennis. "I'd never tried it before but they needed someone for the team a couple of years ago," he explains. "Myself and my partner volunteered and we got to like it - so much so that we now play once or twice a week, all year round!"

Better Club Games is organised and funded exclusively by charitable social enterprise GLL - which runs the Olympic legacy competition venues Copper Box Arena and Lee Valley Hockey & Tennis Centre which hosted the sports.

In addition to transport and refreshments, participants enjoy raising awareness for their club, a celebrity ambassador on the day, a team trophy for each individual sport winner and a medal for every competitor.

Teams from Enfield, Mole Valley and Newham competed for the first time.

The event was supported by GLL supplier partners Technogym, Your PT and Brakes.

GLL Communications

Picture caption: 2024 Better Club Games Winners - Epsom & Ewell with GLL Deputy CEO Phil Donnay (4th from right, front row) and Club Games Ambassador Chris Biggins (second row, 4th from left) /Credit: GLL

More or less Surrey Police challenge to Commissioner

6 October 2024



Staffing cuts at Surrey Police could be in the pipeline as the force attempts to fill a potential £23.4 million financial hole.

Surrey Police has to make the savings in the next four years and both government-agreed pay increases for police officers and staff and inflation have added to the difficult financial position.

Recognising the financial pressures on forces, the government has awarded a special grant of £175m in 2024/25 to fund the 4.75% officer pay award. Out of money set aside to cover the pay increases, Surrey has been awarded just £2.1m to cover the costs.

As Surrey gets a smaller slice of government funding, calculated by a formula, there is less money to go around. The police allocation formula (PAF) is worked out through various data sources, including population density and the relative need for policing in areas. The nature of the formula grant system means the annual money allocated to Surrey covers just 45% of the total budget whereas other areas such as Northumbria get 80%.

In a Police and Crime Panel meeting on September 26, Surrey Police's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Kelvin Menon, said "it is too early to say" exactly the savings that will need to be made and where.

The CFO said it is likely the government's funding will only cover pay increases for Surrey's police officers so the force

will have to bridge the £2.4m gap to cover the costs of police staff itself. Police staff may be cut as the force has to keep a base number of 2,253 police officers in place.

Speaking after the meeting, Cllr Richard Wilson (Bagshot and North Windlesham/ Liberal Democrat) said: Due to the government’s penalty regime in place to ensure officer numbers are maintained, any reduction can only come from police staff. This means the people helping front-line officers in investigations and forensics.”

The CFO told the panel that work was also being done into making savings by changing shift patterns, reducing overtime and forensics, looking at the benefits of upgrading administrative and data systems, potentially reducing vehicle numbers and a detailed budget review by area.

Modelling different scenarios, the CFO said Surrey Police might have to make up to £27.6m gap as a worst-case scenario, or £21.5m on an optimistic basis. Mr Menon added: “The Chief and the PCC are both committed to try and minimise any impact on residents.”

If the savings cannot be reduced by the time the budget is set in February 2025, the CFO said Surrey Police will have to use some of its reserves.

Uncertain future for officer numbers

In a national drive to increase police officers, the previous government set Surrey Police an ‘uplift’ target of 2,253 officers and awarded £48k for every officer recruited above the baseline. Although the force recruited an additional 22 officers it now remains uncertain whether the £48k bonus will be received every year, accounting for the extra officers.

Surrey’s Police and Crime Commissioner, Lisa Townsend, said: “If [the bonus] ceases to be the case then officer numbers will have to be reduced.” She added the reduction would happen through “natural wastage”, meaning officers leaving the force for a new job or change in career.

Surrey currently loses an average of 17 officers a month, creating overall a 10% vacancy in the force.

A gloomy atmosphere took over the meeting as the PCC repeated there was a lot of “uncertainty” in the new government’s policy going forward so the force is unable to forecast officer numbers beyond 24/25. She said that constables have been told not to expect any more funding.

Cllr Wilson criticised Mrs Townsend during the meeting, stating the PCC ballot paper for her re-election had the description. More police, safer streets’. He asked: “Shouldn’t voters take that as a commitment that the number of officers is going to increase?”

Mrs Townsend said the number of officers has increased and is still increasing, and argued it was for the Chief Constable to decide where officers and staff are best deployed. She added: Both the Chief Constable and I have both made commitments to ensure that we have more officers out and about on the streets.”

American baseball started in Surrey

6 October 2024



The latest **BBC Secret Surrey podcast** features Julian Pooley, Public Services and Engagement Manager, who tells the story of a previously unknown William Bray diary. Covering 1754-1755, the diary was found in a garden shed in 2007. It is a fascinating document for many reasons but it is particularly interesting as it is the earliest known manuscript reference to baseball, confirming baseball was played in Surrey more than 20 years before American independence.

[Listen here »](#)

Read more from Surrey History Centre [HERE](#).

Text and image courtesy Surrey History Centre

Hampton’s Jolly Boatman has more to be jolly about

6 October 2024



Hampton Court and its historic views will be forever changed after the secretary of state approved controversial Jolly Boatman plans to build 97 homes together with an 84 bed hotel and restaurant on the banks of the River Thames.

The landmark ruling on the long-running saga was confirmed this week when Lisa Nandy, Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport published her formal decision on Friday, September 27.

The decision comes as welcome for developers who have been battling to regenerate the area around Hampton Court station but is a slap in the face to the campaigners who have fought for decades to stop it.

It comes at the end of a nine week consultation that ran between April and June this year in call for new evidence.

The majority of responses focused on the impact the huge development would have on Hampton Court Palace and surrounding area given its cultural status.

However, much of the evidence presented had already been considered during an earlier planning appeal when inspectors overturned Elmbridge Borough Council decision 2022 and green lit the development, Mrs Nandy said.

Instead the focus on the government's decision related to changes in planning law and the listed statuses of Cigarette Island Park and the Coal Office - as well as arguments over maximum heights of buildings on railway land.

Issuing her decision, the Secretary of State for the Department for Culture, Media and Sport said she gave "consent to build the residential-led mixed use scheme on land around Hampton Court Station, specifically the former Jolly Boatman and land adjoining Hampton Court Station, Hampton Court Way, the Western part of Cigarette Island, east of Jolly Boatman and Hampton Court Station site."

She said that since the appeal, Elmbridge Borough Council's supply of deliverable housing had declined, and failure to proceed with the site would be make the problem worse

The government also considered the council's local heritage listing of the land opposite the palace was not a sufficient reason to not approve the development and plans.

The former Jolly Boatman site is next to the River Thames and overlooks the palace.

Elmbridge Borough Council rejected the original application which received more than 1,800 objections due to "excessive height and bulk" and "harm to numerous heritage assets".

However, its decision was challenged and overturned after the planning inspector ruled it fit with surroundings while the hotel, retail units and riverside restaurant would improve the experience for those using the station to visit the palace.

The inspector added that the plans would also support the rest of the town.

Related reports:

Doubtful Henry VIII would have permitted

Local MP comes to our defence?

6 October 2024



In a significant development in UK party politics, **Helen Maguire**, the Member of Parliament for Epsom & Ewell, has been appointed to the frontbenches of the Liberal Democrats. On September 19th, Liberal Democrat leader Sir **Ed Davey** announced that Maguire would take up the role of spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces. This announcement follows the unveiling of the Lib Dems new 33-member frontbench roster, following the party's success in July's general election, where they secured a record 72 parliamentary seats.

Maguire, a former Army captain in the Royal Military Police, brings extensive real-world experience to her new role. She served in Bosnia on a NATO peacekeeping mission and in Iraq, where she assisted the rebuilding of the Iraqi police force. Maguire took to X (formerly known as Twitter) to express her enthusiasm, stating that she is “delighted and honoured” to take on the role, while also highlighting the need for the UK defence budget to reflect the challenging times we face.

A party spokesperson for Defence and the Armed Forces plays a crucial role in communicating the party’s stance on national security, military strategy, and defence spending. Helen Maguire is likely to become more prominent in debates on these issues in the House of Commons, especially in light of ongoing global conflicts and increasing geopolitical tensions.

In an era of emerging threats, the public will increasingly turn to the main political parties to ensure the military is effectively managed, underpinned by competent, transparent, and realistic governance. As global conflicts and tensions continue to rise, trust in the leadership and oversight of the armed forces will become a central issue in upcoming elections, with national security playing a critical role in shaping the public’s confidence and the country’s future stability.

Maguire faces a challenging task, especially as the Liberal Democrats work to rebuild public confidence. The party is likely to be cautious to avoid over-promising on policies, mindful of the damage caused when they reneged on their pledge to scrap tuition fees during their coalition government from 2010 to 2015, a decision that deeply hurt their voter base.

As the third-largest political party in the UK, the Liberal Democrats are attempting to position themselves for further growth. With Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer’s approval rating dipping in recent Opinion polls and ongoing uncertainty surrounding the direction of the Conservative Party, the Lib Dems may believe that they are poised for future electoral gains. The political winds of British Politics are constantly shifting, and as Helen Maguire takes a substantial step forward into the spotlight, her performance on the frontbench might just determine if the Lib Dems can ride the wave of electoral success, or end up washed out to the fringes at the next general election.

Epsom’s local life savers

6 October 2024



A Covid survivor who was so poorly her children were warned she wouldn’t survive the night and the mum of a young boy who bravely battled leukaemia have thrown their support behind an inaugural event that celebrates incredible NHS staff.

Jan Ehtash, from Carshalton, spent 12 weeks in Epsom and St Helier hospitals after falling seriously ill with Covid – receiving care from a dedicated team of nurses, doctors, and other health professionals.

Sutton schoolboy Jackson Hall, meanwhile, was treated at St George’s Hospital for leukaemia, where paediatric teams went “the extra mile” to support the now-seven-year-old and his family.

Both Jan and Jackson have finished treatment, and they and their families are calling on others to cast their nominations for the very first staff awards at St George’s, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group.

“They are amazing, just wonderful people,” said Jan, 60. “All of the nurses, the doctors, the cleaners, they are just so, so caring.

“When I went into hospital, all I took with me was a handbag with a set of pyjamas, a toothbrush, and a pair of underwear. I had no idea I would be there that long, but quickly started to deteriorate and was told I would have to go into intensive care. I just remember turning to the doctor and saying, ‘I don’t want to die’.

“It’s thanks to the staff at Epsom and St Helier that I am here today, and I cannot thank them enough for saving my life and for being there when my family and I needed them the most.”

Sam Hall, Jackson’s mum, added: “All the staff were incredible throughout Jackson’s treatment and they really went the extra mile – from giving me a hug when I had to choose between staying at hospital or going home with my daughter, to making me a cup of tea. The care they provided was fantastic, but it was these small things, too, that made a difference.

“Jackson is doing amazingly, settling back into school and becoming an amazing big brother to three-month-old Louie. He makes us so proud.

“Sometimes as a patient or a family member it’s hard to know exactly how to show your gratitude to the incredible people who have been there in your time of need. But one way you can say thank you is by nominating a team or member of staff for this award.”

The Outstanding CARE Award is dedicated to staff and teams who have been nominated by a member of the public, while colleagues will put forward their nominations in several other categories. All 17,000 members of staff working for the

hospitals Group – from frontline clinicians, to essential support teams – are eligible for nomination.

Jacqueline Totterdell, Group Chief Executive, said: “Our biggest-ever awards event will recognise the incredible teams and individuals who go above and beyond for patients like Jan and Jackson.

“Hearing stories about the amazing efforts our staff go to is one of my greatest joys, and every single day they make me proud. I’m already looking forward to reading all the nominations and celebrating everyone who is shortlisted.”

The awards take place on Tuesday 10 December at the Oval cricket ground, and will be generously supported by the hospital charities and local businesses. To make your nomination, visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/about/gesh-care-awards or www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/gesh-care-awards by Tuesday 22 October.

NHS Press

Image: Jan in ITU with family

Dorking refurb: “it’s behind you”!

6 October 2024



Dorking’s “sleeping beauty” will wake up in time for the busy panto season – it has been confirmed.

Dorking Halls closed in June 2024 for refurbishment work that could cost up to £11 million – with the initial focus on replacing the 1930s plaster ceiling in its grand hall as well as much needed mechanical and electrical work.

Mole Valley District Council this week confirmed work was on schedule and Dorking’s flagship theatre is on track to welcome the public through its doors from Monday, December 9.

Councillor Nick Wright, cabinet member for leisure and tourism said: “The pantomime is Sleeping Beauty and I like to think of Dorking Halls as a sleeping beauty that will wake up on December 9.”

With the first stage of work set for completion, the council cabinet agreed on Tuesday, September 24, to release the remaining £6.1m needed to complete phase 2, set to take place next summer.

Cllr Margaret Cooksey (Liberal Democrats; Dorking South), said: “It’s really exciting that we have a date.

“There is a program and everybody is going to be welcomed back into our favourite venue and it won’t be how we have been used to it.

It will take some time to get the hang of it, but it’s an exciting prospect.”

In addition to the new ceiling, guests will notice enlarged toilet provision, a draft lobby and new fire alarms.

Next year’s work will mostly consist of replacing electrical and mechanical installations that are near the end of their useful life.

The meeting heard that new seating, bigger bars and improved accessibility remained a pipe dream for the foreseeable future unless new revenue streams or grants are found.

Instead, the work has been to ensure Dorking Halls continues to meet health and safety standards, with improved visitor comfort and better energy efficiency “while meeting the changing technical requirements for future shows and events”.

Cllr Wright added: “Dorking Halls is a tremendously important part of Mole Valley’s community life.

“It not only serves as a key cultural and arts hub, but also provides opportunities for residents and visitors to gather and celebrate local, British and International talent.

“This beautiful art-deco building, which has served us for so many years, has reached a point where significant investment is needed to continue its community mission.

“I’m pleased that the proposed budget has been approved by Cabinet, and the important upgrades to the building can continue to move forward.”

Shows that had been scheduled to be held at Dorking Halls were shifted to Leatherhead Theatre, the Green Room Theatre and Pippbrook House.

Dorking Halls (image Google)

Epsom man pounds Epsom streets for charity

6 October 2024



Local man and charity CEO, **Lucas Mee**, ran 125km in under 24 hours this weekend, joined in part by local MP **Helen Maguire**, to help raise funds and awareness for children on the streets in Uganda. Starting at 3pm on Saturday 21 st September 2024, Lucas pounded the local pavements of Epsom and ran on a treadmill through the night. Lucas completed the 125km in 23 hours and 27 minutes.

On the morning of Sunday 22 nd September he met Epsom and Ewell's MP **Helen Maguire** and her running group, the Epsom and Ewell Harriers Athletic Club in Horton Country Park, to cross the 100km mark and share with them the reasons for his run.

Lucas is fundraising for S.A.L.V.E. International - the charity he is CEO of - which supports young people and their families in Jinja, Eastern Uganda, to leave the streets and have brighter futures through education, business empowerment and permaculture.

This epic run is part of a month-long fundraising campaign to help raise £10,000 for young people who live and work on the streets. Thanks to Lucas' fundraising efforts this total has now been beaten.

Lucas says, "Every day, children in Uganda leave their homes and families in search of a better life. They can travel vast distances to reach major cities, hoping for new opportunities, but often end up at the mercy of the street, where life is constantly dangerous.

"S.A.L.V.E. International works to provide immediate support to street connected children in Jinja, with the aim of helping them to return home and achieve their full potential.

"To raise awareness of the extreme decisions that children on the streets are forced to make, as well as raise vital funds for our work, I have decided to put my fitness to the test and take on this ambitious challenge.

"125km is the equivalent distance between Uganda's capital, Kampala, and Jinja where we are based. This is a journey that many children make by foot. I know it will be tough, but it's nothing compared to spending even one night on the street".

Lucas' challenge is part of S.A.L.V.E. International's Step up for S.A.L.V.E. campaign, which invites people across the globe to take on their own fitness challenge in September to help raise funds for children living and working on the streets of Uganda.

Another Epsom pub gets a major face-lift

6 October 2024



Much-loved Church Street pub, The Faraday, has reopened after an exciting six-figure investment, creating six new jobs in the local community.

Located in the town centre, the site was originally an eclectic showroom and was named after the experimental physicist Michael Faraday. Today, The Faraday has become one of the most popular bars in Surrey.

As part of Stonegate Group's commitment to position every site for success, the investment has been carefully allocated to

enhance the pub’s offerings while preserving its unique charm.

All renovations have been carefully crafted to aid the pub’s goal of being a welcoming space for sports teams, social societies and locals looking for an unforgettable night out.

The venue’s attractive new décor has revitalised the space, creating a contemporary setting that’s perfect for bottomless brunch on Saturdays.

The sports experience at the pub has been enhanced with the addition of multiple HD TV screens. Whether it’s Premier League football, rugby, boxing, or Formula 1, The Faraday has it all covered.

With a huge 60-inch HD TV, and now a whopping 23 HD TVs throughout the site, every seat has a view of the sporting action.

The Faraday also has multiple dartboards for Epsom locals who want to find their inner Luke Littler.

The pub has a popular beer garden, where guests can enjoy soaking up the last of the autumn sun, with the front garden also providing a relaxing spot for a lovely cold pint of premium world lager.

A popular student hub, the pub is renowned for its student deals, with the best student night in the city, offering alcoholic drinks starting at just £2.35, burgers or pizza and a drink for a generous £8 and soft drinks starting at 65p.

The Epsom pub offers a fantastic range of craft beers, world beers, cider, and cocktails, all at some of the most competitive prices in the area. It’s the perfect place to enjoy a drink in front of one of the many big screens, with 2-for-1 cocktails available all day, every day.

However, those not drinking alcohol will be able to choose from an extensive range of no and low alcohol options, ensuring everyone is accommodated to.

What’s more, furry friends are welcome throughout the pub, with the venue being a popular spot for dog walkers popping in for a pint.

MiXR users can unlock exclusive rewards at The Faraday by downloading the MiXR app and creating an account, including a free drink for signing up. Students can also take advantage of special discounts available exclusively through the app.

Samantha Camara, General Manager of The Faraday, said: “These renovations align with Stonegate Group’s commitment to always improve and innovate, meaning we can give our guests the best possible experience at our beloved pub.

“We want the investment to position our pub as the place to be for students as well as being the premiere venue to watch sport in Epsom with a huge range of big screens and food and drink at competitive prices.

“I’ve been General Manager of The Faraday for six years now and my love for this venue only continues to grow. This renovation marks a new chapter for our team which we cannot wait to start!”

The venue features a jam-packed weekly deals schedule, including 2-for-1 pizzas on Mondays, Student Baskets on Tuesdays, Wing Wednesdays, and Craft & Cocktails on Thursdays. Additionally, there are food and drink deals available throughout the week, along with the popular 2-for-1 cocktail offer.

But that’s not all, the beloved bar always has a reason for guests to visit with karaoke night on Thursday and Friday, and Saturday nights seeing local DJs spinning decks late into the night.

Finishing the week in style, the pub hosts a quiz night on Sundays at 7pm, where locals are invited to test their knowledge amongst the smartest in Epsom to win exciting prizes.

Related reports:

Landmark pub re-assembles Tuesday

Surrey Coroner’s bed safety concerns

6 October 2024



A frail, elderly man “cried for help for over an hour” before tragically dying after getting stuck in a gap between his care home bed extension, a Surrey coroner has found.

Paul Batchelor was found dead at The Red House, **Ashted**, on 27 June 2023, after a mattress extension fell through his bed’s extension frame.

Assistant Coroner, **Susan Ridge**, raised concerns that Mr Bachelor’s “numerous cries for help” were not responded to

and there is a “lack of awareness” about bed extensions which could put other lives at risk.

A spokesperson for the care home said the circumstances around Mr Batchelor’s death was “deeply distressing” and they “fully accept and respect” the assistant coroner’s findings.

Ms Ridge found that despite one carer hearing Mr Batchelor’s cries for help, she “did not open the door or go into his room as it was said she was frightened of him”. Even as he called out for help for over an hour, between 10:05pm-11:15pm, much of the staff were doing their night-time routine.

Mr Batchelor, who was under respite care, was put into bed around 9pm by care home staff. Later that night he had manoeuvred himself to the foot of the bed and was lying on the mattress extension.

But because there was no deck in place supporting the extension, Mr Batchelor fell through the bed extension frame and became wedged in the gap.

Ms Ridge also addressed her report to the governmental Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) regarding a possible “lack of awareness” of the support needed for a mattress extension or bolster on extended beds.

She said: “Without adequate support there is a risk of death in that the mattress extension can fall through the bed frame creating a sufficient gap for a person to become wedged or stuck.”

A Red House spokesperson said: “We strive to provide the highest level of personal care and support to all our residents.” They added the company had addressed the concerns raised with equipment and staff protocols as a “matter of priority”.

The member of staff no longer works for the company, the spokesperson said, stating the care home has “ensured that the wider team understands how best to manage challenging or stressful situations”. They added: “We have underlined the importance of seeking support from others to sustain responsive and appropriate care, which is our highest priority.”

Dr Danielle Middleton, Deputy Director in Benefit/Risk Evaluation at MHRA, said she is reviewing the report carefully. The government agency has 56 days to respond to the coroner’s concerns.

Dr Middleton said the MHRA issued a National Patient Safety Alert, after reports of “adverse incidents” involving bed rails, medical beds, trolleys, bed rails, bed grab handles and lateral turning devices, warning of the risk of entrapment.”

The Alert requires staff receive device training suitable to their roles. Organisations are also required to have an up-to-date medical device management system in place, with regular servicing and maintenance of medical devices in line with the manufacturer’s instructions.

She added: “It also requires regular risk assessments for patients using bed rails or handles, including entrapment risks.”

The prevention of future deaths report, issued on September 13, has also been sent to the interim chief executive of the Care Quality Commission and chairman of The Red House (Ashtead) Limited.

The Red House Care Home, Ashtead. (Credit: Google Street View)

Surrey Tory MPs against school fees VAT

6 October 2024



Special Educational Needs families should be exempt from Government plans put VAT on independent school fees, six Surrey MPs have said.

Claire Coutinho, Jeremy Hunt, Ben Spencer, Rebecca Paul, Greg Stafford and Lincoln Jopp argue in a open letter to the chancellor Rachel Reeves, that VAT on school fees misunderstands the sacrifices many families make to give their children a better life.

They said the 20 per cent increase would force parents to send their children to state schools and increase pressure on the system – applications from parents “transferring from independent schools” in Surrey jumped from 116 between November 2022 to August 2023, to 382 the following year when Labour’s VAT plans on private schools gained traction.

The Conservative Surrey MPs said price rises disproportionately affect educational needs pupils as 93,000 children at special independent schools do not have Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).

If their parents are unable to afford the increases, they argue, children would have to attend schools less able to cater to their complex situations.

The Treasury argues that ending tax breaks on private schools will help recruit 6,500 new teachers while children in local authorities where their needs can only be met in private schools will not have the fees apply to them.

East Surrey MP, Claire Coutinho, said: “One in four children in Surrey attend an independent school.

“Their parents are saving the Government money by paying for their independent school, and paying for a state school place through their taxes.

“To penalise them for this and increase pressure in the state system is wrong.

“As a former minister for special educational needs, I am acutely aware about the impact that Labour’s tax changes will have on children with special and complex needs.

“These families, who have often faced uphill battles to find a school that meets their child’s needs, will now be taxed and many children who have settled in a school environment will be forced to move.

“Labour must reconsider this ideological policy and introduce an immediate exemption for SEND children.”

The Government argues that it has carefully considered the impact ending VAT will have on pupils, families and schools across both the state and private sector.

Ending tax breaks on private schools, it said, would help raise revenue to change education,.

The Government does not expect significant numbers to move to the state sector part way through the academic year, citing the stable number of children in independent schools since 2000 – despite a near 75 per cent “real terms increase” in average private school fees over that time.

Pupils in independent schools, funded by local authorities because their needs can only be met privately, will not have the fees apply to them as the council’s will be able to reclaim the VAT.

A government spokesperson said: “We want to ensure all children have the best chance in life to succeed. Ending tax breaks on private schools will help to raise the revenue needed to fund our education priorities for next year, such as recruiting 6,500 new teachers.

“Fees for students with an Education, Health and Care Plan that states their needs cannot be met in the state sector will have their private school fees paid by the Local Authority that can then reclaim the VAT they pay.”

Related reports:

Taxing question for Surrey’s private schools

Claire Coutinho MP for East Surrey

Gatwick expansion update

6 October 2024



Local authorities have said they will not support Gatwick Airport’s plans to expand unless its growth is dependent on meeting environmental and noise targets.

According to legal documents, the impacted councils are concerned that there is currently a “lack of sanction” against Gatwick if the growth of the airport exceeds expected environmental guidelines without clear accountability.

Airport chiefs at Gatwick, the country’s second busiest airport, want to modify its northern runway so that it can increase passenger numbers to about 75 million a year on 386,000 flights. It says this will help minimise delays, bring in about £1 billion into the region’s economy every year, and create 14,000 jobs – all while staying within agreed noise levels. It also has a carbon action plan for how the airport will be net zero for its own emissions by 2030, with aviation emissions excluded.

Gatwick Airport has applied for a Development Consent Order (DCO), a legal document that allows the construction of major infrastructure projects. Part of the process requires the applicant to show the planning inspector how it will mitigate the impact of the development.

The airport’s current position is that the impact from the growth of the runways will be controlled by an air noise envelope (a way to limit sound) an annual cap of 386,000 commercial air transport movements, surface access commitments/SACs (55 per cent people accessing the airport by public transport by 2040) and a carbon action plan (to reduce carbon footprint).

Councils such as Crawley Borough, West Sussex County, Surrey County, Reigate and Banstead Borough, Mole Valley District and Tandridge (together the JLA) have been consulted on the proposals and have written to both Gatwick Airport and the planning inspector with recommendations.

The JLA say they are “concerned” that the current project “will impose unjustified adverse impacts on local communities,

local businesses, and the receiving environment". The group disagree with the Planning Inspectorate's recommendations for the major development and believes it does not go far enough to address their concerns.

Instead, the JLA has put forward an approach where any increase in passenger numbers would be dependent on Gatwick Airport's achievement of specific targets which would avoid, limit and reduce impacts of the project. The group said that if all their recommended measures were adopted, including the Environmentally Managed Growth framework (EMG), they would "not object".

Under the JLAs' proposed approach, Gatwick Airport would be required to continually monitor and regularly report on the extent of the environmental effects associated with the airport in the four areas: noise, air quality, greenhouse gases and surface access. In each of the cases, the JLAs say they want to ensure Gatwick meet their specific targets and are held accountable, to prevent the airport expanding at any cost.

The group has proposed a tier system in which to monitor potential breaches in environmental commitments. For instance, if air quality or green gas emissions go above a certain point (level 1), Gatwick will review the current measures and work on mitigation. Then, if air quality gets increasingly poorer (level 2), Gatwick will review its pollutant contributions and introduce mitigation measures, perhaps preventing further capacity. If the limit for air pollution is breached, further mitigation would be required to solve the problem and no more aeroplane flight slots will be allocated.

The JLAs also want further clarity on the impacted areas exposed to higher levels of aircraft noise, especially areas where noise could wake people up. Measures should also be applied to give Gatwick Airport an incentive to transition to quieter aircraft and noise insulation as soon as possible, according to the JLA's statement. The JLAs also want to secure night time controls for flying.

The examination of the proposed DCO closed on August 27. The Planning Inspectorate will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Transport, who will then make a final decision on or before February 27.

A London Gatwick spokesperson said: "We are fully committed to making sure the airport's growth is sustainable. London Gatwick has thoroughly assessed the environmental impacts of its growth plans, which include environmental mitigations related to noise, carbon emissions and surface access improvements.

"As part of our sustainability policy we are committed to reaching net zero for our own scope one and two admissions by 2030, as well as continuing to reduce overall energy use, invest in on-site renewable energy, and continuing to source 100% renewable electricity.

"London Gatwick is delighted with the strong support shown by many local people and businesses during the recent hearings, who all voiced their desire to see the airport grow for the economic benefit of the area. We thank them for their ongoing support."

Related reports:

[Gatwick Airport Expansion](#)

[Gatwick 2nd runway sneaking in?](#)

[Gatwick expansion plans revealed](#)

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Gatwick Plans (Image PINS / Gatwick)

Surrey Coroner calls for action over ambulance wait

6 October 2024



The death of a man who waited more than three hours for an ambulance has prompted calls from a coroner for quicker clinical assessments.

Philip Ross died at the Royal Surrey County Hospital on December 19 2023 after a fall in his home on December 3.

Surrey's assistant coroner Susan Ridge ruled that Mr Ross died of multiple organ failure after his accidental fall. Ms Ridge said she was concerned South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAmb) has not shown evidence that its timeline for clinical validation is being met, as in this case.

Clinical validation is when a case is sent to a clinician to decide the best response for the patient at the right time.

Mr Ross' wife called an ambulance at 11:25pm after her husband had a fall and was unable to move. Initially, Mr Ross' case was labelled by SECAmb as Category 3, which would have a response time of 120 minutes, or two hours. Paramedics

did not arrive until 2:30am, the Prevention of Future Death report stated.

During the wait, Mrs Ross made “a number of increasingly anxious calls to the ambulance service” about the urgency to help her deteriorating husband, according to the report.

Ms Ridge said Category 3 cases had a response time of 120 minutes and SECamb aimed to validate these calls with a clinician within 90 minutes. But the NHS Trust’s target was not met in this case.

“No clinical validation of the calls took place until well over 2 hours from the initial call,” Ms Ridge said. The court heard the delays came from a “surge” in the number of calls as well as a lack of available clinical staff or “clinical hours”.

Categories 3 and 4 are judged as less serious cases and so have longer required response times from ambulances. However, this can become extended even longer at times of high demand.

The report stated: “Because of these potentially long response times, timely clinical validation is important to ensure correct categorisation and/or identify a deteriorating situation.”

The coroner said she is concerned that late or delayed assessment and sorting of these initially ‘less serious’ cases is “placing patients at risk of early death”.

The ambulance service has 56 days from 16 September to respond to the coroner’s report.

A SECamb spokesperson said: “Our thoughts and condolences are with Mr Ross’s family. We are very sorry that we were not able to respond to him more quickly.

“We recognise that there are times when we are taking longer than we should to respond to some calls and are working hard to address this and improve performance across all categories of call. Having recently been written to by the coroner, we will respond in full to her within the requested timeframes.”

Image: South East Coast Ambulance vehicle example. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

Surrey’s outstanding beauty expanding?

6 October 2024



The Surrey Hills could be made significantly larger as Natural England considers expanding the borders of the county’s “iconic and beautiful” landscape.

Each year millions of people are drawn to Surrey’s “views and beauty” as they search out rare habitats and ancient woodlands – not to mention locations from Hollywood hits – and now moves are afoot to protect even more of Surrey’s cultural heritage.

A consultation has been launched on expanding the Surrey Hills, with up to 27 new areas brought under the label, that could result in the area of outstanding natural beauty being made up to 30 per cent larger.

That figure includes the potential 13 “minor areas” that could be removed from the protection afforded by the designation.

An area of outstanding natural beauty are protected by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 to conserve and enhance natural beauty. Any planning proposals submitted in these areas must have regard for the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the Surrey Hills.

Nature England area deputy director Allison Potts said: “If the proposed areas are added to the Surrey Hills National Landscape, this could bring many benefits including conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, as well as the views and beauty of the area.

“It will give improved access to nature for the benefit of people’s health and wellbeing whilst boosting economic growth and local tourism and safeguard a nationally important landscape for future generations.

“All on the doorstep of London.”

The Surrey Hills, described by Natural England as “an iconic and beautiful landscape encompassing rare habitats from acid and chalk grassland to extensive ancient woodland” is enjoyed by millions of residents and visitors.

It stretches across the county and includes the chalk slopes of the North Downs from Farnham at its furthestmost western point to Oxted in the east. Its southern boundary stretches to the densely wooded Greensand Hills around Haslemere.

The consultation features an online survey as well as a series of roadshows to help Natural England consider whether to approve a draft designation order to include new land within the national landscape.

It is the first time the Surrey Hills boundary has been reviewed since its original designation in 1958 and comes after a number of borough and district councils began designating areas bordering the Surrey Hills as Areas of Great Landscape Value in recognition of their value at a county level.

Natural England, after a formal request by the Surrey Hills National Landscape Board, will now consider whether these and others should be included within the designation.

If successful it would still require approval from the secretary of state for environment, food and rural affairs.

In 2023, more than 1,500 individuals and organisations responded to the survey to express their views on the future of the Surrey Hills.

Of those, an overwhelming majority supported the extensions, Natural England said.

Ms Potts added: “If the proposed areas are added to the Surrey Hills National Landscape, this could bring many benefits including conserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage, as well as the views and beauty of the area.

“It will give improved access to nature for the benefit of people’s health and wellbeing whilst boosting economic growth and local tourism and safeguard a nationally important landscape for future generations. All on the doorstep of London.”

Areas under consideration include Wey Valley Hogs Back Cranleigh Waters, Hatchlands and East Clandon as well as Headley Hill Limpsfield, Betchworth Hills and Mole Valley

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