



Satisfy your eye at Epsom film festival

24 July 2024



Epsom based **Satisfied Eye International Film Festival** (SEIFF) is set to dazzle film enthusiasts with its “Best of Fest 2024,” running from July 26-28 at the brand new **Picture House** in Epsom Square. This special event will showcase the top-rated films from SEIFF’s history, highlighting exceptional storytelling from over 20 countries since its inception in 2018.

The festival kicks off on July 26 with the “People’s Choice” segment, featuring films like the Spanish short “Ainhoa” and the heartwarming “A Kiss” from the Netherlands. This selection promises a journey through a variety of emotions, setting the tone for the weekend.

On July 27, the morning begins with “Kids Animation,” where young audiences can enjoy charming shorts such as “The Kite” and “Ian, A Moving Story.” The afternoon continues with “Best of British,” spotlighting homegrown talent with films like “The Legend of Bob Leonard” and the poignant “An Irish Goodbye.”

Saturday’s programming also includes the thought-provoking “Underage Engineers,” an inspiring Polish documentary, and the “Rising Stars” segment, which showcases emerging filmmakers. The day wraps up with “The Human Condition,” exploring deep human emotions through shorts like “Bonobo” and “Hot Chocolate.”

Sunday, July 28, starts with “Adult Animation,” including the award-winning “Lost & Found” and the haunting “The Driver Is Red.” The festival then honors female filmmakers with the “Wonder Women” segment, featuring powerful films like “A Travers” and “The Letter Room.”

The weekend concludes with “All Blood Runs Red,” a collection of shorts addressing diversity and prejudice, and “A Night at the Oscars,” celebrating SEIFF’s past Oscar nominees and winners, such as “The Neighbor’s Window” and “Brotherhood.” Finally, “The Lighter Side” closes the festival on a humorous note with a series of comedies including “Career Day” and “Archibald’s Syndrome.”

This year’s SEIFF promises a cinematic feast, offering something for everyone and celebrating the best in independent filmmaking. Don’t miss the chance to experience these compelling stories on the big screen.

For full programme and tickets [click HERE](#)

Footage of Epsom College murders aftermath not for idle police viewing

24 July 2024



An ex-serving Surrey Police officer has been banned from the profession for gross misconduct after viewing body-worn camera footage of a “significant local and national case” without a legitimate reason.

The Local Democracy Reporting Service understands that the footage was of the moment the headteacher of Epsom College was found dead. Surrey Police have not confirmed which specific footage was viewed, however the date of the footage aligns with the date that officers were called to Epsom College.

Emma Pattison, 45, was found dead alongside her seven-year-old Lettie, in the grounds of the Surrey school, on 5 February 2023. Mrs Pattison’s husband, George Pattison, is believed to have shot them at their home before killing himself.

The former Surrey Police cop, Mr Baseer Ahmed, admitted he watched the body-worn video (BWV) footage of the serious incident on 5 February, but denies he did so without a policing purpose.



The police misconduct hearing panel, held July 1, found Mr Ahmed breached professional standards as he unnecessarily watched footage of the police attending the scene, where the victims were found.

Professional standards state that there must be an express policing purpose to access body-worn camera footage, to ensure it is not accessed unnecessarily.

Mr Ahmed watched some- not all- of the footage on February 7, days after the major incident was reported, and picked up by newspapers. He was not given specific instructions to look at the footage nor carry out any enquiries, according to the misconduct report.

A Staff Officer for Chief Superintendent Budd since 2022, Mr Ahmed's role included accessing additional information for his Chief Superintendent. Working in West Surrey, the panel noted it was not in this instance appropriate for Mr Ahmed to find out information from other divisions.

The panel found Mr Ahmed did not appear to be watching the video as part of a genuine work activity. For example, he made no notes, did not attempt to discover the location of the incident or tell any senior colleagues about it.

Although admitting he watched part of the video footage, Mr Ahmed has continually denied not having a justifiable policing purpose for accessing the footage. He also denies a breach of the standards and that his conduct amounts to gross misconduct.

The panel was not satisfied and Mr Ahmed was found to have breached standards of professional behaviour, confidentiality, orders and instructions. The report reads: "It is important to remember the high standards that members of the public rightly expect Police Officers to adhere to, the extremely difficult circumstances being faced by family members in this particular case and the likely effect that unnecessary viewing of the footage would have on them."

The panel agreed this amounted to gross misconduct and it would harm the public's view of the police service for watching footage of a major incident without legitimate purpose. This was aggravated by Mr Ahmed acting contrary to national guidance, without any specific instructions and continuing asserting he had valid policing reasons to access the footage.

Mr Ahmed resigned from Surrey Police on December 15, 2023 - 10 months from the incident- with his last day being January 15 this year. If he was still a serving officer, the panel said he would have been dismissed to maintain public confidence in and to uphold high standards in policing

Whilst Mr Ahmed attended the two Pre-hearings, he did not attend the misconduct hearing due to 'personal reasons' he cited in an email.

Head of Professional Standards, Superintendent Andy Rundle said: "The public rightly expect that police officers behave at all times with integrity and respect.

"Ex-officer Ahmed breached this trust when he looked at body worn footage of a crime scene, despite having no policing purpose. This behaviour is not acceptable, and a thorough professional standards investigation was launched."

A full inquest into the deaths of George, Emma and Lettie Pattison is due to take place later this month on July 30.

Surrey police said they are not officially confirming what body worn footage Mr Ahmed viewed due to "other ongoing judicial processes" that have not yet been concluded. The full inquests into the deaths are expected to take place on July 30. Surrey Police confirmed it is the Epsom College incident "off the record".

Image - Epsom College: Naveed Barakzai/Maxal Photography. Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 2.5 Generic license

Surrey teacher banned for underwear social media pupil chat

24 July 2024



A Surrey teacher has been banned after messaging pupils about thongs, favourite underwear, and shaving.

[The Teachers' Regulation Agency (TRA) has not published the name of the school in the interests of pupils. The Epsom and Ewell Times has decided not to publish the name of The Teacher for the same reason.]

The Teacher has been prohibited indefinitely from the profession and can no longer teach in any school, sixth form



college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England.

The 30-year-old can apply to have the order set aside after June 29, 2026 and has one month to appeal the Secretary of State's decision.

In a Teachers' Regulation Agency (TRA), she was found to have behaved unacceptably and brought the teaching profession into disrepute after failing to keep professional boundaries with pupils between February 2023 and May 2023.

The panel, which sat in her absence after The Teacher declined to attend the June 2024 hearing, found she communicated with pupils via social media - discussing underwear, relationships, shaving, body piercing and vaping. The TRA did not name the school in their report, to prevent undue harm to pupils.

The Teacher was also said to have met up with pupils outside school and later tried to conceal her behaviour - asking them not to communicate with her, while her social accounts were being monitored and deleting exchanges.

The report reads: "Instead of teaching the dangers of social media to young children taking their initial steps into the online world, The Teacher actively exposed them to such risks.The panel therefore found that The Teacher' actions constituted conduct that may bring the profession into disrepute."

In a signed statement of agreed facts, The Teacher admitted the allegations in full.

They read: The Teacher admits that she engaged in discussions... in connection with underwear. The Teacher accepts that she initiated a conversation ...about the topic of thongs, which was in response to (a pupil) asking what underwear The Teacher owned. The Teacher also accepts that she received messages... in which (a pupil) described what underwear she liked. The Teacher also accepts (a pupil) sent The Teacher internet images of underwear that (a pupil) liked. The Teacher accepts that she discussed with (a pupil) what underwear The Teacher owned and how [they] wore their underwear",

The Panel Decision and reasons on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education report read:

The teacher also messaged about whether she had a boyfriend and "what things put her off".

A week after pausing communications while accounts were being monitored, messaging started up again, with the teacher telling the pupil "not to tell anyone about their contact."

The Teacher also admitted deleting a large majority of messages in an effort to conceal what had been sent. She also admitted to deliberately misleading the school over the nature and extent of her communication with pupils on social media.

The report read: "At the school's suspension meeting, The Teacher accepts that she told the school the pupil had been in communication with her for one week and that The Teacher had been trying to 'bat her away'."

The Teacher is prohibited from teaching indefinitely and cannot teach in any school, sixth form college, relevant youth accommodation or children's home in England. She may apply for the prohibition order to be set aside, but not until 29 June 2026, 2 years from the date of the order.

Image: Ibrahim.ID Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International licence.

Average house price in Epsom and Ewell over half-million.

24 July 2024



Epsom and Ewell saw the largest increase in new build completions in the **South East** between **2021-2023**, new data has revealed.

The study, conducted by architectural visualisation experts at Modunite, investigated ONS data on the number of new build completions from 2021-2022 and 2022-2023, to find which **local authority has seen the biggest increase in new build completions year-on-year**.

Key findings:

- **Epsom and Ewell** saw the largest increase in new build homes, at **133%** - compared to the English average of **21%**
- **Tunbridge Wells** ranks second with an increase of **130%** new build completions



- **West Oxfordshire** had the biggest drop in house prices across England (**13.10%**)
- **Milton Keynes** saw the largest volume of new build homes in 2022-23 (**2,480**) in the South East, and the second-highest in England

For the full study, head to: <https://www.modunite.com/a-review-of-englands-new-build-market/>

The results:

Local Authority	Average house price 2022	Average house price 2023	% decrease in house prices	2021-2022	2022-2023	% increase 2022-2023
Epsom and Ewell	£543,670	£533,491	1.90%	90	210	133%
Tunbridge Wells	£454,657	£446,490	1.80%	270	620	130%
Hastings	£271,727	£270,043	0.60%	10	20	100%
Arun	£351,693	£350,191	0.40%	490	930	90%
Eastbourne	£298,348	£296,227	0.70%	40	70	75%
Dartford	£355,378	£353,765	0.50%	400	660	65%
Canterbury	£361,144	£357,128	1.10%	370	600	62%
Thanet	£315,384	£310,705	1.50%	290	410	41%
Chichester	£470,413	£452,668	3.90%	590	810	37%
Tonbridge and Malling	£438,694	£431,931	1.60%	270	370	37%

Please find the full dataset [here](#).

Modunite can reveal that **Epsom and Ewell** has seen the largest increase in new build completions in the South East, with a **133% increase** from 2021-2022 compared with 2022-2023. Between 2021 and 2022 **90 new builds** were completed, in comparison to **210 in the following year**. House prices in Epsom and Ewell also dropped by 1.90%, down to **£533,491**.

Hastings ranks third

Hastings ranks third. From 2021-2022, Hastings completed **10** new build homes, increasing by **100%** by the end of 2023 with a total of **20**. This is largely higher than the average number of new build completions across all the local authorities in England (**21%**). House prices in Hastings have also fallen by **0.60%** between 2022-2023, to an average of **£270,043**.

Tunbridge Wells ranks second, with a **130% increase in new build completions** between 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. A total of **270** new builds were completed in 2021 -2022, in comparison to **620** the following year. House prices in Tunbridge Wells have also decreased by **1.80%**, down to **£446,490** on average.

Image: <https://oaktondevelopments.co.uk/henrietta-place-new-build-homes-epsom-surrey/>

Campaign to keep local child cancer services local

24 July 2024



Wandsworth Council is leading a campaign against the NHS decision to move children's cancer services from two South London hospitals into Central London and the new Labour Government will be asked to step in. NHS England announced its decision to move the children's cancer centre based jointly at **St George's Hospital, Tooting**, and **The Royal Marsden, Sutton**, to Evelina London Children's Hospital, Lambeth, in March.

Wandsworth has now confirmed it will refer the decision to new Health Secretary Wes Streeting in a bid for him to intervene. The council is particularly concerned about the prospect of parents having to travel via public transport into Central London with immunosuppressed kids to reach the Evelina.

The authority said Richmond, Kingston, Merton, Sutton and Surrey councils are set to join the cross-party campaign, as



children in their boroughs currently receive care at the existing children's cancer centre. Richmond approved plans to challenge the decision in May.

Opposition to the plans began to grow after the NHS launched a consultation on two options for the future location of the centre last year - either moving it entirely to St George's or to the Evelina. The centre has provided specialist children's cancer services to those aged 15 and under living in South London, Kent, most of Surrey, Brighton and Hove, Medway and East Sussex for 25 years.

The NHS said it has to move the centre as a new national service specification in 2021 outlined very specialist children's cancer treatment services must be on the same site as a paediatric intensive care unit and other specialist children's services. The Royal Marsden does not have a paediatric intensive care unit, meaning a small number of children with cancer requiring intensive care are transferred safely by ambulance to St George's every year.

Labour Wandsworth Council leader Simon Hogg urged Mr Streeting to work with local authorities challenging the decision to find ways to keep services at St George's. He said: "We have opposed these plans to move specialist children's cancer care from St George's from the start. Our serious concerns remain - getting to Evelina hospital through Central London traffic will be challenging at the best of times. Travelling by public transport is not an option for vulnerable children who are on immunosuppressant medication. So there has to be a better solution to these plans."

Local MPs have also publicly opposed the plans. Tooting MP Dr Rosena Allin-Khan described the decision to move services from St George's as 'deeply disappointing' when it was announced in March, and signed a letter to previous Health Secretary Victoria Atkins asking her to review it. The letter was also signed by Putney MP Fleur Anderson, Mitcham and Morden MP Siobhain McDonagh, Richmond Park MP Sarah Olney and Twickenham MP Munira Wilson.

Services are not expected to move until 2026 at the earliest. An NHS London spokesperson said: "Evelina London has been chosen as the future location for the children's cancer centre following a rigorous process, including involving clinical advisers, parents, charities, nurses and research staff. The future centre will stand ready to give cutting-edge treatments that require intensive care on site, like other major centres worldwide."

"Service reconfiguration is rarely easy and we recognise that during consultation, parents and families raised a number of concerns about the change in location, including about travelling further into London, and what that will mean for them. Our focus now is on detailed implementation planning which takes all of these concerns into account to support families and staff."

An Evelina spokesperson added: "We are fully committed to working with patients, their families, staff from the current service, and other partners to design the new service with children, young people and staff at its heart. This will ensure continuity of care during the transition period and a plan for the safe transfer of the service."

A St George's spokesperson said: "We understand the concerns being raised by our communities who want to keep specialist children's cancer care at St George's. We are working with NHS England and our partners and will continue to provide outstanding care to children and their families throughout this process."

Charlotte Lillywhite - reporter.

Image credit Jean Barrow Licence

Local roadworks taken to task

24 July 2024



Surrey County Council has established a critical new **task force** to reduce the impact of utility roadworks and drive better coordination and communication of works across Surrey's road network.

Utility companies' demands in Surrey are amongst the top five highest in the UK with 88 works starting every day in the last twelve months. In total, over 32,000 utility works have been undertaken across the county during this period, at a cost impact to Surrey residents of £35,424,225.

Made up of representatives from water, energy and telecoms companies, the task force held their inaugural meeting last week and agreed five key areas of focus:

- Better coordination of roadworks across Surrey
- Working collaboratively to minimise disruption for residents
- Improved public communication by utility companies and improved on-site signage prior to works commencing and throughout



- Improved methods of sharing information, including online mapping of planned utility works
- Clearly defined escalation routes so that SCC can quickly hold utility companies to account.

Jonathan Hulley, Deputy Cabinet Member, Strategic Highways at Surrey County Council, said, “Whilst we recognise that works on the highway carried out by utility companies are necessary, these works are all too often impacting negatively on Surrey road users.

“This is a huge source of frustration for our residents, and we need to ensure that utility works are completed quicker, with better traffic management, better coordination, and better resident communication, which is why we have formed this vital task force.

“Surrey County Council is working hard to improve over 100 roads as part of our £8.5m highways maintenance programme this Summer to help prevent potholes – the biggest ever surface dressing programme undertaken in the county.

“I thank all partners who attended the first meeting of the task force and I look forward to working together to drive real improvements and do all we can to reduce utility congestion on our busy road network.”

The task force will meet monthly to take this work forward.

More information on Surrey County Council’s responsibilities and utility companies roadworks is available on the **Surrey County Council website**.

Image: Credit Geof Sheppard Licence

No more German supermarkets in Epsom

24 July 2024



Plans for an Aldi store have been rejected again over fears the increased traffic would have a severe impact on road safety.

[The site is a few hundred yards away from another German owned supermarket Lidl in Upper High Street.]

A proposal to create the budget supermarket on the vacant former Dairy Crest site in Alexandra Road was refused a second time at an Epsom and Ewell council meeting on July 10.

The application was first thrown out in 2015 following concerns about the site’s location, level of car parking and traffic, and the effect on the character of the neighbourhood.

The new application for the £5m development in Epsom includes car parking, some landscaping but plans for residential units have been scrapped.

Councillor Jan Mason (Residents’ Association/Ruxley Ward) said the supermarket giant should “do far better” on the design of the building if it “wants to come to a lovely area such as Epsom”.

Although Aldi said it had “refined” its proposals, carefully designing an “attractive, bespoke Aldi food store” which would “respect the surrounding area”, councillors were still concerned about its location.

Despite Surrey Highways advising the development “would be unlikely to result in a severe impact” on local traffic, councillors remained sceptical. Speaking before the debate, Ward Cllr Julie Morris (Lib Dem/College Ward) said there would be a “huge” impact on local residents who already feel the surrounding residential roads are a “rat run”.

“The one thing you can’t put in a spreadsheet is common sense,” Cllr Chris Watson (Residents Association/ Ewell Court Road) said. He argued that regardless of “clever” data from the county council, “common sense” says it is a busy junction which could result in queuing traffic.

Agreeing with him, other councillors said the “already challenging junction” is “fraught with danger”. It was agreed it was in the interests of residents, motorists, pedestrians and children crossing to go to school that councillors had to reject the application.

However, Cllr Clive Woodridge (Residents’ Association/ Ewell Village Ward) argued it was not viable to refuse the application on traffic and road concerns. He said Surrey Highway experts have judged the development acceptable and this could not be easily defended at appeal.

But Cllr Mason called the development a ticking “time bomb”, which could lead to a fatal collision if plans goes ahead.



Speaking to the committee, local resident Leah said: "The council has had feedback multiple times that local residents don't want a food store here." She cited Aldi's own research from its application that 58-61% of local residents objected to the proposal.

Around 91 letters were sent opposing the scheme, arguing it was an 'unacceptable location' for a food store at a busy junction. Concerns were raised that traffic would be exacerbated, a pedestrian crossing would be dangerous and the brownfield site should be saved for affordable housing.

Aldi superstore. (Credit: Marques Thomas/Unsplash)

Teen suicide risk underestimated by CAMHS

24 July 2024



An "underestimation" of suicide risk and significant mental health 'failings' contributed to the death of a vulnerable teenager, a Senior Coroner has found.

Locket Williams, described by their family as "a lovely person with a huge character", was just 15 years old when they tragically killed themselves in September 2021.

Senior Coroner Richard Travers concluded that there were a number of key failures by Surrey and Borders Partnership (SABP) NHS Foundation Trust's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) which contributed to the death of the vulnerable teenager, who goes by they/them pronouns. The three-week inquest concluded Friday 31 May.

Locket's older sister, Emily, said: "Hearing the coroner recognize what we have believed for three long years—that failures by CAMHS contributed to Locket's death and ultimately meant Locket lost all hope—is heartbreaking."

"We're thankful for the Coroner's respect for Locket's identity, which was so important to them, and we sincerely hope this process will help prevent more tragic deaths like Locket's in the future."

Described by their family as "vibrant" with a "massive heart", Locket "brought colour to everything they participated in" their family said.

They had a long history of mental health difficulties, resulting in self-harming behaviours and three previous suicide attempts throughout within seven months of 2021.

Evidence heard at the inquest highlighted "illogical conclusions" that Locket was deemed "low risk" by clinicians, despite their ongoing suicidal ideation and three suicide attempts in close succession, the family's lawyers said.

Coroner Travers found that Locket's high risk of suicide was "underestimated" by clinicians, as there was an "insufficient account" of Locket's long-running risk, which meant Locket did not receive the treatment they needed.

Commenting on the Coroner's findings, the family's solicitor, Elle Gauld from Simpson Millar's public law team, said: "Given Locket's three suicide attempts and deteriorating mental health, CAMHS' approach repeatedly defied logic and palpable evidence of suicidality, bypassing the patient's express wishes and placing an unrealistic burden on a family already in crisis. Treatment was not commenced in a timely manner"

Long waiting lists for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and a shortage of therapists meant that, although clinicians all agreed CBT was necessary, Locket remained at home. Without access to the required support and treatment, their mental health continued to deteriorate, the lawyers for the family said.

Coroner Travers said there was a 'failure' to assess the likelihood Locket could be kept safe while waiting eight months for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy ('CBT'), a treatment she was ready and willing to engage in.

Failures in communication between social services and CAMHS were also identified, leading to crucial information being missed in Locket's assessment and care. CAMHS failed to attend Core Groups meetings held by social services to protect Locket, as a vulnerable child.

Locket was passed from service to service, with no continuous care from the same clinicians or who was responsible for Locket's care, lawyers said.

Speaking of the family's loss, Locket's mother, Hazel Williams, said: "We hope the lessons learned from their death highlight the urgent need for change and prevent future tragedies. We are grateful for the thoroughness of this inquest and the potential for positive changes in managing mental health services for young people."

SABP has 56 days to respond to the senior coroner's findings. Coroner Travers has asked the NHS Trust to report whether there is now a system in place to ensure that young people referred to CAMHS are seen and treated promptly, and that clinicians are acting in accordance with the Trust's guidelines.



A Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust spokesperson said: "We are extremely saddened by the tragic death of Locket Williams and our deepest sympathies go to their family and friends."

"We are carefully reflecting on the Coroner's findings and the questions we have been asked and will respond within the given timeframe."

Image: Locket. (Credit: Simpson Millar law firm) Coroners Court in background - Google

Poor road conditions a real test for learners

24 July 2024



A driving instructor said he's on a "one man crusade" to fix the roads around Redhill Aerodrome Driving Test Centre. Martin Pitchley, 57, said he was "shocked" at the road conditions in Redhill, Surrey.

Unreadable road markings, overgrown hedges blocking speed signs and poor road conditions were some of the issues raised by the driving instructor.

"It's not very fair for students taking their test with all these problems with the road which is caused by poor road management by the [county] council," Martin said.

Emailing Surrey County Council (SCC) on June 3, Martin said nothing has been done to fix the issue.

A SCC highways maintenance officer said the vegetation covering road signs will be removed as part of the rural cut back of Earlswood and Reigate South on July 19. Fixing chevrons and replacing speed signs have also been requested on a list of works to be done.

Students who are just about to take their driving test come out of the centre not knowing what the speed limit is on that road, according to Martin. He claims a speed sign had been knocked over and lying down in a hedge for over six months.

Outside the driving test centre is the 40mph Kings Mill Lane, but Martin says there is no signage until a good few hundred yards up the road.

He said: "It's not fair to be giving students tuition and telling them there should be a speed limit here but there's not one, or it's knocked down.

"It's an unsafe speed for that road" he added, "It's got so many sharp bends, and big lorries yet students are expected to drive 40 mph up there.

"It's like a one-man crusade really. It's not really fair for the students going up to the test centre and taking their test with all these problems with the road."

Not only worried for his driving students, Martin said he was concerned for the general public including pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles.

"They are very severe and dangerous [roads] for any motorists, either for a learner or a full-time experienced driver," he said. "They have to drive up these roads and find there's a big steep dip in the roads or uneven roads that will make them steer awkwardly or crash their car."

According to Crash Map data, seven 'slight' accidents and two 'serious' incidents with vehicles have occurred on Kings Mill Lane between 2018-2022.

Martin said the county council has had enough time to fix the issues with the road and wants to see change. He said: "I just want this issue to be resolved so students can go up to their driving test, get a fair test, and members of the public are not going to get hit by a speeding car."

A SCC spokesperson said: "We appreciate the concerns raised and our Highways officers have been in communication with the individual to talk through the issues.

"The grass verges in question will be cut as part of our twice per annum rural cuts - information on where and when these take place are available on our website.

"Requests to replace speed signs in the area have been raised, however these need to be prioritised against other requests across the county and officers will review this as soon as they can."

Image: Driving instructor Martin Pitchley, Credit: Road Rules Driving.



Tree falls on van in Ewell Village

24 July 2024



On Saturday a tree close to the bus stop, opposite the entrance to Bourne Hall in Ewell Village fell across the road onto a passing red Mercedes van shattering its windscreen.

Surrey Police were quickly in attendance and a female police officer used a broom to sweep debris from the road to make the road as safe as possible for passing traffic.

After approximately 30 minutes, contractors arrived on site to remove the fallen tree. No one is believed to have been injured by the tree falling across the pavement.

A few months ago, a similar incident occurred when a large tree inside the entrance gates to Bourne Hall fell causing major damage to walling which has had to undergo major restoration.

Whilst Saturday's incident required Surrey Police's involvement, it is not believed that any of the other emergency services were called upon. Two trees falling within only a few metres of each other within such a short space of time in a busy village suggests that people were lucky to escape serious injury. Does more need to be done in the Borough to ensure trees overhanging public spaces do not pose a danger to anyone?

Ivy can choke a tree if allowed to climb it and dead branches will then fall to the ground below. Ivy can, however be easily dealt with by removing a section of it from the base of a tree so that the ivy above dies and loosens its grip on the tree.

The tree that fell across the pavement and road onto the top of a red Mercedes van on Saturday was visibly covered in ivy.

Epsom and Ewell's new MP and new Party

24 July 2024



The 2024 general election count for Epsom & Ewell was held last night at the Epsom Downs racecourse from 10pm to the early hours today.

This year's election introduced new boundaries for the constituency of Epsom and Ewell, with the addition of wards from Ashtead and Leatherhead.

With the vote closing at 10pm, the official ballot count revealed a voter turnout of 70%. (2019: 81,138. 73.3%)

Mrs Jackie King, Epsom and Ewell Borough Council's CEO and Returning Officer, revealed the official result at about 06:15 with the results as follows:

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: Helen Maguire:

- Votes 20,674
- Share 37.9%
- Share change +13.7
- *2019: 13,946 (23.5%)*

CONSERVATIVE: Mhairi Fraser:



- Votes 16,988
- Share 31.2%
- Share change -22.4
- *2019: 31,819 (53.5%)*

LABOUR: Mark Todd:

- Votes 8,325
- Share 15.3%
- Share change -1.5
- *2019: 10,226 (17.2%)*

REFORM UK: Mayuran Senthilnathan:

- Votes 5,795
- Share 10.6%
- Share change +10.6

GREEN: Stephen McKenna:

- Votes 1,745
- Share 3.2%
- Share change -0.1
- *2019: 2,047 (3.5%)*

TRUE and FAIR: Gina Miller:

- Votes 845
- Share 1.6%
- Share change +1.6

Social Democratic Party: Damon Young:

- Votes 153
- Share 0.3%
- Share change +0.3

Each candidate was accompanied by a fairly large cohort, all working endlessly to keep up with a general sense of how well their party was doing nationally. While the rest of the UK's election results unfolded on TV screens, mixed reactions were circulating. However, it was the Labour corner with the most cheers throughout, with a landslide exit poll for the Labour party unfolding into a reality. The announcement of a Labour government was issued around 4:55 am.

Helen Maguire (Liberal Democrat) said a priority for Epsom and Ewell was getting the new hospital built that had been promised for 10 years. On the election campaign she said "There are so many pollsters saying different things it has been difficult for voters to know what has been going on. It brings up the question whether we should have polls during election campaigns. If we had proportional representation we wouldn't need polls anyway."

Responding to the result **Stephen McKenna** of the Green Party said "With a super-majority is it less likely that the new Government will work with other parties to get proportional representation and introduce the Green policies the country needs. We hope the new MP preserves the Green Belt and makes sure we have a housing policy that works for everyone and sorts out the NHS locally."

Mayuran Senthilnathan of Reform UK said "The first past the post system does not serve the interests of this country so I hope the constituents of Epsom and Ewell get behind a campaign for proportional representation."

Gina Miller of True and Fair said of the future of Epsom and Ewell "I hope the Green Belt is preserved and Epsom and Ewell becomes a place where health and well-being come first". On the national picture she said "I think the share of the vote for Reform UK is quite terrifying. The centre parties need to start listening to people and delivering for them." On her local campaign experience Gina Miller said she was shocked by the negative campaigning that had gone on. She called for regulation of campaign literature and tactical voting websites. "The bullying is something I never thought I would experience".

Editorial:



Democracy at work? Or strange mathematics?

May our hustings make up your mind?

24 July 2024



Epsom and Ewell Times staged a six election candidate Parliamentary hustings at the Adrian Mann Theatre, **NESCOT** in Ewell on Wednesday 26th June. With every seat in the 230 seat theatre occupied, **Gina Miller** (True and Fair), **Mark Todd** (Labour), **Mhairi Fraser** (Conservative), **Stephen McKenna** (Green), **Helen Maguire** (Liberal Democrat) and **Mayuran Senthilnathan** (Reform) took the stage, with **Lionel Blackman** in the Chair.

Questions on Brexit, local government financing, arming Israel, where to build houses, crime, tactical voting and proportional representation and others were asked by a lively audience. Many voters from the new southerly Ashtead and Leatherhead areas of the Epsom and Ewell constituency came along.

Below is a recording of the hustings. After introductions the hustings get going after 06:50.

The Epsom and Ewell Times is indebted to NESCOT CEO **Julie Kapsalis** and **Louise Gaskin** of the Creative and Media Department of NESCOT, who worked so hard to make a success of this once in a Parliament event. Special thanks to **Charlie McCarthy** of NESCOT who edited the video recording.

Top image credit Steven McCormick photography.

[Please note that in error the introducer muddled the Labour candidate Mark Todd with a former Labour MP of the same name.]

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A True and Fair view of the world

Sick "jokes" end trainee PC's career

24 July 2024



A **Surrey** trainee police officer, who 'joked' he would rape a domestic abuse victim, has been sacked from Surrey Police.

PC **Samuel Wilton**, a trainee officer since 2023, admitted gross to misconduct at an accelerated hearing on June 26.

Fellow officers reported PC Wilton 'joking' that "if she [a woman] was a domestic violence victim I would still rape her" on a night out in Five and Lime Bar in Guildford on January 5.

Comments made by the trainee officer included: "If they were single, I would break her in half". He also said: "If there



was a Domestic Violence (DV) victim who was fit, I would rape her" then adding: "If the DV victim was fit and dead, I would still rape her".

The training group, for which PC Wilton was part, had received training about professional behaviour and standards expected in the police force on the very same day that he made the comments.

PC Wilton was then placed on restricted duties. Still in police training, PC Wilton was never on front line duties.

Allegations against PC Wilton were proven in the hearing, and he was found to have breached the Standards of Professional Behaviour amounting to gross misconduct. "I am absolutely disgusted with myself," PC Wilton said during the hearing, as he told inspectors about his life-long ambition to be in the force. He added: "I will never forgive myself of a lifetime of focus for a moment of madness."

PC Wilton assured the hearing that he has "grown as a person", reflecting 'daily' on his comments. PC Wilton also said he has taken reading courses he has taken on sex and gender equality to educate himself.

"I am more than this incident and this mistake," PC Wilton told the hearing as he asked for a second chance. He added: "In my naivety and thoughtlessness, I have contributed to the [misogynistic and abusive culture] that the police try to eradicate."

However Peter Gardner, Assistant Chief Constable for Surrey, concluded: "For the public interest you should cease public duty immediately." He stressed that, although the incident amounted to gross misconduct, there is no evidence or allegation that PC Milton is a threat to the public.

The hearing heard that, drunkenness was "no defence" for his behaviour, as agreed by both investigation officers and PC Wilton, who said he never intended to offend anyone.

The misconduct hearing noted the trainee officer does not regularly drink to excess and so 'could not have foreseen' his conduct.

The panel concluded that the incident could damage the police's reputation and make the public think less of the police.

Recent high-profile incidents such as Hampshire police officers sending discriminatory whatsapp messages were highlighted as part of a perceived 'culture of misogyny' within the police. Investigating officers said they wanted to send a very clear message of "there is no place for you in the police service" if misconduct is found.

The misconduct hearing concluded that "anything less than a dismissal would not achieve the purpose of misconduct proceedings" and "fail to maintain public confidence and the police's reputation".

Acknowledging PC Wilton's regret, lifetime ambition to be in the force and commitment to the civic duty, Assistant Chief Constable said in his closing remarks: "Please don't let this determine the rest of your life".

Numerous character references were given to the hearing from PC Wilton's former colleagues, mostly female, including those from his time in the RAF. One female colleague said the comments were "completely out of character" for PC Wilton, with others praising his 'teamwork', 'professionalism' and 'emotional intelligence'.

Deputy Chief Constable Nev Kemp said in a statement to the press after the meeting: "The comments made by PC Wilton are deeply offensive and disgraceful for any police officer to make, whether on or off duty and simply cannot be condoned.

"I am pleased that his colleagues reported his behaviour without delay. This demonstrates that this standard of behaviour is not tolerated in Surrey Police, and I commend them for taking the immediate action that they did.

"Fortunately, PC Wilton has never carried out any frontline duties or come into contact with members of the public as a police officer. His conduct on that night falls far short of the high standards and example expected of our officers and staff in order to maintain the trust and confidence of our local communities."

PC Wilton will have five working days to lodge an appeal against his dismissal.

Image: Surrey Police ethics print on wall at Mount Browne HQ. (Credit: Emily Dalton/LDRS)

Justice Stops Oil

24 July 2024



A Surrey campaigner is "over the moon" after a landmark legal decision found that planning permission given to drill for oil at Horse Hill is unlawful.

The Supreme Court has found that the environmental impact of burning fossil fuels must be taken into account when granting planning permission.



Sarah Finch has been fighting Surrey County Council's decision to approve UK Oil and Gas's oil drilling site in Horse Hill, south of Reigate, for years - having first brought the case to the High Court in 2019.

On Thursday (June 20) the Supreme Court ruled, by three judges to two, that planning permission for fossil fuel production should not be granted unless the climate impact of the project - specifically downstream greenhouse gas emissions from the combustion of the fuel - have been fully assessed.

It means Surrey County Council's decision to grant planning permission for oil production was unlawful, her lawyers said at the end of the five-year battle.

Mrs Finch said: "I am absolutely over the moon to have won this important case. The Weald Action Group always believed it was wrong to allow oil production without assessing its full climate impacts, and the Supreme Court has shown we were right.

"This is a welcome step towards a safer, fairer future. The oil and gas companies may act like business-as-usual is still an option, but it will be very hard for planning authorities to permit new fossil fuel developments - in the Weald, the North Sea or anywhere else - when their true climate impact is clear for all to see.

"I thank the Weald Action Group, Friends of the Earth and everyone who has been part of our long journey through the courts. And I thank my lawyers for their commitment and hard work."

The Court found the council's reasons for refusing to assess the impact of burning the fuel was inadequate, her lawyers said, adding that it made the "common sense point" that combustion emissions were unavoidable and no other controls could be relied upon to reduce their impact.

They added that for similar reasons, the court also dismissed an argument that refining the oil somehow excused a failure to assess its impact at the earliest possible stage.

The decision means planning authorities in England and Wales must now assess the total climate impact of any proposed fossil fuel developments.

Stephen Sanderson UKOG's chief executive said: "The court's rather perplexing retrospective ruling, which is counter to all prior judgements, further underscores why the company's focus over the past few years has shifted away from oil and gas and firmly towards creating and delivering strategic underground hydrogen storage, an essential element of the UK's future low carbon energy system.

"These projects have the potential to create far greater sustainable value for the company and the UK than any small onshore field such as Horse Hill. They also have the added benefit of making a positive contribution to Net Zero.

"However, although Horse Hill is a small part of our portfolio, it still has a role to play in both the company's and UK's future transitional energy mix and thus we look forward to working closely with the local planning authority to rectify this retrospective change to EIA requirements."

The proposed expansion at Horse Hill Developments would have created five drilling cellars, four hydrocarbon production wells, four gas-to-power generators, a process, storage and tanker loading area, seven 1,300-barrel oil tanks, and a 37-metre drill rig to allow large-scale production of up to 3.3 million tonnes of crude oil for sale and use as transport fuel for 20 years, Mrs Finch's lawyers Leigh Day said.

UKCOG has said it plans to work closely with Surrey County Council to "promptly rectify the situation", either via an amendment to the original 2018 planning applications or a new retrospective planning submission, for which there is recent planning precedent within Surrey.

A spokesperson for Surrey County Council said: "The long awaited judgement of the Supreme Court in the case of R (on the application of Finch on behalf of the Weald Action Group) v Surrey County Council and others has found that the Environmental Impact Assessment undertaken for the planning application at Horse Hill to extract petroleum did not assess the effect on climate of the combustion of the oil to be produced.

"Council officers at the time of the planning application assessment believed that they acted in compliance with the law. The judgement makes it clear that local planning authorities must have regard to downstream emissions. The council was unsuccessful in defending its decision.

"The planning permission remains to be determined in due course."

Image: Redhill climate campaigner Sarah Finch at Horse Hill rally 5 Nov 2021. Credit Denise Laura Baker

Computer's gift of a Trojan Horse?

24 July 2024



The computer won the Derby! On the eve of yesterday's famous Epsom flat race Epsom and Ewell Times published winner tips Los Angeles from Royal Ascot Odds and first to cross the finishing line **City of Troy** from a super-computer. What other gifts for humanity might be brought by AI?

An Epsom and Ewell Times reader put £50 on both tips and came away with a £100 profit thanks to the brain-power of a super-computer. He said "One swallow does not make a summer. So, I won't be inclined to follow computer tips every time but thanks for this one"

No Royal could be spotted on Epsom Downs this Derby Day but our own leading citizen Mayor **Steve Bridger** and Mayoress Carol Bridger took centre stage in the Royal Box of The Queen's Stand. Another Epsom and Ewell highlight was **Helin Konyar** a Ukraine scholar of the local **Laine Theatre Arts** leading the National Anthem just before the Derby stakes. The King and Queen attended Oaks Day on Friday.



Students of Epsom's Laine Theatre Arts. Helin Konyar front row centre in yellow dress.

City Of Troy (3-1 Favourite) banished the memory of his disappointing run in the QIPCO 2000 Guineas with a breathtaking performance to clinch victory in the 245th Betfred Derby at Epsom Downs today.

The colt, sired by Justify, secured a record-extending 10th win in this prestigious Classic for his trainer Aidan O'Brien, while jockey Ryan Moore celebrated his fourth Derby triumph.

City Of Troy, racing on the inside, was settled towards the rear among the 16 runners as stablemates Euphoric and Los Angeles led the field.

Rounding Tattenham Corner, City Of Troy began to make an impressive move, surging to the front in the final quarter mile. He maintained his momentum, finishing strongly to fend off Ambiente Friendly by two and three-quarter lengths, with Los Angeles trailing three and a quarter lengths behind in third.



The Derby jockeys. Epsom Racecourse 1st June 2024 c. Epsom and Ewell Times

"It was hard to know what would happen today, but I was very sure we still had the best horse before the race," Ryan Moore said to ITV Racing. "Newmarket... it didn't happen. I can't pretend that we knew it would happen [today], but we do know that he has a big engine, he showed himself to be a brilliant two-year-old. The Guineas... we got a few things wrong. But it's great that he could come back today. He's still a little bit immature, that's the first time he's run around a bend, hopefully there's plenty more to work with."

Moore reflected on the race's turning point, stating, "We did a few things wrong at Newmarket, today we rectified it and put it right."

On the sensation of guiding City Of Troy through the final stages, Moore said, "He was going to win very easily. With the loose horse in front of him, he was still a bit unsure, and then he galloped out strong. He quickened well and then kind of waited, you have to be delighted with what he has done today."

"I had to find a little bit of room. The race kind of opened up, loose horse in there, he travelled well into the straight, and he picked up and went to the front very easily and very quickly," Moore recounted. "Then I felt he was still a little bit inexperienced, with the loose horse in front of him he wasn't quite sure what to do - he was pricking his ears, then he changed his leads near the line and went on again. I'm just delighted that a horse who showed so much as a two-year-old - he was very good at two - and the Guineas, we got a few things wrong on the day and it's great that Aidan's got him back and brought him here today. He didn't lose faith in the horse, stuck to the plan and it has paid off. We believed that if he turned up like we thought he would, he'd be too good for them, and he was."

"I was always happy where I was. It's never going to be 100% smooth with a field that size, where we were, but I was able to pick a path. He took me there early and easily, and the race was over and he was in control of it a fair way out."

"He's special - he won the Dewhurst, won a Group Two as early as July, won the Dewhurst, then to come here, and it's the first time he's been round a bend, and obviously it's a big step up in trip. We thought he was the sort of horse, and once again Aidan's brought him here, he's turned up and it all worked out great," Moore concluded to ITV Racing.

Epsom Downs witnessed a remarkable performance today, marking yet another chapter in the illustrious careers of City Of Troy, Aidan O'Brien, and Ryan Moore.

Bearing the balls of Derby week in Langley Vale

24 July 2024



Residents of **Langley Vale**, an estate adjacent to the renowned Epsom Racecourse, have expressed growing frustration and concern over repeated incidents of anti-social behavior and vandalism coinciding with the annual **Derby week**. The community's grievances were vividly shared through a series of social media posts, highlighting a range of disturbances and a perceived lack of adequate police response.



One resident described a troubling encounter with three males, one of whom had a cast, yet lamented the police's apparent indifference. "This is serious now, not just knock down ginger, but they don't seem to be taking it seriously. They should be going on site and looking for these culprits. The police should be patrolling this whole area of the downs anyway. They know we get trouble every year; a burnt-out car last year on the downs and theft," the post read.

Another resident voiced their anger over the disruption Derby week brings to the village, accusing the police of failing to ensure community safety. "The whole village gets held hostage this time of year, and the police don't do enough at all to make the residents feel safe," they stated.

The most alarming incident reported involved the shattering of bedroom windows by ball bearings, suspected to have been launched with a catapult, between 10-11 PM. Fortunately, the children's rooms were spared. The attack occurred at the top of Grosvenor Road, near the bridle path. "Reported it to the police, obviously, but if anyone has had similar treatment or saw anything suspicious, can you let me know or report it to 101," the resident urged.

Further reports of catapult and ball bearing damage surfaced within the village, including a patio door destroyed within a half-hour span. The resident noted the impressive accuracy of the attack, considering their home's secluded position next to the woods. They identified a pattern, suggesting the culprits were targeting homes from the bridle path at the top of Rosebery, Grosvenor, and Beaconsfield Roads, areas supposedly under police dispersal orders. "Despite these boys being exactly in the same place three evenings and nights running, no police presence was seen at the top of the village," the post concluded.

As Derby week continues, Langley Vale residents remain on edge, calling for more proactive measures from law enforcement to protect their community from further disturbances.

Inspector **Kelly Clifton-Sinclair**, Borough Commander for Epsom and Ewell, said: "We are aware of reports of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage in the Langley Vale area. We know that these crimes can have a serious effect on the local community, and I would like to reassure residents that we are investigating all possible lines of enquiry so that we can work to identify those responsible. Since the reports were made to us, we have had officers patrolling the local area, proactively speaking to the local community and those affected, to make sure residents feel safe."

"If you are a victim of crime, or have recently been a victim of crime, please report it to us so that we can investigate it thoroughly. Each report helps us to build our understanding of crime in the area so that we can respond, work to deter crime, and help keep our communities safe. If you have any information that might assist our investigation, please get in touch with us via Messenger quoting PR/ 45240061106."