



Epsom's local life savers

30 September 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."

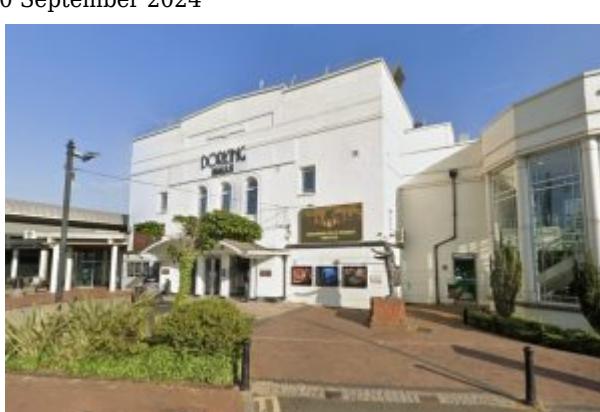
The awards take place on Tuesday 10 December at the Oval cricket ground, and will be generously supported by the hospital charities and local businesses. To make your nomination, visit www.stgeorges.nhs.uk/about/gesh-care-awards or www.epsom-sthelier.nhs.uk/gesh-care-awards by Tuesday 22 October.

NHS Press

Image: Jan in ITU with family

Dorking refurb: "it's behind you"!

30 September 2024



Dorking's "sleeping beauty" will wake up in time for the busy pantomime 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

30 September 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

30 September 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.

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Landmark pub re-assembles Tuesday

Surrey Coroner's bed safety concerns

30 September 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, **Ashtead**, on 27 June 2023, after a mattress extension fell through his bed's extension frame.

Assistant Coroner, **Susan Ridge**, raised concerns that Mr Batchelor'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 (Ashstead) Limited.

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

Surrey Tory MPs against school fees VAT

30 September 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 an 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."

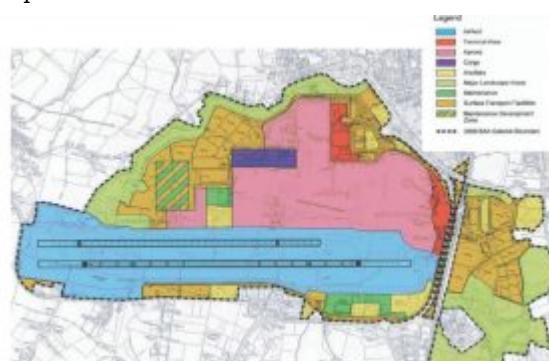
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Claire Coutinho MP for East Surrey

Gatwick expansion update

30 September 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."

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Gatwick Plans (Image PINS / Gatwick)

Surrey Coroner calls for action over ambulance wait

30 September 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?

30 September 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 furthermost 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)

Epsom landlord fined for neglect

30 September 2024



A bedsit landlord who repeatedly ignored warnings to fix flats dubbed "cold", "damp", "filthy", and a "firetrap" has been hit with a court bill approaching £32,000. Epsom Pars Limited, which runs a 21-room house in multiple occupation (HMO) near Epsom Downs was ordered to pay the fines and costs by Staines Magistrates' Court after they pleaded guilty to 48 criminal charges.

The case was brought forward by Reigate and Banstead Borough Council after the landlord repeatedly ignored warnings to carry out improvement works to the property.

Councillor Rich Michalowski, executive member for place, planning and regulatory services said: "This case underscores the importance of landlords being held accountable to ensure tenants are living in safe, well-maintained homes.

"Reigate and Banstead enforcement teams, armed with legal powers, will continue to take action against those who fail to meet the legal standards, ensuring that unsafe and unfit housing has no place in our borough."



The company was ordered to pay fines, costs, and a victim surcharge totalling £31,840. The charges included various forms of disrepair and fire safety offences, the council said.

The prosecution comes on the back of months of exchanges between the landlord and the council.

During that time officers from the private sector housing team were said to have repeatedly warned the landlord against its continued non-compliance that left people living in "cold", "damp", "filthy" "firertrap" of a property.

During sentencing, magistrates spoke of the "repeated, unacceptable non-compliance" and noted that the problems identified had put tenants at risk, according to a council statement.

Image RBBC

Epsom residents score double-century

30 September 2024



Two residents at Linden House Care Home in Epsom have celebrated their 100th birthdays surrounded by fellow residents, relatives, and the dedicated staff at the Surrey-based home.

Edith Valerie Griffiths, known as Val, and Evelyn Houseman marked their milestones with a small but special get together with friends and family. Val and Evelyn, who have both lived rich and active lives, were delighted to share their landmark birthdays with those closest to them.

Val, who was born in Richmond, Surrey, experienced a childhood of frequent moves due to her father's work. Despite the disruptions, Val developed a passion for sports, excelling in tennis, table tennis, ice skating, and skiing. During World War II, she was evacuated to Berkhamsted but returned to London after a year. Val married at the age of 33, becoming a mother to three boys, and is now also a grandmother of three.

Evelyn, a lifelong resident of Epsom, is renowned for her knitting and love of fashion. Having worked as a seamstress, she takes pride in the knitted jumpers she still wears today. Evelyn has always been passionate about music and dance, and she never misses a chance to be the first on the dance floor when Linden House hosts live entertainment.

Maintaining a healthy diet and drinking very little alcohol has helped Val live a long and happy life. Val's family believes that moderation has been key throughout her life but also acknowledge that good genes have played a significant role in her longevity.

Josephine Gbadamosi, manager of Linden House said: "Celebrating Val and Evelyn's 100th birthdays has been a wonderful experience for everyone at Linden House.

"These incredible women have lived rich, full lives, and their stories continue to inspire us all. It's a privilege to have them as part of our community, and we look forward to creating many more happy memories together."

Linden House, located in Epsom, Surrey, is rated 'Good' by the CQC, with an 'Outstanding' rating for its well-led category. Part of Wren Retirement Living, Linden House is managed by Healthcare Management Solutions, committed to providing high-quality care in a supportive and engaging environment.

Surrey scientists invite children to reach for the stars

30 September 2024



Children need to dream big and reach for the stars to become the country's future space engineers and budding astronauts, say the organisers of Guildford's World Space Week High Street Takeover.

Scientists from the University of Surrey and the Institute of Physics are encouraging young people, who may one day want to build the rockets and technology that make their way to space, to join them at Guildford High Street and Tunsgate Quarter, all day on Saturday, 5 October.

Event-goers will have the chance to get up close and personal with a miniature version of the Mars Rover and find out how it works on Mars; thanks to the Observatory Science Centre, there will be a state-of-the-art pop-up planetarium. Researchers from Surrey will be on hand to showcase the range of fascinating space-based work taking place at the University, and employers from the local space sector will be on hand to answer any questions that young people may have about working in the field.

Professor Adam Amara, Head of the School of Mathematics and Physics at the University of Surrey, who is also an astrophysicist, said:

"Our primary goal as educators is to inspire people – and that is why our University is delighted to once again host this event with our partners from the Institute of Physics.

"The space sector in our region is a truly exciting, forward-thinking place and the goal of events like this is to ensure that the sector has a pipeline of skilled young people who dream big and reach for the stars."

For more information on other activities happening at the World Space Week High Street Takeover, visit our website.

Image: credit: Grant Pritchard / University of Surrey