



Confusing debate on police attending mental health calls

30 June 2023



An ex-police officer has responded to **Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner's** calls for coppers to attend fewer mental health call outs - saying the first murder he attended was initially a non-critical mental health call.

Surrey's Police and Crime Commissioner, **Lisa Townsend**, recently called for officers to stop attending every mental health call out, saying officers are being taken off the front line. She has called for the "Right Care, Right Person" model to be introduced, following the Metropolitan Police also saying from August they will no longer attend mental health call outs where there is not a threat to life.

Councillor **Richard Smith**, a Tandridge District Councillor, said he had been a police officer for 30 years and that he was in agreement with Mrs Townsend's comments. (*sic*)

Cllr Smith (Residents' Alliance, Burstow, Horne & Outwood) spoke at the annual meeting of Surrey County Council's Police and Crime Panel on Thursday (June 29). He said: "Probably the first murder I went to was a non-critical [mental health] call to a person who then decided to stab the nurse to death with a carving knife out of the kitchen. I feel that's where we are going to come unstuck when it comes to removing police from mental health calls."

Mrs Townsend responded that was "absolutely the right place for police to be" and there would always be a role for police to play in such cases. But she said police officers should not be attending where there was a role for other agencies, such as adult social care or the NHS, to follow up.

Earlier in the meeting she had pointed to additional money given to the NHS for mental health support, which police don't get. But she was clear the police should not get additional money, in her opinion.

She said: "If somebody has broken their leg we would not expect them to be in the back of a police car. "If somebody is having a mental health crisis I do not want them in the back of a police car."

Mrs Townsend said she'd had "difficult" conversations with NHS representatives about police officers not being able to attend all mental health calls.

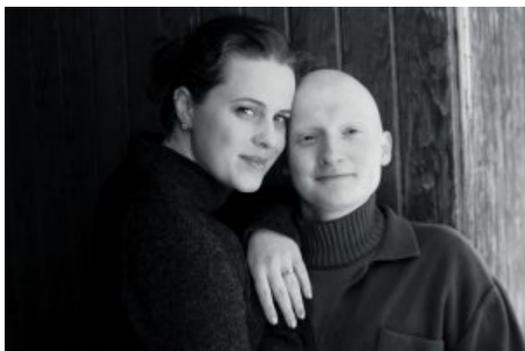
She told the meeting the difference was: "I'm not walking into A&E in St Peter's on a Friday night saying can we borrow a couple of nurses because we have got some burglaries that need solving in Woking?"

She said in February, officers spent 515 hours on incidents relating to mental health which was the highest number of hours ever recorded in a single month by **Surrey Police**.

Image: Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey Lisa Townsend. Surrey Live photographer Darren Pepe.

Running ahead of Crohn's disease

30 June 2023



"I didn't think I would ever be able to run 10k" said **Epsom man** and Crohn's disease sufferer **Harry Reed**. But he will now compete in the London race on 9 July to raise awareness of disease.

Last year, after a long battle with Crohn's Disease, 24-year-old Harry Reed weighed just 48kg. Today he is training for the ASICS London 10k and is in his best health of recent years. "I'm super excited," says Harry who is due to compete on July 9.

"My knee's been playing up recently, so I've had to take it easy over the last couple of weeks...but apart from that...I have

a feeling it's going to go very well." Before [developing Crohn's] I was an athlete," says Harry who grew up in Epsom. "I was a county sprinter and I actually qualified for the county races."

After losing much of his strength due to illness Harry's race preparation now incorporates muscle training to help with his endurance. "All the strength that you'd normally build up in like your joints, I lost it. So, I'm currently doing a lot of work to kind of build up the strength in my ligaments, tendons and around my knees and ankles."

Crohn's Disease is a chronic condition which causes parts of the gut to become swollen and inflamed resulting in symptoms including pain, diarrhoea, weight loss and extreme tiredness.

Harry developed Crohn's in 2015 when, after a calf muscle injury, he contracted glandular fever later leading to the onset of his disease. The route to a diagnosis was not straight forward and Harry spent his GCSEs through to A levels in and out of hospitals. "They just couldn't figure it out because my blood tests weren't coming back with anything specific that was wrong," Harry says.

Harry was finally diagnosed in 2017, 2 years after his symptoms began. But, that year, during an initial surgery to treat the Crohn's, Harry developed life threatening infections of the blood and stomach lining known as sepsis and peritonitis. He was transferred from Epsom to St Helier's hospital for emergency surgery.

"I wasn't expected to live. So that was a bit of a miracle in itself...I had to basically say goodbye to my parents, my family at that time because we all knew that it wasn't good."

The complications did not end there. In 2019, Harry developed hair loss known as alopecia. He also experienced two rounds of failed drug treatments which led to a severe return of symptoms in 2022.

"My diet sort of got narrower and narrower about things that were okay for me to eat...by the end of September [2022], I had not been able to eat for a couple of weeks. I ended up going into hospital through A&E due to the backlog of patients with COVID."

Harry was given intravenous nutrition before undergoing further surgery to remove the problem part of his bowel. Thankfully the operation was a success, and it was in 2022 that Harry was able to rediscover his love for running.

"When I first started.... it went terribly. But it felt great when I got back, to actually feel like I accomplished something or at least to have that sort of exercise endorphin release. Mentally the fog had been lifted for just a moment which was really great."

"As I was able to eat more, my body was able to take in more calories, my strength grew. By November of 2022 I was given the kind of all clear by my surgeon... It's been a blessing to be able to do it for myself and prove to myself that I can do it. I didn't think I would ever be able to run 10k so to be able to feel confident about doing a good job is so exciting."

Harry will run to raise awareness of the disease, which affects over 1 in 123 people in the UK*.

"It's an invisible illness - you'll never know if someone's got Crohn's," says Harry. "I think the tough thing... is realising the severity and the kind of the intensity that people suffer when it comes to the flare ups. It's something that is really hard to put into perspective. I think also the lack of energy that you have...it's like you have to work 10 times as hard. And most of the time your output is 10 times less. I think once you can be educated, you can then have empathy towards people and some more understanding".

Harry currently works as a creative director for a publishing house start-up based in Epsom, where he lives with his fiancé. His upcoming race will be the start of many, with plans to run the Bacchus Wine 10k at Denbies Wine Estate in September.

You can find out more about Harry's upcoming race at

<https://limelightsports.club/event/asics-london-10k-2023>.

*Crohn's Disease or Ulcerative Colitis - stats from Crohn's and Colitis UK

New Epsom theatre very open for business

30 June 2023



Set amidst rolling lavender fields, the **Lavender Theatre** will open for its inaugural summer season this July in **Epsom**. The theatre is located at 139 Reigate Road, Epsom KT17 3D

The 250-seat open air theatre will be home for an annual season of plays and musicals with a truly elegant backdrop.

Based at Mayfield Lavender in Surrey, the theatre has been co-founded by director **Joe McNeice** (producer/director of 'DIVA: Live From Hell!'), Mayfield owner Brendan Maye and Jonathan Muir.

The inaugural season will open with Irving Berlin's classic musical '**Annie Get Your Gun**' from July 17, with music and lyrics by Irving Berlin, original book by Herbert and Dorothy Fields as revised by Peter Stone, with new direction and choreography by Simon Hardwick ('My Fair Lady').

The launch of the theatre will see the completion of a significant investment into the Epsom site, which already boasts a coffee bar, shop, and a full service glasshouse restaurant due to open alongside the theatre this summer.

"This will be more than just a visit to a theatre," commented Joe McNeice, "Audiences will be able to grab a picnic to enjoy among the blossoming rows of lavender as the sun begins to set, before taking their seats in our covered auditorium to watch a show under the stars."

Since opening in 2006, the Mayfield Lavender Farm in Banstead has grown into a major summer destination for tourists and locals in South London, and this year the team are opening the gates to a theatre at their sister location in Epsom.

Lavender Theatre Artistic Director **Joe McNeice** worked behind the scenes at London's immersive 'Great Gatsby', and was Regent's Park Open Air Theatre's Visitor Services Manager until 2022, after graduating from the University of York in 2018.

"The whole place looks incredible, just walking about the site is a real treat for all the senses," McNeice added, "so our shows have to compliment their surroundings and match the sophistication that the natural landscape has set for us."

Speaking of his plans for 'Annie Get Your Gun', **Simon Hardwick** said: "The show will be a rip-roaring staging of the well known Broadway musical in a very raw and kinetic production that evokes the energy of Buffalo Bill's original touring celebrations of the Wild West. The Lavender Theatre will be a dream destination; an environment in which to enjoy a West End-standard production under a hazy summer sky."

The theatre, privately funded and managed by **Lavender Productions Ltd.**, will produce its own shows with plans to see the summer season expand year on year with diverse and engaging programming.

McNeice said: "With no public funding or grants to help us achieve this mammoth project, we are relying solely on our Box Office income to build the Lavender Theatre into a profitable business, but we believe that creating a new producing theatre, a proper landmark location for the arts in Surrey, is something worth the investment, for both the local community and the wider industry."

"I'm really passionate about developing new shows, particularly musicals. The location is perfect because it's actually very close to London, but far enough away to have its own identity, which will give us the opportunity to develop work without the vast expense and pressure that comes with opening new shows in the capital. It's an incredibly exciting opportunity."

Tickets for the inaugural season are on sale today at lavendertheatre.com.

Epsom family Opened to a two degree challenge

30 June 2023



Joanna McLenaghan walked quite literally in her Epsom father's footsteps when she followed dad Ian across the stage to collect identical degrees recently at a ceremony staged by **The Open University**.

The pair signed up for an OU MSc in Maths in the same year and there followed six years of "total rivalry" to see who could get the best marks for assignments.

It's the third degree for Joanna, 36, who is now a data scientist managing a team of people at Gousto, the recipe box company.

She earned a first-class degree in physics at Oxford followed by a doctorate in the same subject from the University of St Andrews. But her latest achievement was hard won by burning the midnight oil whilst working full time.

Jo, as she is also known, says her OU degree was definitely a factor in her gaining her latest job at Gousto as she says employers know the "level of effort and commitment that you have to put in, particularly doing something over six years on top of a job. Whilst I already had the undergraduate degree and a PhD, I think as an employer, when you're looking through hundreds of applications having something like this on a CV really helps you to shine," she said.

Ian McLenaghan, 66, from **Epsom** in Surrey, is full of praise for his daughter: "I'm incredibly proud of her achievements. We might have started out on the same pathway but she's much more of a people person, who's capable of

doing things like management. “That’s something I avoided like the plague when I was working. I just wanted to go away in a cupboard somewhere and work on my own solving technical problems.”

Yet Ian is something of an academic himself. He *also* has an Oxford degree in physics, and in the same subject holds a doctorate from Imperial College as well as an MS from the California Institute of Technology. He began his MSc while semi-retired to “keep Alzheimer’s at bay” but also admitted “I guess we like studying”.

Jo says she clearly remembers Ian encouraging her and supporting her studies through childhood: “I always remember, before I went to high school, that my dad and I had these study sessions where he cut out these different molecules and then we’d attach them together with paper clips. And he was always buying me things like magnet sets, so he definitely encouraged me from a young age.” She says once he bought her a book on Java programming!

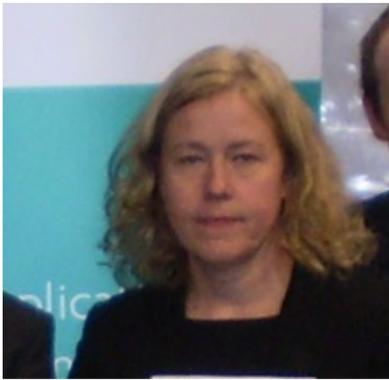
For Jo, her dad is an inspiration: “He’s had a lifelong love of learning that he’s been willing to pass on. He taught himself coding and computer programming and it’s that curiosity that has guided him his whole life.” She added: “I think a lot of people think you just learn when you’re a child; a teenager and then you when you go to university and then that’s it!”

The Open University (OU) is the largest academic institution in the UK and a world leader in flexible distance learning. Since it began in 1969, the OU has taught more than 2.3 million students worldwide and currently has over 208,000 students. Seventy-one per cent of directly registered students are in full-time or part-time employment, and 76 FTSE 100 companies have sponsored staff to take OU courses.

Philippa Green reporting.

County CEO’s pay rise triggering strikes?

30 June 2023



A pay offer giving **Surrey County Council**’s chief executive almost 10 times more than the authority’s lowest paid workers has prompted a strike action ballot.

Social workers, teaching assistants and bin collectors are among the thousands of county council staff voting on industrial action. It’s over a pay offer public sector union Unison says falls far short of covering the increase in the cost of living.

UNISON’s Surrey county branch secretary **Paul Couchman** said: “After years of below-inflation pay increases and with the soaring cost of living, staff are struggling. There’s still no end in sight to spiralling bills and staff feel strongly that enough is enough. It’s not too late for the council to think again and improve its pay offer.”

According to the union about nine in 10 members rejected the county council’s offer which it said would increase the overall wage bill by 5 per cent.

If accepted it would have worked out as an additional £1,300 and £1,700, to low-paid staff with the chief executive **Joanna Killian**’s £234,600 salary topped up by up to £10,000, the union said.

Surrey County Council leader **Tim Oliver**, said the council recognised the financial pressures people were living under and labelled the decision to turn down the pay increase “disappointing”.

He said: “ That’s why we have worked really hard to find extra money for staff pay this year, increasing our offer to make sure that for the second year running we are focussing the largest percentage increases on our lowest paid employees to reflect the increased costs staff are facing day by day.

“This years’ offer is between 7.8 per cent for the lowest grades, and 4.5 per cent on the highest, with a Surrey minimum wage of £11.05 per hour -15p per hour higher than the Real Living Wage. This represents an increase of 16.3 per cent over the past two years for staff on the very lowest pay grades, and is in addition to a one-off lump sum payment for business mileage and a Real Living Wage adjustment for lower paid staff paid in January this year.

“However, it’s imperative that the offer is within our means. The council is not immune to the challenges of the current economic landscape, rising costs and inflation pressures. Put simply everything is more expensive for us to buy as a council too, and we must ensure we remain in a position to deliver vital public services and protect the most vulnerable in our communities throughout. It’s within this context that discussions will continue, and we will be reviewing our next steps accordingly.”

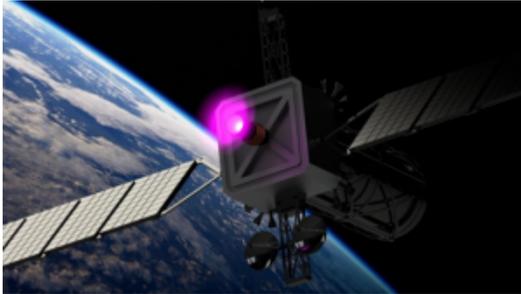
Addressing the increase to the CEO’s salary a spokesperson for the council said that its focus was on providing the best possible services to 1.2m residents of Surrey, and to ensure it does this, needs to have the best people in senior positions.

They said: “The scale of our work means we employ 10,000 staff, and have an annual budget of £1bn, and in order to attract the best people from both the public and private sector for this, we need to offer competitive salaries.”

Image: Julian Killian SCC CEO. Credit: User:Dolfussguy CC BY-SA 4.0

Surrey's "Tugs in Space!"

30 June 2023



Thanks to £250,000 of government funding announced today, a new type of electric space propulsion system will be developed by the **University of Surrey** in partnership with the University of Leicester. The new thruster would be used to service and reposition satellites in space via agile space tugs.

The **PLAsma Torch Rocket (PLATOR)** project will fill a gap in current propulsion options, offering a balance between the high thrust typical of chemical propulsion engines and the propellant efficiency of electrical propulsion ones.

The project has been awarded £250,000 from the **UK Space Agency's** Enabling Technologies programme.

Dr Andrea Lucca Fabris, Senior Lecturer in Electric Propulsion at the University's Surrey Space Centre and project lead, said:

"Our PLATOR rocket could be used as the main way to move spacecraft after launch, or it could be used in space transportation vehicles, or space tugs, for delivering satellites to specific orbital slots, refuelling satellites to prolong their service life and removing space debris."

As well as designing the propulsion system, the project will explore potential uses for PLATOR through flight dynamics simulations, identify the optimal size and design of space tugs and, in partnership with researchers at the University of Leicester, develop a piloting system.

Dr **Nicola Baresi**, Lecturer in Astrodynamics at the University's Surrey Space Centre and project co-Investigator, added:

"PLATOR will increase the options available to mission planners and could be particularly useful when the UK develops its own launch capability. UK launches will only be able to reach high-inclination orbits, but our proposed space tugs could hopefully expand their reach, opening the door to new and exciting mission opportunities from the UK soil"

Surrey Space Centre is where the era of small, low-cost satellites began with the successful spin-out company SSTL. Today, Surrey Space Centre is a world-leading academic centre of excellence for space engineering research and education which regularly leads on experimental orbital payloads. Surrey Space Centre is globally renowned for its Space Engineering education courses at Masters and Undergraduate level. It is part of the Space South Central regional cluster.

The PLATOR project will make the most of the advanced vacuum facilities and instrumentation in the Space Propulsion Laboratory at Surrey Space Centre.

Image: An artist's impression of PLATOR: Oliver Hitchens, University of Surrey.

Surrey University Press Office

The knives are out in Woking

30 June 2023



The Epsom and Ewell Times has covered the bankruptcy of Woking Council. Recently we have received daily updates from our partners at the BBC's Local Democracy Reporting Service but spared you from the flood. This report, however, demonstrates the importance of a vibrant quality local media. The baffling commitments that were made by Woking are unlikely to be made by our Epsom and Ewell Borough Council. Nevertheless, a free press reporting on Council business is an important contribution to sensible decision making. Chris Caulfield reports:

Woking Borough Council's bankruptcy crisis is so insane the authority even agreed to be responsible for "buying the Hilton Hotel's cutlery".

It is the first of many revelations to come as the authority agreed to an "asset disposal strategy" as part of its efforts to cut into its £2.6 billion projected debt on Tuesday (June 20).

Many eyes were immediately drawn to the council's flagship town centre development in Victoria Square - a central driver behind the council's £1.2 billion deficit.

But the recent news that it had been written down in value to almost half what it cost to build means it is unlikely to be sold at a massive loss straight away. It's the assets inside the building that made many drop their spoons.

Addressing the extraordinary council meeting was borough leader Cllr Ann-Marie Barker. She said: "Let's have a look at a couple of projects. Victoria Square going from £150 million to £460m to £700m. Huge difference in the scale of what went on there. Huge changes to the project as it went through. Much that wasn't known by opposition councillors as that project developed.

"I found out at a very late stage that Woking Council was responsible for buying all of the cutlery for the Hilton Hotel. That was where the hotel was run, we've got to buy all the stuff that goes inside there. It just seems quite astonishing that that was the approach and how much responsibility and risk the council has taken on. That's where the huge issues lie."

The opening of the Hilton Hotel, part of the Victoria Square development, is already about three years overdue. It was originally set for completion in November but the pandemic and other delays pushed this back 16 months. Later remedial work to address cladding issues added another 20 months on to the opening date.

Meanwhile the knives and forks have sat unused in drawers.

Cllr Barker added: "To get things under control you have to understand the totality of the problem."

Residents' complaints about anti-protester measures ahead of Derby

30 June 2023



Epsom Derby organisers faced an "awful lot of complaints" from residents as they put up fencing and closed footpaths to minimise disruption caused by Animal Rising protesters. The activists had made clear before the event they planned to disrupt this year's Derby, and one did make it to the track.

The Jockey Club, which owns **Epsom racecourse** among others, applied for an injunction ahead of the event on Saturday, June 3.

It also asked a special meeting of the **Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators**, held behind closed doors just days before the event, for permission to put up 4,000 metres of fencing across the Downs and suspend footpaths.

Simon Durrant, representing the Jockey Club at a meeting of the Conservators held on Monday (June 19), spoke of his "disappointment" at the fencing having to go up and that organisers were "constantly fearing the worst". But he said due to the "unique" nature of the Epsom Downs, organisers quickly realised "it wasn't about avoidance it was about how we were going to react to it".

Mr Durrant set out the challenges ahead of this year's event and addressed "frustrations" residents may have had. Adding that he knew there would be councillors at the meeting who had heard from residents about their "frustrations and disappointment" he called it a "different and difficult" event this year.

He said: "It was made even more difficult because, for obvious reasons, we didn't want to communicate why we were putting fencing up, why we were suspending the footpaths. We didn't want to give the protesters too much information before that Saturday morning. We've had comments in from residents as well."

He told the meeting that the Jockey Club had seen what the protesters were capable of when they disrupted the Grand National at Aintree in April. He said there were three types of protesters, the "really pleasant" peaceful protesters outside the grounds, those "intent on causing a scene in and around the racecourse" and then those who were trying to gain access to the racetrack.

Councillor **Bernice Froud** (Residents' Association, Woodcote and Langley Vale) thanked Mr Durrant for the explanation

of the security issues. She said: “I did have an awful lot of complaints where I think people just didn’t quite understand what was happening. I fully understand that none of us in this room that knew about it could really publicise that. So I think it’s really helpful that you’ve actually explained in detail what the reasoning was, and I hope that goes some way to actually reassuring the residents.”

At the meeting it was also confirmed that no working royals attended the Derby, and that as the late Queen Elizabeth II used to attend in a private capacity, it was not something that was “naturally be passed along” through the family.

Mr Durrant pointed to other complications across the weekend, including train strikes, and the FA Cup final between Manchester United and Manchester City that was played at Wembley on the same day.

He told the meeting: “Two Manchester clubs, playing in London. It was great for the Manchester United fans because most of them live in London.”

With an event that he said gets “better and better every year”, Mr Durrant said of the Derby weekend: “As ever, in general, a fantastic, iconic event that puts Epsom on the map again.”

Image: Preparations for the Queen’s Jubilee celebrations underway on the Hill seen from the Epsom Downs Racecourse. Credit: LDR Emily Coady-Stemp

Should have gone to the Surrey Youth Games?

30 June 2023



On Saturday, children in **Epsom & Ewell** who took part in the 2023 **Specsavers** Surrey Youth Games and their families came together to celebrate the Games at the Surrey Sports Park in Guildford. Around 70 children from Epsom & Ewell aged 7-16 took part in the Games this year, having a go at a fun across a range of activities – from boccia, boxing and street basketball to judo and rugby, all at no charge.

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games is the biggest multi-sport youth programme of its kind in the south east. The Games were open to all but were actively promoted to encourage those who might not normally get the chance to join a sports club or are otherwise inactive.

The Games would not have been possible without the 12 young ambassadors who helped promote them in their schools, encouraging young people to find out more and sign up to take part.

Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee said “We were overjoyed to see so many children from Epsom & Ewell take part in the Specsavers Surrey Youth Games this year.

“We know that building positive habits in early life is vital for the long-term health of our children and the Games are a great way for children who may not previously have had access to some of these sports to join in and have fun taking part.

I was honoured to meet the young ambassadors who volunteered their time to help promote the Games to their peers earlier in the year while I was serving as Mayor of Epsom & Ewell and was delighted to see the positive outcome of their efforts this weekend.”

The Specsavers Surrey Youth Games were coordinated by Active Surrey and sponsored by Specsavers.

Anonymity justified by acquittal?

30 June 2023



A service Surrey Police officer who allegedly ‘harassed two female colleagues’ has been cleared of misconduct. The hearing’s chairperson said they had looked into allegations that a police constable carried out a series of acts of harassment against two female officers but misconduct thresholds had not been proven, or were not reached.

The police officer, who has not been named and is referred to as “PC X”, escaped sanctions after the five day hearing which took place last week at the force’s Guildford HQ.

[Image is illustration only - it is not the officer in question.]

PC X was accused of “shouting” at an officer during the first coronavirus lockdown, and attempted to hug another officer twice despite being warned about his behaviour.

Summing up, chairperson Eileen Herlihy said that on July 3, 2020, PC X got involved in a work-place argument that continued at the female officer’s desk. Describing the altercation, which was said to have lasted a matter of seconds, the chairperson said: “He shouted at her” and approached “ her in an intimidating manner” and that his actions were said to cause “intimidation and embarrassment” over a matter of “police policy”.

The argument was said to have started before she was at her desk but that the tone was “abrupt” and “brusque”. He then “placed himself close to her face” and “she had to put her hands up to create some space”. After the argument the pair continued their day as normal. The woman’s initial reaction was that it “was not a big deal but felt embarrassed”.

The chairperson said that it was “not the officers intention to intimidate” and that there was no evidence the PC made any reference to her gender or sex. It was a “genuine disagreement between colleagues that led to an argument”.

The other two matters related to attempts to hug the same woman. The first incident was said to have occurred on January 13, 2020. The panel heard two conflicting reports about the exact details surrounding the PC asking a female colleague for a hug outside their office. The dispute was over the timings of when he went in to hug her, and that he didn’t stop when she pulled away.

The female PC said she regarded him as having a “reputation” as being “over friendly”, “creepy and uncomfortable”. Two months later when she was alone inside the office he again asked her for a hug. He put out his arms and she said no before walking away. He had already been warned about his behaviour.

The panel found he had failed to treat her with respect and courtesy but the chairperson said there was no motive of sexual gratification.

The panel found two of the allegations unproven; the argument and outdoor hug. The third, in the office, was proven but “but fell short of the threshold required for formal disciplinary action”.

Surrey Police Headquarters in Mount Browne, near Guildford, hosted the police misconduct procedure between Monday, June 12, and Friday, June 16.

The male PC can not be named after his identity was protected by the committee chairperson to protect his welfare.

The hearing was brought by the Professional Standards Department as it felt there were cases to answer over potential breaches of authority, respect and courtesy, equality and diversity.

A spokesperson for Surrey Police said “thresholds for referral to disciplinary proceedings are necessarily set lower than that necessary to prove the misconduct, to ensure transparency in the police disciplinary regime.”

During the course of the hearing, an application to withdraw certain allegations against the PC were also agreed.

Related report:

[Anonymity for Surrey policeman](#)

Ex MPC, now Epsom PPC, tackles Surrey PCs

30 June 2023



Epsom and Ewell Liberal Democrat prospective parliamentary candidate and former Royal Military Police officer, **Helen**

Maguire, is pushing Government to spend more on policing in Surrey given the “dire” state of policing in the County.

Using figures culled from various public sources by the LibDems, Ms Maguire points to the 1,412 burglaries that went unattended in Surrey last year, as another example “... of the Conservative Government suggesting it is tough on crime with the facts telling a different story”.

Figures uncovered by her Party show that of the 2,768 burglaries reported in Surrey, the police only arrived at the scene in 1356 instances – accounting for just 48.99% of cases. The number of unsolved burglaries in Surrey also soared, with 2195 cases being closed without a suspect even identified. This is equivalent to 79.3% of all cases.

The Liberal Democrats are calling for a new “Burglary Response Guarantee,” which would create a guarantee that all domestic burglaries are attended by the police and properly investigated.

This will require a return to proper community policing, the LibDems urge – where officers are visible, trusted, and have the time and resources needed to focus on solving crime. Yet since 2015, Ms Maguire claims, the Conservatives have taken over 4,000 Police Community Support Officers off the streets, while they look set to have broken their key promise of having recruited an extra 20,000 police officers by the end of March 2023.

“The number of PCSOs has fallen to just 69 by the end of March – down from 136 PCSOs just over a year ago in February 2022. It’s worse in **Epsom and Ewell** where we should have 8 and now have half of that number. That’s hardly a good track record for a (Tory) Party which makes out to be supportive of policing! Hardly surprising then that so many burglaries in our community are not being attended by police officers. No family should be denied justice after suffering the distress and trauma of being burgled”, said Ms Maguire.

“Car theft is also a scourge across the county with a staggering 79.2% of car thefts going unsolved last year with just 5.3% resulting in a charge or summons. Lib Dem analysis, based on the latest Home Office statistics on crime outcomes, showed that a grand total of 1503 car theft cases in Surrey were closed in 2022 without a suspect even being identified – equivalent to 4 car thefts going unsolved every day.

“The priorities of this government are clearly not on our public services with our police officers, like the NHS, being starved of resources. In such a dire situation, enough is enough – we need a change of regime – one that puts the focus on our communities, on law and order, and the health and wealth of our people,” said Helen Maguire.

“Many families across Surrey now feel unsafe in their own homes, because this Conservative government has left our police forces overstretched and under-resourced. It means far too many victims are being denied justice and far too many criminals are getting away with it.

“Meanwhile, it has been revealed that the Surrey Police budget for 2022/23 was underspent by at least £7.9 million, enough to pay for the entire 5.1% council tax increase imposed by the Police and Chief Commissioner Lisa Townsend for 2023/24.”

Surrey Police responded to Ms Maguire’s claims:

Exclusive to the **Epsom and Ewell Times** a spokesperson for Surrey Police rebuts the LibDem candidate’s claims:

“We are committed to deploying officers to all home burglaries. We recognise how invasive and traumatic it can be to be a victim of burglary, and this is why we are already investing significant resources in preventing and tackling these offences, alongside providing the appropriate support and advice to victims.

Each of our three divisions in Surrey has its own proactive team that reviews all burglaries in that division. These teams monitor ongoing burglary trends and patterns, identify hot spot areas and target prolific and repeat offenders and organised crime networks to ensure that patrols are directed in a targeted and most effective way.

Changes to how burglaries are classified, which were introduced on 1 April 2023, will enable officers to give a greater focus on home burglaries and help to meet the NPCC pledge of attending all home burglaries.

Burglary offences had previously been divided into two categories of “residential” and “business and community”. A residential burglary previously included sheds, garages, outhouses and summer houses, as well as the dwelling itself.

The changes will mean that residential burglaries are split into two categories – residential burglary of a home and residential burglary of an unconnected building. All sheds, outhouses and garages with no connecting door to the home will be classed as unconnected buildings.

Our figures show that we have solved 81 more offences than the previous 12 months and so far have had 125 less offences (106 less offences between April 2023 and today v April 2022 and June 14/06/22).

Work also remains ongoing to prevent burglaries from occurring in the first place by ensuring effective prevention measures are in place. Many of the residential burglaries reported are shed or garage break-ins and we continue to run awareness-raising campaigns in our local communities to remind homeowners of the steps they can take to avoid becoming a victim.

More advice on protecting your home/outbuildings from burglary can be found on our web site <https://www.surrey.police.uk/cp/crime-prevention/protect-home-crime/>

In some cases, there may not be enough intelligence or positive lines of enquiry for police to act on. This does not mean that a crime is closed indefinitely or that intelligence or information is ignored. This information will be collated and monitored to identify emerging crime hotspots and any trends or patterns.

If an investigation is closed, and we then receive information to link an offender at a later date we will always pursue this to seek closure for victims.

The public can also help in the pursuit of offenders by reporting suspicious activity, and also by reporting to the police

those selling stolen property or those involved in burglary offences via 101, by webchat on our website <https://surrey.police.uk/online> and <https://www.surrey.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/cor/tell-us-about-existing-case-report/> or anonymously via the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Residents are also able to upload video footage and images that they think could assist our burglary investigations through the use of a public CCTV submission portal <https://surrey.police.uk/suspiciousactivityportal> “

And on the claims about reductions in PCSOs the police spokesperson continued:

“In 2022, to contribute to savings across the force, we reduced the number of Police Community Support Officers in Surrey Police to 96, 22 posts fewer than our previous staffing level of 118 full-time equivalent PCSOs. This reduction did not involve redundancies and achieving this staffing level did not result in a reduction in overall numbers in our Safer Neighbourhood Teams; we maintain a strong blended mix of police officers and PCSOs in these key frontline posts in every borough.

In September 2022, Surrey Police employed 88 PCSOs. This is lower than our desired number of PCSOs, so it is inaccurate to say that 35 PCSO roles have been cut by the Force. We are actively recruiting to bring our establishment level back up to 96.

We know how important a visible police team with local knowledge is to residents in each of our boroughs. A trusted, knowledgeable, and proactive local policing presence is just as important to us, and PCSOs are a valued and integral part of that.”

Adding to the local force’s rebuttal Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey **Lisa Townsend** said: “The suggestion that policing in the county is in a ‘dire’ state is once again entirely misleading – the reality is that Surrey Police is now the biggest it has ever been.

“The Force has not only met but exceeded its target for extra officers under the government’s programme to increase numbers by 20,000 across the country. An extra 395 police officers have been added to the ranks since 2019 – this is 136 more than the target set by government for Surrey which is fantastic news for residents.

“Last year, in order to help achieve its savings target – Surrey Police made an operational decision to temporarily halt the recruitment of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). “These posts were replaced with new warranted officers and there were no redundancies or loss of numbers to Surrey Police’s frontline teams.

“PCSOs continue to play a crucial role in policing our communities – recruitment has been reopened and the Force are seeking applications right now. We expect their numbers to back to the previous levels within three years.

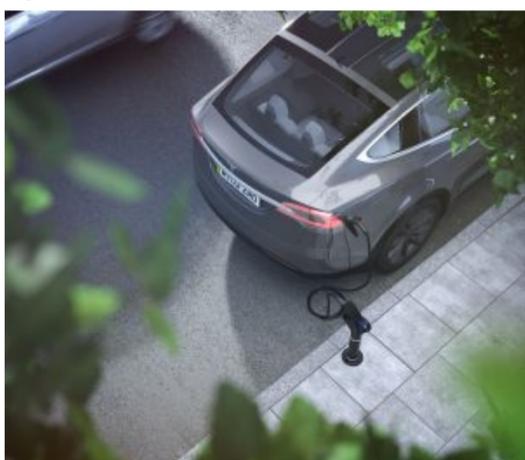
“Over the last year, Surrey Police have achieved an increase in the number of residential burglaries solved and have since coupled this with a commitment to attend all reported house burglaries in Surrey. The outcome rate for residential burglary in Surrey remains above the national average.

“I’m proud that Surrey is the safest county in the south east, and the fourth safest county in the country.”

What is your experience of policing in Epsom and Ewell? Write to us at Epsom and Ewell Times. Via the contact page or by email to admin@epsomandewelltimes.com

Kerbing car pollution trial in Surrey

30 June 2023



On Thursday 15 June, **Clean Air Day**, Surrey County Council is launching the trial of two domestic kerbside electric vehicle (EV) charging solutions for Surrey residents who do not have access to off-street parking. The trial, one of the first in the UK, will allow residents to choose from two options – either cable gullies or a Trojan AON charger. Both connect to the residents’ domestic energy supply, to allow home charging for EVs without the need for a driveway.

Both options are being introduced as part of a trial, with limited numbers of each available. The trial will be used to assess effectiveness and popularity, combined with feedback from residents who participate. To find out more and to register for the trial, residents can visit this **webpage**.

The two products being trialled are cable gullies and Trojan AON chargers. Cable gullies are channels installed in the

pavement that can be used to safely trail an EV charging cable, and AON chargers are installed on the pavement near the kerb with a cable laid underneath the pavement connecting it directly to a property's own electrical supply.

Councillor Matt Furniss, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport said: *"Many Surrey residents have written to us in the last year with interest in new and innovative ways to charge electric vehicles from their home. I am delighted to be able to offer these two new kerbside charging products to our residents. I look forward to seeing the outcomes of this trial and hope this could provide another charging solution for residents and allow more people to switch to electric vehicles."*

In Surrey, almost half of our emissions come from transport, and about half of that is from private vehicles. So, reducing the emissions from the way we travel about - whether that's by walking or cycling more, using public transport or switching to an electric car - can help to drastically reduce our carbon footprint. Electric vehicles produce no exhaust emissions, so are much cleaner than petrol or diesel cars. Approximately 40% of households in Surrey do not have access to a driveway at home, so innovative solutions are needed to encourage more people to switch to EVs.

The installation and maintenance of the cable gullies will be managed by Surrey County Council.

The AON chargers have been developed by Trojan Energy and Surrey County Council will license Trojan Energy to install, maintain and operate AON chargers on Surrey's highways.

The Trojan AON charger differs from the cable gullies in that it can be shared across more than one local household to reduce the cost to residents. Both trials will involve a cost to residents.

Ian Mackenzie, Trojan Energy CEO, said: *"At Trojan Energy, we understand the importance of accessibility and convenience when it comes to EV charging. That's why we're delighted to be part of this trial bringing innovative solutions to Surrey residents. Our home-connected Trojan AON makes EV charging fully accessible to residents who don't have off-street parking, helping everyone benefit from the transition to EV."*

The trials are expected to run for a minimum of three years, with 30 cable gullies and 50 AON chargers being installed in the first year. A new quota will be agreed for the following years and if the trial is deemed successful, the limit on numbers will be removed. The aim of the trial is to understand whether there is demand for this type of charging method and whether this provides a good solution for residents without private parking. Several factors will be monitored throughout, including how easily the charge points are maintained and whether there is demand for continued use from Surrey residents.

Site selection for the cable gullies will take place in two stages. An initial survey will need to be completed to register interest and share location details. If the site is suitable, the electric vehicle team at Surrey County Council will contact applicants for a more detailed assessment.

Site selection for the AON chargers will be determined by Trojan Energy.

Related reports:

Let's go Electric Epsom and Ewell

Council driving forward with electric chargers

Surrey lands largest EV charging contract in UK

Mayor's electrifying car decision

Surrey County Council co-stars in national CoSTAR lab

30 June 2023



Surrey is to be the home of brand new state-of-the art facilities for the UK's creative industry sector, thanks to a successful bid involving **Surrey County Council**.

A partnership team, led by Royal Holloway University of London (RHUL), and involving Pinewood Studios, disguise, BT, Buckinghamshire Local Enterprise Partnership, University of Surrey, Abertay University and National Film and Television School, alongside the county council, has been announced as the preferred bidder for the 'Convergent Screen Technologies and performance in Realtime (CoSTAR)' national lab.

The successful bid will create hundreds of new jobs and add tens of millions of pounds to Surrey's economy.*

The national CoSTAR lab and three regional R&D labs will ensure the UK has the skills and infrastructure to stay on the

cutting-edge of new virtual production techniques in film, TV and live events which involve using computer-generated imagery (CGI), augmented reality and motion capture to create ‘virtual sets’. Instead of adding visual effects and CGI in post-production, virtual production allows filmmakers and theatre directors to create large-scale digitally-generated environments using LED panels that performers can interact with in real-time, as a quicker and less expensive alternative to green screens. The technology has been used in the *ABBA Voyage* live concert and the *Batman* and *Minecraft* immersive experiences in the UK, as well on Disney’s hit show *The Mandalorian*.

The £51m funding application was submitted in February 2022 by **StoryFutures** at Royal Holloway, University of London on behalf of the wider bid team. The application focused on establishing a CoSTAR national lab at Pinewood Studios, alongside associated facilities and programmes to drive innovation and creativity in the UK’s screen and performance industries.

Surrey County Council’s proposed contribution includes a capital commitment of £3m to fund the establishment of a CoSTAR satellite studio and incubator space on the RHUL campus in Surrey. It’s hoped these facilities will provide a sizeable boost to Surrey-based creative industry businesses, with over 200 expected to benefit.

The Surrey-based Satellite Studio Facility is also projected to create 350 jobs over six years, and make a net contribution of c£35m gross value added to Surrey’s economy. Both facilities aim to open in early 2026.

The announcement yesterday came as part of the government’s **Creative Industries Sector Vision**, which aims to maximise the potential of the UK creative industries and grow the economy.

Along with the national lab, the government also announced that three regional research labs will be based in Yorkshire, Dundee and Belfast. All of these facilities will work closely with Surrey’s new CoSTAR satellite studio and incubator space to be located on RHUL’s campus in Egham.

Together, these facilities will ensure the UK has the skills and infrastructure to stay on the cutting-edge of new virtual production techniques in film, TV and live events.

Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth, Matt Furniss, said: *“I’m delighted that our joint bid for the national CoSTAR lab has been successful.*

“These facilities will bring huge technological advantages to UK creative industries and their global competitiveness and it’s fantastic that Surrey will be home to them.

“It’s also hugely exciting to think of the local benefits that will come from our proposed CoSTAR Satellite Studio and Incubator space. These will bring about local jobs and investment and provide invaluable support for our local businesses, helping to deliver the skills and opportunities for Surrey’s economy to thrive.

“I’d like to thank all of the partners involved in the bid for their hard work in securing this great outcome for Surrey.”

*Today’s announcement of the preferred bidders for CoSTAR is subject to internal government approvals processes, and where relevant, commercial discussions with external partners. Partner organisations such as BT, the National Film and Television School, Vodafone, Studio Ulster and Screen Yorkshire have today announced they will invest at least £63.3 million in CoSTAR.

Pressure on Epsom Hospital at boiling point?

30 June 2023



Visits to emergency departments (EDs) rocketed on Monday, with more people coming through the doors than ever before. More than 1,250 people went to one of St George’s, Epsom and St Helier’s three EDs - a rise on the previous record of 1,170, and a huge increase on a typical day of about 800 attendances.

It comes just hours before hundreds of junior doctors prepare to strike across the hospitals group - prompting fears of a “double whammy” of pressures.

ED attendances on Monday 12 June were as follows:

- St George’s: 580
- Epsom and St Helier: 674
- Kingston: 533
- Croydon: 622

Croydon and Kingston hospitals also experienced very high demand and easily surpassed their previous highest number of attendances.

Kingston Hospital set a new record seeing more than 530 people visiting its emergency department in one day, including

78 ambulances and 455 walk-ins.

Croydon University Hospital saw 622 unwell patients needing to see an emergency care consultant - 16% above the previous busiest summer day on record on 17 June 2021.

Dr **Richard Jennings**, Group Chief Medical Officer at St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group, said: "We have never been busier, and with the upcoming strikes it's going to be a very challenging week.

"We're here, as always, for those who need us. But now more than ever, we need the public's support in those cases where it is not an emergency. NHS 111 online should be your first port of call in these instances, as it can direct you to where you need to go."

Members of the British Medical Association and Hospital Consultants and Specialists Association will strike for 72 hours from **7am on Wednesday 14 June until 7am on Saturday 17 June**.

This action will impact services at hospitals, and will mean that some appointments, procedures and operations may be postponed to ensure emergency care can be prioritised. Patients will be contacted directly if their appointments are rescheduled, and should continue to come forward for care as normal unless they hear otherwise.

The mercury is expected to remain in the high 20s, and even early 30s, when these strikes start - and will hit hot temperatures once action has finished, too, with the UK Health Security Agency and the Met Office extending their heat-health alert to Monday.

When temperatures rise, more people, especially those in high-risk groups, can suffer from illnesses like heat exhaustion and dehydration, as well as sunburn.

The pollen count has also been very high, and there has been a surge in people visiting EDs with shortness of breath. This might not be anything to worry about, but it is scary and sometimes those who are experiencing it will need medical help. NHS England has this advice for people who are affected.

If you have an underlying respiratory condition, you should contact your GP or asthma nurse as needed - unless it is an emergency, in which case you should call 999 or go to ED immediately.

Everyone should stay safe and well in the hotter weather, and take steps such as: looking out for people who may struggle to keep cool and hydrated, such as elderly relatives or neighbours; keeping windows closed when the room is cooler than outside; and staying hydrated.

You should also stay out of the sun between 11am and 3pm, apply suncream regularly, and wear a hat.

Dr Jennings added: "This weather has undoubtedly contributed to the rise in people - some who are vulnerable and very sick - coming to our emergency departments.

"Help us to prioritise care for those need it the most, and use our services wisely."

If you need urgent medical help use NHS 111 online first, which can direct you to where you need to go. Pharmacies, meanwhile, can offer advice and over-the-counter medicines for a range of minor illnesses, such as coughs, colds, sore throats, and aches and pains.

To find out more about staying safe during hot weather, visit the NHS's website.

St George's, Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals and Health Group

Related reports:

[Hospitals heatwave warning](#)

[NHS website remedy for hay-fever](#)

[Junior doctor strikes to be 'monthly' in Surrey?](#)

NHS website remedy for hay-fever

30 June 2023



With hay-fever suffering at a peak the NHS urges sufferers to visit its website for advice and reduce pressures on its telephone and other services.

The number of hay fever sufferers seeking advice from the NHS website has more than tripled - reaching 122,650 visits

last week.

Analysis by NHS England, which runs the NHS website, found weekly visits to the hay fever page have increased by 252% in the past five weeks from 34,878 visits during the first week of May.

Sunday was the busiest day of the year so far for visits to the web page with 27,834 visits in 24 hours - an average of one visit every three seconds.

The surge coincides with figures seen last year when hay fever page visits topped a million during the six months from March to October, peaking at 462,706 in June 2022. December was the quietest month for visits with only 5,658.

NHS information pages on hay fever treatments have also proved popular during the past five weeks. Visits to the antihistamines and cetirizine pages have more than doubled, and visits to the fexofenadine page have more than tripled to reach 45,450 visits last week.

Most hay fever symptoms can be effectively managed at home or with medication widely and cheaply available in community pharmacies or supermarkets.

Robert Cleary, NHS England's Content Director for the NHS website, said:

"Many of us experience hay fever symptoms at this time of year and the nhs.uk hay fever advice page provides the latest medical advice to manage your symptoms, as well as giving guidance on when to get support from NHS services.

"Millions of people make the NHS website their first port of call for advice and information on a wide range of conditions. The website is here for anyone 24 hours a day, making it easy for people to receive health advice and support from a trustworthy source around the clock."

There is currently no cure for hay fever, which usually hits between late March and September when the weather is warm, windy and humid, and the pollen count is at its highest.

The symptoms include sneezing, coughing, a runny or blocked nose, as well as red, itchy or watery eyes. Sufferers can also experience headaches, earache or lose their sense of smell.

The NHS hay fever page details several ways people can ease their symptoms including staying indoors, keeping their windows shut, not cutting their grass or coating their nostrils with Vaseline to trap the pollen.

The page also offers advice on different treatments available from pharmacists and recommends when people should seek help from their GP.

The NHS website is the UK's biggest health website with an estimated 2.6 million visits a day in 2022 from people seeking information and advice.

It includes over 4,000 pages and provides information about 990 medical conditions as well other health services including applying for a free UK Global Health Insurance Card for healthcare cover abroad, finding a GP, and a pregnancy due date calculator.

For more information visit Hay fever - NHS (www.nhs.uk).

NHS England Media Team

Image: Fitzpatrick AM CC BY-SA 4.0

Not insulated against prosecution

30 June 2023



47 activists who caused chaos on the Surrey stretch of the M25 in the autumn of 2021 have been convicted of a variety of offences following a lengthy and complex investigation.

Officers have worked tirelessly to bring those responsible to justice following the direct-action protests, which took place between J6 and 14 of the M25 on Monday 13 September 2021, between J8 and 10 on Wednesday 15 September 2021, at J9 on Friday 17 September 2021 and between J9 and 10 on Tuesday 21 September 2021.

Numerous arrests were made at each of the protests, including 35 arrests on 13 September, 35 on 15 September, 33 arrests on 17 September and 24 arrests on 21 September.

Of these, 54 people were charged with 133 offences, with 47 subsequently found guilty following a series of hearings and trials which have taken place over the last few months.

The activists were convicted of a variety of offences, including wilful obstruction of a highway and criminal damage.

Chief Superintendent Jerry Westerman, who was in charge of policing the activity, said: "Not only did the action taken by

the Insulate Britain activists over the four days cause significant delays and disruption to our road network, it also endangered the lives of our officers and staff and other motorway users, as well as the activists themselves.

“The tactics used by these activists, which included running out in front of oncoming traffic and lying down in the carriageway, escalated rapidly and was unprecedented in any of the protest activity we had seen previously.

“We will always seek to facilitate peaceful protest but committing criminal offences and taking part in activity which puts lives at risk cannot be condoned. That is why we took swift and robust action to ensure that these activists were removed from the road and detained as quickly as possible to enable us to reopen the affected sections of motorway as soon as we could.”

Ch Sup Westerman continued: “We have continued to see this type of direct action in Surrey, with the motorway protests last year and more recently, the activity at the **Epsom Derby Festival** last weekend and these investigations remain ongoing.

“More recently we have seen the introduction of new legislation under the Public Order Act 2023 which gives us a wider range of options to deal with these activists. The protests in 2021 were carried out before this legislation was enforced but we did everything possible to ensure that the offenders were dealt with robustly and brought before the courts.”

Ch Supt Westerman added: “I would like to thank those motorists affected by the disruption for their patience and understanding, as well as our colleagues in other forces and partner agencies for their support.

“The work to investigate and bring these offenders to justice is a lengthy and complex process and I would like to thank the team involved for their diligence and determination in seeing this through to its successful conclusion.”

Related reports:

Police maintain order at Epsom Derby Festival

Image: BBC