



Surrey PCC candidate Lisa Townsend - Conservative Party

20 April 2024

I want to be re-elected as your Police and Crime Commissioner to continue building on the improvements I have driven within Surrey Police.

Since you elected me 3 years ago, I've worked hard to keep Surrey safe, helping secure more police officers for our county than ever before and investing in projects to support communities. I have spoken with many of you and prioritised championing your voice and concerns.

Surrey Police is now larger than ever, helped by funding from the Government Uplift programme, and I recruited a new Chief Constable to lead the Force who shares my commitment to a "back to basics" approach to policing.

In 3 years, my team and I have also secured more than £10m of additional funding for Surrey. This has been spent supporting community projects, including Safer Streets projects tackling anti-social behaviour and county-wide teacher training around violence against women and girls. This includes securing £270,000 of Safer Streets funding to improve safety and tackle town centre violence, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage right here in Epsom.

In the last year alone, Surrey Police has made incredible improvements, from fulfilling recruitment targets to achieving record performance for 101 and 999 wait times.

But there is more to be done, and I hope to continue driving improvements, listening to you, and supporting our communities.

If you re-elect me on 2nd May, I will prioritise:

1. Ensuring Surrey Police do what only they can. Investigating and solving crime and pursuing offenders, not sitting in hospitals or examining non-crime hate incidents.
2. Being a voice for victims. Prioritising victims throughout the Criminal Justice System, continuing to commission and support services that support victims.
3. Making policing accessible. Ensuring residents get swift answers from the right organisation, rather than being passed from agency to agency without resolution.

Lisa Townsend

Surrey PCC candidate: Paul Kennedy - Liberal Democrat Party

20 April 2024

I came a strong 2nd in the last PCC elections with over 112,000 votes across Surrey; and with Epsom & Ewell constituency now a Liberal Democrat target for the general election, I've already spoken to many of you with our inspirational (ex-military police) parliamentary candidate Helen Maguire.

You've told us you want action on antisocial behaviour, drugs, shoplifting, burglaries and vehicle crime. You're fed up with paying the highest council tax in the country for policing yet feeling less safe. You're appalled our Conservative PCC has expanded their own budget by 70%, while forcing Surrey Police to cut staff - with 6 of the 7 common performance assessments in the latest PEEL inspection having deteriorated since 2021.

Personally, I'd scrap PCCs tomorrow. But we're stuck with them for now, and whereas the current PCC previously worked for Conservative MPs, I'm professionally qualified for the job. I'm a former barrister, accountant and actuary with experience in private and public sectors; for 10 years I've overseen public interest bodies on a non-political basis; I'm a local councillor and serve on Surrey's police and crime panel.

Here's what I'd do:

- scrap the deputy PCC role, cut the PCC's bloated office budget and bring back community policing instead;
- serve one 4-year term only, to focus on improving police performance, not campaigning for re-election. I'd set Surrey Police challenging targets, and give you fair and balanced reports, not a list of my own "achievements";
- drive accountability down to local level. I'd tell Surrey Police to work with local communities, not just me.

We've a historic opportunity in Surrey to replace the Conservatives' failed top-down model of self-serving PCCs - with a professional, ambitious, community-based approach to policing. But only I can do that. Voting for anyone else just helps the Conservatives.

Paul Kennedy.

Surrey PCC candidate: Alex Coley - Independent

20 April 2024

I was born and raised in Surrey and live with my wife and two daughters in Epsom & Ewell. We don't believe that 75% of women and girls feel safe after dark, like the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner says.

Since 2018 I've been a borough councillor. I'm also a member of the Surrey Police & Crime Panel and my local Community Safety Partnership. I've been a senior police manager and I'm currently an independent adviser on policing. I also founded a local charity to help people living in deprivation in our borough. We focus on helping vulnerable children.

Residents tell me they want 'bobbies on the beat' and a better response when they need help. They are fed up with the police share of council tax going up again, but not seeing police officers or PCSOs on the street. Surrey is the only police area in the country where local taxpayers contribute more to policing than the government. I'm petitioning Parliament to change this.

Surrey Police underspent by £8.7m last year and it's happening again this year. In December, an inspection of Surrey Police gave a rating of 'Inadequate' at responding to the public. I will use the £43m in the Police & Crime Commissioner's savings account to deliver a better service. I will put the pride and professionalism back into Surrey Police, so you can have confidence in your police force.

Let's take party politics out of policing. I will be an Independent PCC, fighting crime with more police, keeping you safe, where you live.

Alex Coley

Surrey PCC candidates: Kate Chinn - Labour Party

20 April 2024

The Conservatives have lost control of crime in Epsom and Ewell', says Kate Chinn, Labour's candidate for Surrey's police and crime commissioner.

'Under the present Conservative commissioner, the record in Surrey is one of utter failure', added Cllr Chinn, Labour leader on Epsom and Ewell Council.

'Conservative cuts are central to a dismal record brought on by the austerity years of the Liberal Democrat coalition government.'

'Fourteen years of failure, not only reduced the number of police and community support officers on our streets, but saw the closure of Epsom police station and most others across Surrey.'

Surrey Labour has long argued that every town centre has a disused shop that could be re-purposed as a police office, becoming a focal point for reporting crime and as a visible deterrent. Crime can be reported and properly investigated solving more crimes.



'It is not surprising that burglaries and shoplifting have risen to unprecedented levels. The Conservative PCC seems incapable or unwilling to address the real concerns of local people. The LibDems offer more of the same.'

Through different roles as a psychiatric nurse, working in the homelessness sector and social care, and as a councillor, everyday I see the consequences of these cuts to police and local government budgets.

'Working with often vulnerable people I understand the damaging impact that crime has on our communities. Surrey has been my home for over 30 years and my family, friends and most local people say they have never known it this bad'.

I can make a real difference as a Labour PCC working with the next Labour government.

It is time for a change in Surrey. I represent a fresh start with new and innovative ideas, replacing this failed right-wing Conservative policing agenda in Surrey.

Kate Chinn

Epsom's Earth health doctor checks GMC

20 April 2024



Epsom residents led by Dr. **Kristine Damberg** converged Thursday 18th April on the General Medical Council (GMC) headquarters in Central London, decrying what they perceive as the regulator's lackluster response to the urgent health risks posed by climate change. The demonstration, organized by the **Planetary Health Coalition**, aimed to spotlight the pressing need for action on climate-related health issues affecting the community.



Dr Damberg protesting outside General Medical Council.

Dr. **Kristine Damberg**, Senior Simulation Practitioner and ESTH Sustainability Champion based at **Epsom Hospital**, voiced concerns about the immediate health impacts of climate change in the area. She lamented the rise in climate-related ailments among patients, including heat-related illnesses during the 2022 heatwave. Dr. Damberg emphasized the gravity of the situation, citing staggering statistics: "In the UK, 29-43,000 people die unnecessarily every year because of air pollution."

Adding: "Even in a relatively affluent area like Epsom we are seeing these impacts on patients presenting to GP surgeries and hospitals. In the 2022 heatwave there were 3000 excess deaths in the UK and on the wards at Epsom Hospital the temperature was consistently above 30 degrees. It was extremely challenging for staff to work and keep already vulnerable patients safe at these extreme temperatures."

She stressed the imperative for proactive measures, echoing The Lancet's designation of climate change as the most significant global health threat of the 21st century. "We need to act now to protect our community."

However, the GMC's recent efforts to incorporate sustainability into medical ethics guidelines have fallen short, according to Dr. **Rammina Yassaei**, a medic and ethicist. She criticized the optional nature of these additions, stating, "Practising climate-conscious medicine should be a clear duty of a doctor." She called for more robust guidance from the regulator to address the climate crisis head-on.



Epsom resident **Warren Bunce** echoed these sentiments, expressing disappointment in the GMC's perceived inaction. "The General Medical Council's silence on climate change is a betrayal of public health," he asserted. He called for stronger support for healthcare professionals in Epsom and beyond to confront the health consequences of a warming planet.

Protestors also raised concerns about the GMC's financial ties to fossil fuel industries. Dr. Christelle Blunden, a GP from Southampton, highlighted the disconnect between the GMC's ethical standards and its investments. "Doctors want their money out of ecologically destructive industries," Dr. Blunden stated. She emphasized the need for regulatory bodies to lead by example in addressing the climate crisis.

The protest occurred amidst growing legal restrictions on climate activism, with the recent conviction of Dr. Sarah Benn, a GP from Birmingham, serving as a stark reminder of the risks faced by healthcare workers advocating for environmental causes. Dr. Benn's case underscored broader concerns about the erosion of protest rights in the UK, prompting calls for greater protection for activists.

Related reports:

Climate Justice. A generation thing?

Job insecurity upsetting collegiate life

20 April 2024



Nearly 92 per cent of voters in a Surrey University College Union (UCU) indicative survey supported holding a vote of no confidence in the Vice Chancellor, with a further 96 per in favour of a vote for the executive board.

Surrey UCU has been campaigning against 'compulsory' redundancies and financial severance elicited by the University of Surrey in an all-staff emergency meeting on March 6. Vice Chancellor Professor Max Lu (VC) announced the university would have to cut staff and assets as part of cost-saving exercises.

A UCU open letter dated April 11 alleged the university was trying to turn a "£10m deficit" into a "£10m surplus". A spokesperson claimed staff feel they have been "coerced" into redundancy, or "feeling that their hand has been forced".

An academic, who wished to remain anonymous, said: "It's extremely distracting and upsetting [...] Commitment to the university falls and commitment to your work falls. You invest a lot of time into your institution and when your institution doesn't value you back, you question why."

Speaking about her department, she said: "It's horrible. Morale is very low" and people feel "very insecure about their jobs".

High inflation, soaring energy bills and overall cost of living pressures were cited by the VC as reasons why the university needed to reduce its expenditure. Sector-wide problems within Higher Education such as "devaluing domestic tuition fees" and declining numbers of international students "due to external factors" were also highlighted in a letter by the VC

However, the UCU argued that poor financial management in "historical borrowing and significant spending on multi-million-pound projects" undermined the VC's claim. Recent developments include the Surrey Institute for People-Centred AI (opened in 2021) and launching a new medical school with an intake for 2024.

Over 90 per cent of the university's income was borrowed externally, coming second in the UK in 2021/22. Gross debt increased by £16.6m in 2022/23 to £296.5m compared to 2021/22, as the University entered into a new £20m term loan used to support the purchase of a building on campus, this was partially offset as a result of scheduled repayments.

Soaring from 0.1 per cent interest rates in December 2021, to 5.25 in 2023, the university now has to pay back around 4.5 per cent interest in its loans (2024).

"It's a reckless [...] way of living," the academic said, "to borrow, borrow, borrow with the hope that you will make that money back."

Rather than trying to "play with the big boys" and be a Russell Group university or UCL, the academic said, "Surrey needs to play to its strengths" as a small, safe university in Guildford which looks after its students.

Fewer Surrey UCU members voted to start formal industrial action (75.3%) than those in favour of a no confidence motion. Academic staff explained striking would mean taking teaching away from university students, who were not at fault.

The union is meeting on April 22 to discuss the next steps and has invited MP Angela Richardson and parliamentary candidates to attend.

A spokesperson from the University of Surrey said: "Our University is not immune to the unprecedented financial pressures facing the UK's higher education sector - including high inflation, high energy costs, the sustained devaluation of tuition fees and the recent decline in international student numbers. We're taking a focused and nuanced approach to tackling these sector-wide challenges at Surrey, with our approach designed to minimise the impact on our people and our core mission. We are looking at a variety of measures to increase income and save on costs including offering voluntary severance to some colleagues. We are hoping to avoid compulsory redundancies."

Low morale hits Surrey Police

20 April 2024



Up to 20 per cent of Surrey Police officers want to leave due to low morale and poor pay, according to a new report.

Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) found that 84 per cent of officers had experienced stress, low mood or anxiety over the studied 12 months. Of 2,276 Surrey police officers, 460 responded to the Pay and Morale Survey from November 2023.

PFEW issued its survey to support its national campaign for fair pay for police officers and an independent pay mechanism. It found nearly 80 per cent of officers said they were unsatisfied with their pay, with 69 per cent saying their workload was 'too high'.



Tom Arthur, Branch Secretary of Surrey Police Federation, said: "This year shows yet again that officer morale stays at an all-time low, some 90% of those surveyed confirming this - with pay and feeling undervalued by the Government being the main reasons."

"One in five of my colleagues in Surrey are actively seeking alternative employment. Forces and the Government cannot keep ignoring this and making platitudes to the public about how they are serious in dealing with Law and Order."

Polling 460 officers, 20 per cent of respondents said they intend to resign from Surrey Police either 'within the next two years' or 'as soon as [they] can'. This was slightly lower than the national average (22 per cent) in the PFEW survey.

Due to the high number of staff leavers Surrey has a group monitoring resignations with leavers' questionnaires and stay interviews. A recent PEEL inspection into Surrey Police found it still "lacks understanding" why staff or recruits might leave the force.

Adrian Rutherford, Director of People Services for Surrey Police and Sussex Police said: "We have seen our largest police officer recruitment drive in a decade; welcoming hundreds of new officers into our organisation and onto the streets of our communities."

However, 12 per cent of police staff posts were vacant at the end of November 2023, according to a Surrey Police and Crime panel report. Approximately 73 per cent of respondents from Surrey Police said that they would not recommend joining the police to others.

The report found 85 per cent feel 'worse off' financially now than they were five years ago and 16 per cent 'never' or 'almost never' have enough money to cover all their essentials. Whilst police officers received a 7 per cent pay rise in 2023, they have still seen a 16 per cent real-terms pay cut since 2011.

Supporting and protecting Surrey's workforce was found to 'require improvement' in the latest PEEL report (December 2023). The force had not completed a well-being survey in three years, or the Bluelight self-assessment to understand what affects good or poor well-being.

Officers responding to the PFEW survey said they do not feel respected by the Government (95 per cent) and they do not feel valued within the service (65 per cent) and over half (54 per cent) said they were experiencing low morale.

Surrey Police said it had a wellbeing strategy "which places officer and staff wellbeing at the heart of the organisation". Indeed, the force's mental health app, Backup Buddy, won best innovation at the InsideOut Awards 2021. However, according to the survey, morale and pride in the force have dipped since then.

Adrian added: "Our police officers undertake a demanding and often dangerous role, ensuring that we keep Surrey safe and protect the most vulnerable from harm. As a force, we are doing all that we can to ensure that we're alleviating some of the pressures faced by those on the front-line."

"We will be looking closely at the findings of the survey, alongside our recent internal employee opinion survey to look at what we can do to improve matters. We wish to be an employer of choice and will continue to work with our colleagues in the Federation, as well as our own people, to ensure we're doing all that we can to demonstrate the high value we place on our officers and staff and to be the best employer that we can be."

Image: Dave Connor CC 2 by deed (altered placing officers in front of Surrey Police HQ entrance)

Epsom Karate Kids go global

20 April 2024



The Mo-ichido England Karate Association, nestled in the heart of Horton Country Park, made waves on the international stage as they ventured to Albena on the Black Sea coast of Bulgaria. Their mission: to compete in the prestigious 14th WSF World Shotokan Championships, facing off against formidable opponents from across the globe, including national squads hailing from as far as the Ivory Coast.

Led by Colin Sensei and Squad Captain Olivia Lusted, the club sent a team of 8 young competitors, proudly representing England on the global karate platform. Their performance exceeded expectations, returning home with an impressive haul of 1 gold, 3 silver, and 2 bronze medals. This achievement catapulted England to the 12th position out of 27 on the medal table, showcasing their resilience against adversaries with greater resources and support.

From the Mo-ichido association's humble beginnings in an old, rundown cow shed in Horton Country Park, the club has evolved into a beacon of inspiration within the local community. Offering a diverse range of activities including physiotherapy, yoga, pilates, meditation, Ki-aikido, the club has transformed the shed into a sanctuary where individuals of all ages can partake in the shared passion of karate.

With a track record of producing European and World champions, the Mo-ichido club continues to make strides in the martial arts realm, representing excellence on both national and international fronts. However, their ambitious pursuits come with financial challenges, prompting the club to seek sponsorship opportunities to sustain their journey towards global domination.

For more information on the remarkable achievements and ongoing endeavors of the Mo-ichido England Karate club, visit their website at moichido.co.uk.

Epsom and Ewell candidates dominate Police Commissioner election

20 April 2024



Nominations have closed in the race to become the next Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) with four candidates across the parties lined up. Two of the four candidates are Epsom and Ewell councillors.



The Epsom and Ewell Times has invited all candidates to submit statements to our publication and we hope to publish them in the days ahead.

The PCC role oversees the work of Surrey Police and its Chief Constable and holds them and their decisions to account. They set the strategic direction and aims for the force through the Police and Crime Plan.

In the running on May 2 are Lisa Townsend (the current PCC and Conservative), Paul Kennedy (Liberal Democrat), Kate Chinn (Labour) and Alex Coley (Independent).

Salaries of the PCC are decided on a national basis and vary depending on the size of the force; the commissioner for Surrey will receive a salary of £73,000 per annum.

PCCs are also responsible for all funding relating to policing, including the police precept, and to work with the Chief Constable to set the force budget in line with priorities and deliver value for money for residents.

Providing a link between the police and Surrey residents, the PCC listens to the public's concerns and works with the Chief Constable to create improvements.

Lisa Townsend, Conservative

Looking to get a second term, one of Lisa's major flagships is campaigning to end violence against women and girls. She has been working on various community projects including Safer Streets tackling anti-social behaviour and support services for victims.

In a post on X, formerly Twitter, Lisa said her immediate priorities are maintaining and growing the police force, as well as working with the Chief Constable on 'back to basics' policing. She said this includes "ensuring Surrey Police do what only they can: investigating and solving crime, not sitting in hospitals."

Alex Coley, Independent

Previously a Digital Lead for the Met Police, Alex said he wants "more bobbies on the beat" in Surrey. Headline policies include petitioning to parliament to change the way police funding is allocated in the country; so that the government contributes more for policing in Surrey than the taxpayer

Since 2018 Alex has been an Epsom and Ewell councillor as well as chairing the Crime and Disorder panel for the borough. The only independent candidate, Alex is campaigning to "take party politics out of policing" and put "pride and professionalism back into Surrey Police".

Paul Kennedy, Liberal Democrat

Hoping to be third-time lucky is Paul- a former barrister, accountant, actuary and Mole Valley councillor. Some of his campaign policies include "bringing back community policing" and combatting offending behaviour through restorative justice, education and support for mental health and addictions.

In a press statement, Paul said: "Like many people I disagree with the idea of PCCs, but we're stuck with them for now. So, let's do the job properly." If elected, Paul said he will work with the Chief Constable to fix the issues highlighted in the December 2023 inspection report.

Kate Chinn, Labour

Councillor for Epsom and Ewell, Kate's policies include refocusing on neighbourhood-based policing and using empty shops in the town centre for a police presence. Preventative measures is another concern as Kate aims to increase support services for young people.

Kate has said that she wants to review current training to ensure police have a good understanding of domestic violence, misogyny and sexual assault.

The deadline to register to vote is April 16, which can be done online. Elections take place on May 2, with the result announced the following day.

To vote for your preferred candidate, a valid ID must be brought to the polling station. This can include passport, driving licence, disabled or older person's Bus Pass funded by the UK Government, and a biometric immigration document. Residents without an accepted form of photo ID can apply for a free Voter Authority Certificate (VAC).

Surgery delay after hip break led to death

20 April 2024



An elderly woman who tragically died after waiting five days for hip surgery prompted a coroner to raise concerns that a hospital is putting patients at risk of an early death.

Anne Rowland, a care home resident in Oxted, died in East Surrey Hospital after inflammation and infection of the lungs following surgery.

Ms Rowland broke her hip following a collision and fall with another care home resident who was partially sighted on February 27, 2023. She was taken to East Surrey Hospital the same day.

Coroner Anna Crawford found there was "no clinical reason" for the surgery not taking place until five days later on March 3 as the patient was "clinically fit".

She concluded that outstanding infrastructure repairs and the use of different guidelines from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) that the Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust was "placing patients at risk of early death".

NICE guidelines say that hip surgery should take place on the day of the injury or the day after. Early mobilisation is recommended for hip fracture patients to reduce the risk of complications, including pneumonia.

East Surrey Hospital uses a metric of 48 hours within which to conduct such surgery and does not use the NICE timeframe. Although the hospital has a dedicated operating theatre for trauma patients, on some occasions demand outweighs capacity.

However, the surgery did not take place because "other trauma patients were prioritised ahead of [Mrs Rowland] based upon their relative clinical need".

Operating theatre capacity at the hospital has on occasion been compromised by infrastructure failings. An entire new surgery unit is being constructed and is anticipated to be completed by 2025 at the latest. The orthopaedic theatres also need new air handling and chillers which is yet to be completed.

The coroner concluded that waiting for her operation "caused" Mrs Rowland to develop dementia and immobility. This "contributed" to her developing aspiration pneumonia following surgery. Mrs Rowland's condition deteriorated resulting in her death at East Surrey Hospital on March 31, 2023.

Ed Cetti, chief medical officer of Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, said: "We are profoundly sorry for the delay in Mrs Rowland's hip surgery and offer our deepest sympathies to her family during this difficult time."

The Trust said that in the months since Mrs Rowland's death, it has "significantly" reduced delays in hip fracture surgery. In November 2023 59 per cent of operations occurred within 36 hours and 91 per cent within 48 hours.

Mr Cetti added: "We always strive to perform surgeries of this nature as soon as possible and monitor our performance against the 36-hour time window identified



by NICE guidance. We also monitor against a 48-hour window to ensure any patients that miss the 36-hour target are not waiting longer than 48 hours.

"Recognising that not all patients are medically well enough for surgery within 36 hours, we are working on improving our performance further and reaching the 80 per cent target by the end of 2024/25."

Image: Entrance to East Surrey Hospital. Credit Get Surrey*