

New Bus Route for S2 through the Borough

12 March 2024



The transport landscape in East Ewell has seen a significant improvement with the inauguration of Bus Route S2. Commencing operations on 2nd March 2024, the S2 service now runs seven days a week, including Sundays, providing a crucial link between Epsom and St Helier Station. The new route serves several key areas, including Ewell East, Cheam, and Sutton, enhancing connectivity for residents in these regions.

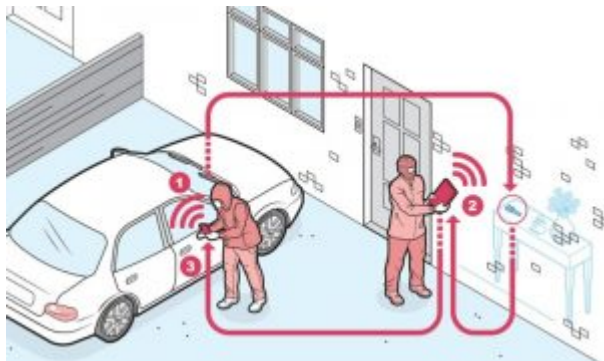
The introduction of Route S2 marks a strategic change in the local bus network, as it replaces the 470 service from Colliers Wood to Epsom, which now terminates at Sutton. This adjustment was made following consultation by Transport for London (TFL) on bus routes in the Sutton and Croydon areas.

Route S2 operates via a series of primary locations, including St Helier Station, Sutton Station, Cheam Station, Ewell High Street, and Epsom Clock Tower, offering a convenient and efficient mode of transport for commuters in the region. The route is operated by London General from their Sutton (A) garage, utilizing brand new Enviro200 MMC EV bodied BYD D8URs, with temporary use of an existing vehicle of the same type.

The introduction of Route S2 represents a positive step towards improving public transport accessibility and connectivity in East Ewell, benefitting residents and commuters alike.

Surrey “relay” car thieves sent down

12 March 2024



Four members of an organised crime group (OCG) responsible for the theft of 53 high value vehicles in **Surrey** and the South-East have been sentenced to a total of 12.5 years behind bars at **Guildford Crown Court** on Friday 8th March.

All four men pleaded guilty to conspiracy to steal and conspiracy to acquire criminal property and were sentenced to;

- Perry Lovejoy, 29, born 01/11/1994, of Reigate Road in Horley, was sentenced to 3 years in prison
- Luke Jackson, 28, born 25/07/1995, of Shoreham Close in Croydon, was sentenced to 3.5 years in prison
- Billy Harrison, 30, born 29/10/1993, of Tollers Lane in Coulsdon, was sentenced to 3 years behind bars
- Harry Sales, 28, born 20/09/1995, of Cornwall Road in Croydon, was sentenced to 3 years in prison

The conviction of the four men was the result of a thorough and complex investigation by the Serious and Organised Crime Unit into the thefts of the 53 vehicles, with a combined value of over £3.7 million pounds.

Jackson also had additional offences taken into consideration when sentenced after admitting his guilt in stealing a further 42 cars, with a combined value of 2.1 million pounds.

The thefts took place over 12 months and across Surrey and the South-East of England. Officers arrested the suspects on the 26 April 2023, after successfully building a clear picture of their illegal activities through intelligence, forensics, ANPR, call data, witness testimony and CCTV enquiries.

During the investigation, officers discovered how the gang used the ‘**relay attack**’ technique to target keyless vehicles including Rolls Royce, Bentley, Land Rover, Range Rover and Alfa Romeo. This method involves using a master device to copy the signal of the vehicle key and transmit it to a second smaller device, which replicates the key and unlocks the car.

Tellingly a manual for a relay device was also found saved on a mobile phone seized from Lovejoy’s possession.

Jackson was also sentenced for two offences of burglary committed whilst stealing two of the cars after pleading guilty. He received 18 months in prison to be served concurrently.

Lovejoy was also sentenced to being concerned in the supply of class b drugs (cannabis) after pleading guilty to this offence when officers found messages on his phone showing supply activity. He received 9 months in prison to be served consecutively.

Investigating Officer DC **Matt Earl**, said; “This was a large-scale investigation that was made possible by the hard-work and dedication of the Serious and Organised Crime Unit, as well as the support and collaboration of other neighbouring police forces.

In Court lawyers for the four said they were the “foot soldiers” in the operation and the maximum sentence for theft being 7 years, the sentences for the defendants should be less than the masterminds “at the top of the chain”, should they ever face justice.

His Honour Judge **Banarjee** said the conspiracy was sophisticated and involved extensive planning. He took into account the guilty pleas of the defendants and the conditions they had endured in HMP Wandsworth since their arrests in April 2023.

Image credit: Which.co.uk

False schizo claim rapist gets 8 years

12 March 2024



Following a three week trial an **Epsom** man who claimed schizophrenia goes down 8 years for rapes. **Joseph Head**, 25, of Chase Road, Epsom, was found guilty of three counts of rape and one count of sexual assault by penetration. Head received an eight-year prison sentence at Winchester Crown Court on Tuesday, February 27.

During the three-week trial, the prosecution unveiled a troubling sequence of events characterized by manipulation and coercion. Head, in an attempt to evade accountability, feigned dissociative identity disorder, alleging that one of his personas, 'J', posed a violent threat, thereby pressuring his victim into compliance.

The survivor, displaying remarkable courage, shared her ordeal spanning three months, marked by fear and intimidation at the hands of Head. His peculiar fixation on the film 'Split', featuring a character with dissociative identity disorder, only served to underscore the calculated nature of his deception.

However, Head's elaborate facade unraveled under scrutiny. Expert testimony debunked his false claims, revealing the stark reality behind his manipulative tactics. A meticulous investigation, incorporating victim testimony, forensic analysis, and digital scrutiny, exposed the truth.

Investigating officer Andy Price of Surrey Police characterized Head as a "dangerous predator" who exploited and instilled fear in his victim. He added: "The unique circumstances of this case posed a challenge to the team but with the unwavering support from the survivor, a thorough investigation and dedication by the team to bring Head to justice, a conviction was secured.

"I would like to acknowledge the bravery of the survivor was in coming forward to us, supporting the investigation and helping keep other women safe. Although the trauma of what happened cannot be erased, I hope this outcome can give at least some measure of closure."

If you have been sexually assaulted and need further help and advice, please click here <https://www.surrey.police.uk/ro/report/rsa/alpha-v1/advice/rape-sexual-assault-and-other-sexual-offences/>

IoT Launch: Nescot Welcomes Industry Leaders

12 March 2024



The Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology (IoT) at **North East Surrey College of Technology** (Nescot) in **Ewell** welcomed over 60 guests at its opening event on Wednesday 28 February. Visitors had the opportunity to explore the state-of-the-art facilities, participate in hands-on activities and discover the wide range of resources and training opportunities available at the newly opened IoT.

The IoT at Nescot is the first new space to open as part of the Sussex and Surrey IoT and specialises in digital technologies with courses and apprenticeships from software development, cyber security, AI (Artificial Intelligence) and networking to cloud computing, data handling, 'internet of things' and IT support.

Visitors included partners and employers from varied industry sectors who were able to find out the many ways in which they can support the future of skills development in the IT sector. Anchor employers including NatWest, Roche Diagnostics, Southern Water, Pearson and Gatwick Airport pledged their ongoing support to work with the Sussex and Surrey IoT in various ways, from recruiting apprentices and upskilling existing staff to working with curriculum experts to help shape study programmes and providing mentoring.

Nescot staff and students also had the chance to explore the newly opened IoT. Computing staff, and students on our computing courses were on hand to showcase the specialist technology facilities and share their excitement with visitors about the courses available.

Julie Kapsalis, Principal and CEO at Nescot said, "We were delighted to welcome our first guests to the IoT at Nescot which was buzzing with activity the whole day. It's been wonderful to showcase our specialist digital technology facilities, resources and training. We are looking forward to working with businesses and partners to address current skills gaps and prepare for future skills needs."

Demonstrating some of the technology, Joseph, a student on our Level 3 Computing course said, "The focus on specialist digital technologies is a great opportunity to enhance my knowledge. Nescot is the perfect choice for the Institute of Technology with great access and networking opportunities."

Another student, Jeremy added, "I'm really excited about the Institute of Technology which is a great addition to Nescot. The technology and devices being installed here are amazing!"

Peter Goodenough, Computing tutor at Nescot, said, "With the Institute of Technology we can offer progress. Computers are in every walk of life and every industry. The IoT at Nescot is offering courses to enhance future skills and aid long term sustainability. You can choose from a wide range of courses on offer, from learning how to design, create and program smart devices, industrial and home robotics to making you mindful of your digital footprint."

For more information on the IoT at Nescot please visit their website

Sussex and Surrey IoT

The Sussex and Surrey IoT includes Nescot, Chichester College Group (CCG) and the Universities of Sussex and Brighton. The IoT will enhance higher level skills training, with a new state-of-the-art hub and specialist satellites for delivery at locations across the region. The investment will create new cutting-edge facilities for higher level technical training with a focus on digital, sustainable technologies, engineering and construction.

Find out more about the Sussex and Surrey IoT here

Image: A guest trying some of the VR (Virtual Reality) kit in the VR room at the IoT. Credit NESCOT

Surrey Police roots out non-PC conduct

12 March 2024



There is a culture of “sexualised conversations” within a Surrey Police training group, an officer’s gross misconduct hearing panel heard.

PC Adam Watkins was found culpable of making sexually inappropriate comments and gestures to a female colleague and then also during the ‘end of training’ celebration evening on 7 October 2022.

Inappropriate comments included PC Watkins asking his colleague, anonymised as ‘Officer A’, if she had ‘christened’ her new house with her boyfriend (i.e whether they had had sex in it yet).

Watkins also asked Officer A how big her boyfriend’s penis is, gesturing with his hands and asking her to stop when he gestured the correct size, then commenting that Officer A would need crutches because of the size.

CCTV footage from a pub also showed Watkins approaching Officer A holding his drink to her face and that she had backed away. He then approached her from behind and pressed his groin against her buttock.

Watkins accepted that he had been drinking throughout the evening and noted that he was unsteady on his feet.

Officer A said, in a written statement on 9 October 2022, that “she turned around and saw [the former officer] right behind [her] swaying his pelvis from side to side. [Her] heart started racing when [she] noticed it was him and [she] felt a bit afraid.”

Officer A’s statement after the event said: “It was an extremely creepy and uncomfortable experience and it shocked me that he would behave in this way. Most times I talk about this experience, I start crying.”

Separate observations from some of the witness statements led the panel to note there “appeared to be a culture of ‘sexualised conversations’ within the training group” at large. Surrey Police have since said that the “overwhelming majority” of their officers and staff are professional .

A police misconduct hearing into Watkins’ conduct was held at Surrey Police Headquarters on 29th and 30th January and was heard by an independent panel.

Watkins had resigned during the investigation and prior to the hearing on 12 May 2023. The panel found that the officer’s actions amounted to gross misconduct and he would have been dismissed if he had not ceased to be a member of the police force.

Watkins argued his comments were made within the context of the culture of the team. Both Watkins and Officer A had instigated conversations of a sexual nature on occasions, the report read.

The misconduct report advised that Surrey Police Force may wish to review the training provided to new officers with the standards of professional conduct, as well as respect to equality and diversity to ensure the content is adequate.

It added training provided to the Police and Crime training team leaders should be revised to ensure unacceptable standards of conduct are quickly identified and resolved.

Head of Surrey Police’s Professional Standards Department, Superintendent Andy Rundle, said: “We have invested in a comprehensive programme of cultural change towards challenging, reporting and tackling unethical or unprofessional behaviour. This included every officer and staff member under-taking mandatory training and plenary sessions in abuse of position for a sexual purpose, gender, and racial bias.”

Noting Officer A’s presentation at the hearing, the panel felt she remained “significantly affected” by the former officer’s actions.

The panel found Watkins “displayed a lack of awareness about his actions”. The former officer claimed “he was just being a bit silly”.

Watkins relied on Officer A to point out that his conduct was unacceptable instead of taking responsibility for his own conduct, the panel observed.

According to the misconduct panel, Watkins “attempted to minimise his involvement by maintaining that he was only joking” when he made the comments to Officer A.

The report said: “We found the former officer’s view – that it was Officer A’s responsibility to tell him that his conduct was unacceptable – to be concerning.”

It added: “The public rightly expects a police officer to maintain the highest standards of behaviour.”

Watkins disputed the allegation that, whilst [Officer A] was discussing what she was going to wear on the ‘end of training’ celebration with her colleague, he said “are you going to get your tits out?”.

Instead, he believed that he said “Are you going to get the girls out” and clarified that by “girls” he meant breasts. Accordingly, the panel considered that whether the words “girls” or “tits” were said by Watkins, the difference was not significantly material.

Accepting his behaviour amounted to misconduct, Watkins denied that it reached the Gross Misconduct threshold as he had not intended to cause harm or distress to Officer A.

The panel concluded it had “no doubt” that the former officer’s actions is likely to cause “reputational harm” to the police service and undermine public confidence in policing, This is particularly the case given the increasing societal concerns regarding acts of violence against women and girls, the hearing heard.

Superintendent Rundle added: “This is a very concerning case where PC Watkins displayed completely inappropriate behaviour towards a fellow colleague and displayed a total lack of respect for her.

“This is simply not acceptable, and we are very sorry that she was subjected to this in the workplace; a place where she should feel safe and respected by all colleagues.

“We recognise the impact this case will have both on the Surrey public and our own officers and staff, particularly with the current focus on standards. Fortunately, the overwhelming majority of our officers and staff are professional and a credit to the force, however, it is essential that we continue to root out those colleagues who do not meet our demanding standards and ethics.”

Image is illustration only and is not nor intended to represent any individual referred to in this report.

The fellowship of NEScot

12 March 2024



Nescot (North East Surrey College of Technology) Reigate Road, **Ewell**, celebrated student success at the annual Higher Education (HE) Awards graduation ceremony at **Epsom Downs Racecourse** earlier this month (7th February). 110 graduands along with 300 family members and friends came together to mark the culmination of their hard work.

Degrees, diplomas and professional awards were conferred in over 15 subjects ranging from teaching to osteopathy. Colleagues from Nescot partners including University of Greenwich, Kingston University, Open University were on hand to assist **Julie Kapsalis**, Principal and CEO, with conferring the degrees.

Guests of honour for the ceremony included Councillor **Robert Geleit**, Mayor of Epsom & Ewell (Labour Court Ward), a former HND student of Nescot and **Brian Finch**, Chair of Epsom Downs Racecourse who kindly brought along the amazing Derby trophy. Brian who was the guest speaker, congratulated the graduates on their achievement and spoke about key lessons from his career journey in his inspirational speech.

At the ceremony, annual awards for outstanding endeavours and achievements were also presented by our guests of honour to six nominated students from the Nescot Class of 2023. The prizes included awards sponsored by the College and by the **Rotary Clubs of Epsom and Ewell**.

To mark Nescot's 70th anniversary, Principal and CEO, Julie Kapsalis was proud to award the college's first **Honorary Fellowships** at this year's graduation ceremony. "2024 sees Nescot celebrate its 70th anniversary, to recognise this incredible milestone and achievement, the college is introducing a new Honorary Fellowship award, the highest accolade the college can bestow. It recognises exceptional achievement and excellence by individuals associated with the college," said Julie.

The first Honorary Fellowship was awarded to **Dee Mathieson**, Senior Vice President and Managing Director of Elekta. A former student of Nescot, Dee has had an exceptional career in the science and medical sector. Sharing her journey, she said, "I am very grateful to Nescot for helping me on my way to what has been a fantastic and varied career in cancer care."

The second Honorary Fellowship on the day was awarded to Nescot staff member, **Daniel Addo** from our Security Team. Presenting the award, Julie said, "With his kindness and positivity he is a wonderful role model and encourages students to make the most of their opportunities both in the college and life."

The student vote of thanks was given by **Craig Clout**, who graduated with an Integrated Masters in Osteopathic Medicine. Craig spoke about the supportive and collaborative nature of the college community that contributes to everyone's success.

HE degrees and awards were conferred for the following subjects: osteopathy, animal management, sports therapy, counselling, early years, animal management, healthcare play specialist, food premises inspection, business, creative media (moving image), performing arts, computing, public services, sport and exercise science.

Image: Honorary Fellowship award winners, Dee Mathieson Senior Vice President and Managing Director of Elekta (left) and Daniel Addo, Nescot staff member (right), with Principal and CEO of Nescot, Julie Kapsalis (centre).

30 years' smile stamped on local Post Offices

12 March 2024



Postmistress **Nidhi Prashar** has reached her 30 years' milestone of serving Post Office customers in Surrey. Three decades ago, Nidhi and her husband, Anil, bought Oxted Post Office and for most of that time Nidhi has served that community. Now Anil runs that branch since Nidhi became Postmistress for **Epsom** in July 2017.

Postmistress, Nidhi Prasahar, said: "I loved serving the people of Oxted, but there was suddenly an opportunity to take on a bigger, busier, branch as well at Epsom, so Anil now runs Oxted branch. First Epsom was temporarily based at Epsom & Ewell Town Hall to restore service to the town, then I opened my permanent branch and card and gift shop in the High Street in February 2018.

"I get on really well with my customers in Epsom too. Thankfully I'd just got settled before Covid struck, but that was strange as many businesses in the high street were closed, so those customers were not around. However, other people who would normally have been commuting to elsewhere, were suddenly working from home and visiting my Post Office, so there were lots of different customers to get to know. People were grateful that Anil and I were able to keep both Oxted and Epsom branches open."

Last year Nidhi was filmed at Epsom branch as part of an episode of Stacey Solomon's Sort Your Life out programme. A local family had their home de-cluttered and they came across lots of different foreign currencies, which was then converted into useful sterling at her Post Office. Many of her customers immediately recognised her from the programme.

Nidhi, said: "I love being a postmistress. It's the people that you meet that make it so great. There aren't many jobs where you have this great interaction with people. People come in regularly and you build up a relationship. Customers become like extended family.

"In Oxted there are no banks left and we meet the banking needs of the community - so it's non-stop banking customers. In Epsom there are lots of banks and building societies, but we are open longer hours than all of them, so for some customers they find it more convenient to come here."

At Oxted and Epsom customers also have the choice of DPD and Evri services in addition to Royal Mail and Parcelforce mail services.

Post Office Area Manager, **Richard Wilder**, presented Nidhi with a 30 Years' Long Service Award. He said: "I want to thank Nidhi for being a first class Postmistress in Surrey for 30 years. Nidhi and Anil provide great customer service and they really care about the people that they serve in Oxted and Epsom. Both branches look great too with the retail alongside."

The Post Office.

Epsom 3rd in a 2024 “Best Places to Live”

12 March 2024



In the latest edition of national estate agents “Garrington’s Best Places to Live” index for 2024, Epsom has clinched the third spot after an assessment of rankings in a range of categories.

Garrington’s evaluation of **over 1400 locales** across England and Wales underscores Epsom’s strengths in various key aspects, including heritage, wellbeing, educational opportunities, employment prospects, and housing affordability.

With its longstanding association with the prestigious Derby and a rich historical backdrop, Epsom ranks high in heritage, landing at 90th place. Its commitment to community wellbeing, supported by a serene natural environment, earns it a respectable 282nd position in this category.

Moreover, Epsom’s strategic location near London, coupled with its excellent schools and robust job market, positions it favorably in terms of employment prospects and connectivity, securing the 99th spot in Garrington’s evaluation.

While property prices in Epsom reflect its status, with the average family home costing £810,809, a modest 0.4% increase in the past year underscores its resilience amidst market fluctuations.

According to Garringtons: “As the real estate landscape evolves, Epsom maintains its reputation as a stable and desirable locale, offering residents a blend of tradition, convenience, and quality of life.”

Jonathan Hopper, CEO of Garrington Property Finders, emphasizes the practical significance of the 2024 ranking, stating, “As the market stabilizes and borrowing costs decrease, buyers are re-evaluating their options. Garrington’s guide offers insights to help individuals identify locales that meet their needs and preferences.”

“Epsom remains attractive to homebuyers with its solid fundamentals and promising prospects for a fulfilling lifestyle.”

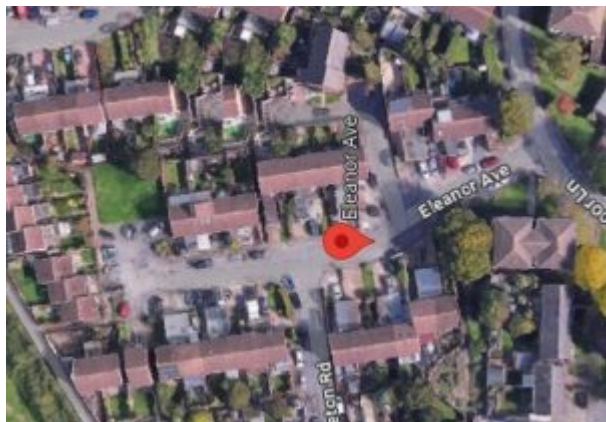
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Murder investigation in Epsom

12 March 2024



A murder investigation has been launched following the death of a man at a residential address in Epsom on Wednesday (7 February).

Officers were called to Eleanor Avenue at 9pm following a concern for safety of a 47-year-old man. South East Coast Ambulance Service attended but the man was sadly pronounced dead at the scene. His family has been informed and are being supported by specially trained officers.

A 44-year-old man from Epsom was arrested last night on suspicion of murder. He remains in custody.

An investigation, led by Surrey Police and Sussex Police’s Major Crime Team, is underway to establish the circumstances of the man’s death and enquiries remain ongoing.

Senior Investigating Officer **DCI Craig Emmerson** said: “The investigation is in the early stages and a specialist team of officers are working around the clock to follow up enquiries. At this time I can share that we believe this is an isolated incident which poses no risks to the wider public.

“Our thoughts are with the victim’s family at this difficult time. There remains a significant police presence in the area and we would like to thank local residents for their cooperation as we conduct our investigation. We will provide further updates as soon as we can.”

As the ward councillors Chris Ames, Kate Chinn and Rob Geleit are saddened to hear of the death of a man after the incident in Court Ward. **Kate Chinn** said: “Our thoughts are with the family and friends of the victim of this tragic event at what must be a difficult time. The police do not consider there is any risk to the wider public. We would like to thank the emergency services both the ambulance staff and the police who responded to and managed the incident.”

If you have any information which may relate to this incident, including any dashcam, CCTV or doorbell footage or any information which may help the police, please get in touch as soon as possible quoting PR/ 45240015016 via:

- Webchat on the website <https://www.surrey.police.uk/>
- Online <https://www.surrey.police.uk/tua/tell-us-about/cor/tell-us-about-existing-case-report/>
- Calling 101

If you do not wish to leave your name, please call the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Another news in store for Epsom!

12 March 2024



Following **Primark**'s announcement it is opening in **Epsom** we have a further welcome boost to the local economy, B&M are thrilled to announce the launch of its brand-new store in Epsom, Surrey. The launch of the new store will create 60 jobs for local people.

The discount retailer has taken possession of a previous Wilko store which provides a space of 26,548sqft. which will undergo a comprehensive internal and external refurbishment programme before officially opening its doors at 8am on Friday 1st March 2024.

Customers can expect to find a wide variety of branded groceries for the best possible price including a range of food, drink and pet food. There will also be a fantastic selection of quality health and beauty products, homeware, electricals, DIY essentials, toys, games, gifts and plenty more to explore.

The store manager from B&M said: "We're feeling extremely positive about the creation of more jobs for local people, and we hope customers are going to be delighted with their new store."

"We are all really excited to get the doors open and welcome new customers through the door."

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