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For the community, by the community. A not-for-profit service

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Surrey lands largest EV charging contract in UK

23 March 2023



Surrey County Council and **Connected Kerb** have agreed a contract to support the rollout of thousands of electric vehicle chargepoints across the county in the coming years. The contract, the largest in the UK to date, will release up to £60million of investment for Connected Kerb to install public EV chargepoints across the county. The aim will be to install thousands over the next five years and Connected Kerb have been licensed to operate the chargepoints for 15 years from installation.

Image credit: Andy Hughes.

Increasing the number public chargepoints in Surrey will support residents who would like to switch to an electric vehicle (or already have done), but do not have a driveway to be able to install a chargepoint at their home. Through this contract, chargepoints will be installed at convenient on-street locations in residential areas and key locations in the community such as on high streets and public car parks.

Connected Kerb will install a mix of chargepoints, depending on location, to suit all needs. This will include slower 3kW and 7kW chargepoints, as well as fast 22kW chargepoints and, where suitable, rapid chargepoints. Their product range includes free-standing and wall-mounted chargepoints, which will cater to those with accessibility needs.

The partnership will see a rapid rollout of on-street charge points, with ambitious plans to install hundreds of charge points within the first year It aims to make one in five of the EV charging bays more accessible to drivers with disabilities, in recognition of the need to make EV adoption a practical reality for the 2.35 million blue badge holders on UK roads**[i]**.

The recent Net Zero Review, published by the Government's advisor Rt Hon Chris Skidmore **MP**, highlighted the opportunity for local authorities to take a leading role in the rollout of charging infrastructure. The partnership between Surrey County Council and Connected Kerb supports the delivery of ambitious EV charging infrastructure rollouts at the scale and pace needed to meet targets set by the government and to keep pace with rapidly growing EV adoption – up 40% in 2022 compared to 2021.

Throughout the contract, Connected Kerb will be identifying suitable on-street locations, using residents' suggestions made **through our online map**, and approaching public sector and community land owners across the county to identify other suitable locations for public EV chargepoints, including local car carks, NHS sites and educational establishments.

Marisa Heath, Cabinet Member for Environment, Surrey County Council, said: *"We know that emissions from transport are a significant proportion of our carbon footprint in Surrey, so supporting residents to switch to an electric car is essential to helping us achieve our aim of being a net zero county by 2050.*

"Many residents don't have access to driveways to charge EVs at home, so a comprehensive network of high-quality, reliable and accessible EV chargepoints is essential to supporting the needs of our local communities.

"We've been working with Connected Kerb for almost a year, as part of our pilot phases that have seen us install over 100 chargepoints across Surrey over the last two years. We're delighted this contract will enable us to speed up the roll-out of further chargepoints and expand our network in the coming years."

Chris Pateman-Jones, CEO of Connected Kerb, said: *"If one local authority can deliver such a significant boost to the UK's charging network, just imagine what we could achieve by 2030 if every city, county, and combined authority was empowered to do the same. The recent Net Zero Review was clear – local authorities can become the driving force behind the rollout of charging infrastructure across the country, and our partnership with Surrey County Council is case and point.*

"If local authorities are the door to a clean transport future, then charging networks like Connected Kerb are the key, providing the tools and expertise needed to unlock the transition at the pace and scale required to reach net zero. Although the Government's estimate of 300,000 chargers by 2030 may feel ambitious, it's eminently possible – and necessary – to achieve; this deal proves it."

In addition to the EV chargepoints, the contract will delivery significant value to Surrey residents through Connected Kerb's social value projects. These will cover a range of initiatives including working with local educational centres to provide industry support to pupils interested in learning about EV chargepoints, providing employability support to vulnerable young people, as well as supporting a number of charities within the county.

- The contract enables up to £60million of investment to provide public EV chargepoints across Surrey
- Chargepoints will be installed at on-street locations as well as on other suitable public sector and community organisation managed car parks
- Partnership underlines findings of the recent Net Zero Revies which highlighted local authorities as the key to

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reaching the UK Government’s 300,000 chargepoint target

Planning or pantomime? Councillors press pause on Plan.

23 March 2023



Epsom and Ewell council voted to “pause” its controversial Local Plan last night, with one Residents’ Association (RA) councillor leaving the meeting after suggesting it was about “forthcoming elections rather than planning policy”. The length of the “pause” has not been specified.

Local elections are due to take place on 4 May.

Councillor **Alex Coley** (Residents’ Association, Ruxley Ward) told the council: “Considering this motion on its merits, I feel that a more appropriate location might be the Playhouse around Christmas time.” “We seem to be debating the forthcoming elections rather than planning policy”, he added, suggesting that the pause “ultimately changes very little”. Cllr Coley then told the council: “I will leave you now to your debate.”

The motion to pause the Local Plan was put forward by councillor **Eber Kington** (Residents’ Association, Ewell Court Ward) and six other RA councillors. Cllr Kington said that a pause would acknowledge “the strength of public feeling” on the Plan, enable a reassessment of brownfield sites, and provide the opportunity to look at options that do not use Greenbelt land at all. He added: “We have to take notice of what residents are telling us, through whatever means they choose.”

The public consultation on the Draft Local Plan ended on Sunday (19 March) with around 1,500 responses. A petition calling to “Keep Epsom and Ewell Greenbelt” has also reached 10,000 signatures, which is thought to be the greatest response to a petition in the borough’s history.

Campaign group Epsom Greenbelt held a protest to “Welcome Councillors” outside of last night’s meeting, and were calling for “Green not greed”.

Councillor **Bernie Muir** (Conservative, Stamford Ward) said she had “no option” but to vote for the pause, despite believing that “nothing in this motion will actually stop this plan from going ahead in the end”.

The pause was discussed in light of expected changes to government planning legislation, including updated guidance on Greenbelt development and how to calculate housing need.

One part of the motion states: “Under the existing legislation Local Planning Authorities are being required to draft Local Plans on the basis of out of date, 2014, data that does not reflect Epsom and Ewell’s housing need, as shown in more recently available 2018 data.”

Councillor **Peter O’Donovan** (Residents’ Association, Ewell Court Ward) said that pausing was not an option because the government had not given at timeframe for its legislative changes. He added that without an up-to-date Local Plan, there was a danger of inappropriate development, and said: “we need to continue on our current strategy, to protect the borough, to produce a plan that protects our Greenbelt.”

Councillor **Kate Chinn** (Labour, Court Ward) said that there was a huge need for housing in the borough, particularly social and affordable housing, but that there should be no development on the Greenbelt until every other option had been exhausted. She said that Labour councillors would be voting to pause the Plan.

Councillor **Julie Morris** (Liberal Democrats, College Ward) said: “There’s really quite a divide, isn’t there, amongst the ruling group?” She said: “We should have been much more clear about the direction that this document was going in, and that’s the problem you’ve got now – you are now having to do a U-turn because it was all kept secret for quite a long time and the public are not happy, understandably.”

Cllr Morris said that it was difficult to know whether to vote for the motion, especially when it did not include any endpoint for the pause, but said that it was the right thing to do on balance.

Councillor **Steven McCormick** (Residents’ Association, Woodcote Ward) had five minutes to respond to the points raised because, as chair of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee, he had led the development of the Local Plan. He said that the proposed pause was reliant on the idea that the government would publish changes

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to planning policy in May, but that some legislation change may not come until 2024.

Cllr McCormick added that the motion to pause the Plan would create “huge uncertainty” and said: “the best thing for protecting the Greenbelt is to progress”. Cllr McCormick voted against the pause.

The council voted to pause the Local Plan by a clear majority, with four councillors (RA Cllrs Dallen, O’Donovan, McCormick and Nash) voting against the pause and Cllr Williamson abstaining.

The text of the motion is HERE.

See editorial.

Sudden hike in Council room charges threatens community groups

23 March 2023



Letters to the Editor from **Peter Prowse** and **Kevin Meager**.

From **Peter Prowse** – 22nd March 2023

For the past year, Epsom and Ewell French Club has been hiring a room (The Studio) at Bourne Hall for its monthly meetings. The Council had agreed a discounted hire rate of £20 per hour, so £40 for our two hours, on the third Tuesday of each month.

Without any prior consultation and with very little notice, the Council has just announced that from April (ie in 10 days’ time) the Club will be charged a new ‘discounted’ rate of £35.36 per hour, so £70.72 for its two-hour booking, plus a new charge of £25 per session for use of the hot water urn (which has until now been provided free of charge).

Image: Bourne Hall Ewell Credit Bobulous – Own work. CC BY-SA 4.0

That would put the cost to the club up from £40 per booking to £95.72.

The club cannot possibly afford these prices. Other community groups who use Bourne Hall will be in the same position. Unless small, local clubs and societies can continue to use Bourne Hall for something very close to the 2022 prices, many will have to close.

Epsom & Ewell French Club is a non-commercial community group, provided for the benefit of its members and anybody else who want to come to its meetings. It is closely allied to the Epsom and Ewell Town Twinning Association, which is supported by the Borough Council.

The club almost folded during the Covid pandemic and its committe worked very hard to build it back up to the point where it is now attracting enough interest and support to keep going – provided it does not have to pay these new ridiculously expensive room hire costs. Bourne Hall exists for the benefit of local residents. This latest price hike means that many of them will no longer be able to use it.

Peter Prowse.

Letter from **Kevin Meager**

23rd March 2023

I would like to follow up on the letter to the editor regarding the hike in hire charges at Bourne Hall. I organise weekly dance classes in the main hall on Monday evenings through my organisation, Ceroc Surrey and we’ve been hit with similar charge increases with little to no notice. If this increase remains in place, we will have to stopping running classes at Bourne Hall as the new hire charges are unaffordable. The vast majority of our dancers are local, many are of retirement age and this is either their main or only weekly social event. Apart from lockdown, we’ve been using the venue continuously for over 20 years!

Your faithfully,

Kevin Meager

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Education assessment delays making parents sick

23 March 2023



A mother claims Surrey County Council “makes her sick” as she says delays to assessing her son’s special educational needs are causing “a lot of stress”.

At a protest held outside the authority’s Reigate headquarters, the mother, along with others, called for change at the council in how Surrey’s children with additional needs are treated.

Image: Parents protesting outside Surrey County Council headquarters in Woodhatch Place, Reigate. Credit: Emily Coady-Stemp

Anna Sutherland, protesting for the fifth time outside the Woodhatch Place building, said parents being sent down the tribunal route, as they are if they want to appeal against a council’s assessment of their children, “put a lot on families”.

She claimed the education, health and care plan (EHCP) issued to her 11-year-old son by the county council was “unlawful” but that because she knew the law, and knew what he was entitled to, she would “get there in the end”. Ms Sutherland told the LDRS: “This makes me ill. Surrey council make me sick.”

With her 9-year-old daughter’s EHCP also up for an annual review soon, Ms Sutherland feared she may have two tribunals on her hands. On previous protests, cabinet members on Surrey County Council have come out to talk to the parents present, but did not on Tuesday (March 21).

When the group of parents decided to attend the council meeting taking place that morning, they were told they could only do so if they left their placards in the building’s reception downstairs.

Ms Sutherland said many families with children with additional needs had “a lot to deal with in the first place” and additional chasing of EHCPs, tribunals and school places was “a lot to put on families”. Saying many families also had to work, may also have neuro-diverse conditions themselves and the “huge impact” on a parent’s mental health of going through a child’s diagnoses she said the parents at the protest were representing a “much huger group”. She added: “On top of the stress they put on you, then having the additional strength or the additional drive to protest, a lot of families just can’t do that.”

Clare Powdrill said delays to the EHCP process for her son had led to her spending more than £30,000 in two tribunals, both conceded by the council the day before the hearing. She said: “I am protesting because Surrey County Council have seriously let my son down.” Another parent, **Charlotte Lewis**, also said EHCP processes had been delayed “at every step” and timelines not been met by Surrey County Council. She said: “Many parents are being forced into a lengthy and expensive appeals process which is usually won but can delay children’s access to an education by years in some cases. ”

A council spokesperson said: “We are not able to comment on the details of any individual children, but we can confirm that all current EHCPs were updated in line with statutory timescales to enable children’s transition to the next phase of their education. If a parent is unhappy with the content of their child’s updated plan, we would urge them to contact their case officer as soon as possible, so that any issues can be resolved.

“We always aim to resolve disagreements without families needing to go through a tribunal process, however, they do have the right to do so, and if it remains the view of the local authority that the latest education health and care plan accurately reflects a child’s needs and the provision required to meet their needs, then, in these rare cases the tribunal is the appropriate route to resolve the dispute.”

Surrey Council’s ULEZ talks ongoing with TfL

23 March 2023



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Surrey councillors have confirmed written communications are ongoing with Transport for London over the impact of the ULEZ expansion. Surrey County Councillor **Robert Evans** (Labour, Stanwell and Stanwell Moor) asked cabinet members at a full council meeting on Tuesday (March 21) to confirm that the mitigations the council was calling for would be followed up with the chancellor.

He claimed previous attempts to extend the Transport for London (TfL) Oyster card zone 6 in several Surrey boroughs had "floundered" because central government would not underwrite potential losses to the train companies.

Image: Ultra Low Emission Zone, Stonebridge Park. Credit: Will Durrant/LDRS

Cllr Evans called on Surrey's cabinet to "work with TfL and the Mayor of London to make sure that Surrey residents get the health benefits of this, but don't get negative impacts if ULEZ comes into operation."
The zone, which sees drivers of older, more polluting cars charged £12.50 per day to enter it, is due to expand to cover all of greater London from August.

The ULEZ currently covers central London and its expansion will see it border several Surrey districts and boroughs including Spelthorne, Elmbridge and **Epsom**.

In response to TfL's plans to extend the zone, Elmbridge councillors previously called for the Oyster Card Zone 6 to be expanded further, highlighting the difference between public transport in London and in Surrey.
Cllr Evans said schemes in Bristol, Coventry, Birmingham and elsewhere had seen the government "pick up the bill for a scrappage scheme".

The council's cabinet member for transport, infrastructure and growth, Cllr **Matt Furniss**, (Conservative, Shalford) confirmed face-to-face meetings had been requested with TfL, but said he was "disappointed to say it only took the threat of legal action to get transport London to respond." He said the council did "ask the government regularly for additional funding" and would be talking to them about the impact of the planned extension.

Meeting documents showed a virtual meeting took place between with TfL, county council officers and Elmbridge Borough Council officers on February 21.

A written response was received from TfL as a follow up to the meeting on March 7, which was being looked at and a response drafted from the council. The documents said: "The council is committed to delivering a greener future, but it must be done in a practical and sustainable way. …..The impact of an expanded ULEZ on many Surrey residents and businesses will be significant, and we will not stand by and watch that happen with no mitigation offered."

During the meeting, Cllr Evans also reminded the scheme had been brought about by Boris Johnson, during his time as Mayor of London. Former Prime Minister Mr Johnson was London Mayor between 2008 and 2016, and announced the introduction of the world's first ULEZ in London in 2015. It was introduced from April 2019.

A written response was received from TfL as a follow up to the meeting on March 7, which was being looked at and a response drafted from the council.

Cllr **Buddhi Weerasinghe** (Conservative, Lower Sunbury and Halliford) said he was supporting a campaign by residents to get Ashford and Sunbury stations, among others in Spelthorne, added to Zone 6. He also highlighted the needs of the expanding Shepperton Studios that he said had been put in a letter to government regarding its work force needing to travel to and from the studios by train.

On the Hunt for pothole repairs

23 March 2023



The Government will give an additional £3.7m for pothole repairs in Surrey. But one Surrey councillor is calling for ministers to "go further" and change the way road funding is allocated from Westminster.

Tuesday's budget, delivered by South West Surrey MP **Jeremy Hunt**, announced an additional £200million for 2023/24 across the country for pothole repair.

Surrey County Council's deputy cabinet member for levelling up, Councillor **Rebecca Paul** (Conservative, Tadworth, Walton & Kingswood) said she was "delighted" the Government had recognised more funding was needed in Surrey for road repairs. She told the LDRS: "The recent spate of potholes across our county affects every single one of us, so this additional money is much welcomed." She called on the Government to "go further and give serious consideration" to changing how highways maintenance funding is allocated to take into account traffic volume.

Cllr Paul delivered a petition to Downing Street in June 2022 calling for funding for road repairs to be allocated by usage rather than the current formula which looks at the length of roads. She said: "This would result in a fairer allocation of

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funds so that Surrey Highways is better able to address the backlog."

Roads minister Richard Holden said the cash could mean another 75,000 potholes repaired. He also praised Surrey's lane rental scheme, which he said the county had been "at the forefront" of rolling out. The scheme, rolled out in 2021, charges companies for works which cause delay at peak times on the county's busiest roads.
Mr Holden said the scheme minimised delays from roadworks taking place because they were more often carried out at the same time, and this also reduced damage to roads. He told the LDRS he wanted to see that rolled out more across the country.

On Cllr Paul's calls for "fairer funding" from central government, Mr Holden said it was "swings and roundabouts" because a lot of the strategic road network, paid for out of national taxation, was in Surrey. He added: "I'm always willing to listen to local concerns about these issues. I think it's vitally important that we do get the balance right when it comes to road funding."

A motion will be brought to a meeting of Surrey County Council on Tuesday, calling for the adoption of a "Vision Zero Safe System" and setting a target date for zero fatalities and severe injuries on Surrey's roads. **Will Forster** (Lib Dem, Woking South) will bring forward a motion saying: "Road collision statistics in Surrey have hardly changed over the last ten years. In 2021 24 people were killed and 647 were seriously injured. The effects of a road traffic collision can have a physical, emotional, social and economic impact on everyone involved. In financial terms the cost of road collisions in Surrey was approximately £250 million in 2021."

A Surrey County Council spokesperson said: "While any additional funding for potholes is welcomed, as highlighted by the Annual Local Authority Roads Maintenance survey in 2022, the condition of roads across the UK would require a one-time catch up cost (over and above what authorities already receive) of £12.64bn. The current commitment from government for English roads funding prior to the announcement in this week's budget was £2.7bn in total between 2022 and 2025, therefore the funding allocations from government still fall far short of the needs of the UK roads.

"However Surrey County Council recognises the need to invest in our roads and so is investing additional funds beyond government grants and will be spending £188m on improving and maintaining our roads and pavements over the next five years."

Epsom and Ewell Times now hot off the press

23 March 2023



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Grand plans for South-East transport

23 March 2023

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Transport for the South East have received approval from their Partnership Board to progress delivery of their Strategic Investment Plan which includes nearly 300 multi-modal transport interventions to be delivered across the south east over the next 27 years.

The plan sets out a vision for the region, with priorities to decarbonise the transport system, level up left behind communities and facilitate sustainable economic growth in the south east between now and 2050. Included within the ambitious list of interventions is several global policy interventions, designed to address the challenges and opportunities faced not just in the south east but across the whole of the UK. These cover issues such as decarbonisation, public transport fares, new mobility, road user charging, virtual access, and integration between all modes of transport.



The Board: Photo: (L-R) Rupert Clubb, Geoff French, Vince Lucas, Cllr Gary Hackwell, Cllr Phil Jordan, Cllr Keith Glazier, Cllr Elaine Hills, Cllr Matt Furniss, Cllr Joy Dennis, Cllr David Monk, Dan Ruiz.

This ambitious plan forecasts a total capital cost of over £45 billion over 27 years and interventions that once implemented could generate; 21,000 new jobs, an additional £4 billion growth in GVA each year by 2050, 1.4 mega tonnes less CO2 equivalent emitted, 500,000 more rail trips a day, 1.5 million more trips taken by bus, mass transit and ferry, and take roughly 4 million car trips a day off the south east's roads.

While £45 billion is a significant sum of money, it isn't dissimilar to the levels of historical investment in the south east over a similar time period. Not only does the plan identify the investment needed to transform the economy in the south east, it also recognises the financial constraints faced by the bodies that would traditionally fund these sorts of interventions. Delivering this plan requires significant investment and Transport for the South East welcomes ongoing discussions with government, both local and central and with the private sector as they continue to explore potential funding options.

Councillor Keith Glazier, Chair of Transport for the South East said; "This evidence based investment is a once in a generation opportunity to set out a sustainable transport network that recognises the importance of major transport corridors across the south east. Corridors that are fundamental to our economy and our communities.

"This plan is the result of five years of partnership working, it truly is a plan developed by the south east, for the south east.

"Following approval by our Partnership Board we have submitted the plan to the Secretary of State for the Department for Transport with a request for it to be considered as future investment decisions are made.

"We could not be more grateful for the insight, support and challenge shown by our partners, and the Department for Transport in the development of this plan."

Transport for the South East's Partnership Board brings together elected members from local transport authorities and district and borough authorities, representatives of local enterprise partnerships (LEPs), protected landscapes, National Highways, Network Rail, and more.

Throughout the development of the investment plan, Transport for the South East held regular stakeholder meetings to gather evidence and seek input. They also held a 12-week public consultation on the plan in the summer of 2022 asking for comments from anyone who lives, works or travels within the region, receiving over 600 responses.

Prior to approval at the Partnership Board, local transport authorities within the region also had the opportunity to present the investment plan to their own council members to secure sign off.

Transport for the South East's investment plan promises to not only deliver economic benefits to the region but to also make a material contribution towards net zero carbon. It supports a reduction in the need to travel by encouraging integrated planning and a shift to more sustainable modes of travel for both passengers and freight.

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It recognises the importance of accessible, affordable, integrated, reliable and attractive public transport, that is fit for purpose and have ensured it is at the core of the Strategic Investment Plan. The transport body promises to work with local authorities and operators to provide better-connected and accessible multi-modal journeys with users easily able to walk, wheel or cycle for the first and last miles of their journeys.

Following approval Transport for the South East's attention now turns to delivery. They will continue to work with partners from across the region to develop a delivery action plan, setting out the current position of each of the nearly 300 proposed multi-modal schemes within the investment plan. The action plan will focus on the next three years, 2023-2026, and detail what the next steps are and confirm the roles and responsibilities of Transport for the South East and its delivery partners required to make this plan a reality.

You can read the plan in full at www.transportforthesoutheast.org.uk

Transport for the South East (TfSE) is a new body created to improve the transport network and grow the economy of the whole South East area.

It brings together representatives of 16 transport authorities and five local enterprise partnerships covering an area stretching from the English Channel to the border of London, and from the Kent coast to Berkshire, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. Not only does this area include major airports, ports, roads and rail routes, it is also a powerful economic motor for the whole of the UK – adding £200 billion a year to the national economy.

The aim of TfSE is to support and grow this economy, improve quality of life and protect the environment by choosing the right strategic transport priorities for investment. A thirty-year transport strategy was published in July 2020 with a strategic investment plan to follow by 2022.

Press release from Transport from the South-East

Dorking pastry chef charts way to pie victory

23 March 2023



Dorking-based pie-expert, **Fine Piehouse** has triumphed at this year's **British Pie Awards**, taking home the prize for best Chicken Pie. The pie-maker beat off 31 other mouth-watering entries in this category to take home the prize.

The pie-oneering awards, now in its 15th year, celebrate the nation's most delicious pies – from the traditionally British to the tantalisingly innovative and totally whacky.

Fine Piehouse won over the esteemed judges this year with its Normandy Chicken with Apple Brandy pie.

Matthew O'Callaghan, Chairman of the Melton Mowbray Pork Pie Association and host of the British Pie Awards, said: "We are always highly encouraged to see the nation's love of pies at these annual awards, and this year there has been a huge level of excitement and creativity.

On Wednesday we had the pleasure of enjoying some spectacular pies, and Fine Piehouse has overcome exceptionally stiff competition for best Chicken Pie. These awards celebrate the skill of British piemakers across the nation, so I'd like to say a particular congratulations to them for this success."

The contest comprises 23 different classes or types of pie including traditional favourites and newcomers such as Vegan and Gluten Free Pies. This year in a surprise twist, meat-based pie entries dominated the top four classes for the first time since 2019, with Beef & Any Flavour topping the entry rankings.

Other memorable entries in the contest included a Marmite and Cheese concoction and Fusion Pies such as Balti Pies, Vindaloo Pies, Kebab Pies, and even Baldy's 'Nearly As Good As Mama Joan's Lasagne Pie'.

Thanks to the British Pie Association.

Image – Oddbodz – CC BY-SA 3.0

Stoneleigh station to be revamped.

23 March 2023

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A new, covered footbridge will replace the existing structure at Stoneleigh station, providing full access via lifts or stairs to the central platform from both sides of the station. New lighting and security cameras will be installed on and around the lifts and bridge. The existing bridge structure will be removed, with the ticket office sited on the central island platform.

Network Rail and South Western Railway have been working together with Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to get this scheme off the ground. The council has provided a £500k funding contribution to the project from its Community Infrastructure fund.

A prior approval planning application was sent to and approved by the council in May 2022.

Network Rail estimate work will start on site – spring 2023 and enter into service Spring 2024.

Next up but one up the line Motspur Park will get a similar revamp and if cross-rail is ever built those trains will stop there.

Surrey MPs oppose each other on drills in the hills

23 March 2023



Jeremy Hunt MP has said it is “disappointing” that plans to drill for oil and gas in Dunsfold have not been “formally shelved” altogether. The Chancellor of the Exchequer issued the statement after the High Court ruled the government-approved exploratory drilling in his South West Surrey constituency would go to Judicial Review.
The High Court ordered the review on the grounds that there was “inconsistency in decision-making” by Secretary of State **Michael Gove**, and that Dunsfold bordered the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – where great weight should be placed on “conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty”.

Mr Hunt, who has campaigned against the planning application in Dunsfold before, said: “Despite the latest judicial review, it is again disappointing that plans for this potential gas exploration have not been formally shelved. The idea of drilling on this beautiful area continues to be inappropriate – what’s more UKOG’s data and mapping of the sub-surface is sparse, old and simply not detailed enough. I hope to meet with Protect Dunsfold again later this month to continue discussions.”

The Conservative MP has form in the matter. In June 2022 he wrote that DLUHC’s decision to overturn Surrey County Council’s initial refusal was “bitterly disappointing and wrong both economically and environmentally”.
He also wrote a letter to Housing Secretary **Michael Gove** that said the project had been strongly opposed by both county council and “the entire local community”, going as far as accusing DLUHC of “ignoring the strength of local opinion”.

After news of the judicial review broke, UK Oil & Gas (UKOG) issued a statement to the London Stock Exchange.
It said: “Mr **Justice Lane**, dismissed five of the opponent’s grounds seeking to reverse the Secretary of State’s grant of planning consent as being unarguable. Two remaining grounds were given leave to be argued at a further hearing at some time in the future, as yet unknown.”

It added that full planning and environmental consents remain in force.

Stephen Sanderson, UKOG’s chief executive, said: “The company’s legal team remains robustly confident that following the extensive Loxley public inquiry, the secretary of state’s decision to grant planning consent was thoroughly considered and entirely lawful. Consequently, we will continue to move our project ahead.”

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Surrey academic wins ‘Woman in Innovation’ award for tackling bias against neurodivergent people

23 March 2023



On International Women’s Day **Surrey University** announce a prize winner among its female academics.

Online technologies to help neurodivergent people successfully enter the workforce are being developed at the University of Surrey, led by **Dr Alison Callwood**, in a project that has seen her win one of Innovate UK’s *‘Women in Innovation’* awards.

The *Generating Neurodiverse Inclusion Selection (GENIUS)* project will explore what communication methods and personalisation options could be used to optimise access and performance in online interviews and assessments for those with neurodiverse conditions such as autism, ADHD, and dyslexia.

Dr Alison Callwood, GENUIS project lead and Senior Lecturer in Integrated Care at the University of Surrey, said:

“Approximately 15 to 20 per cent of the UK population is neurodivergent. The unfairness they experience in the recruitment field is unjustified. Tackling this issue will not only improve the working lives of neurodivergent people by unlocking the valuable contribution they can make, but it will also boost the economy by helping address the rising number of unfilled positions in the workforce.

“I am delighted to receive this award which includes a £50,000 grant. The support it offers is invaluable to this project.”

This project will build on previous work by Dr Callwood who has developed the successful interview tool *SAMMI* which reduces bias and provides robust, reliable, and cost-efficient interviews and assessments for employers.

Helping to further the project, the funding awarded to Dr Callwood will give her access to tailored business coaching, mentoring and a wide range of networking and training opportunities designed to help grow this innovative project.

Professor Paul Townsend, Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, said:

“Congratulations to Alison on winning this award. Being one of only 50 recipients of this prize, shows the strength of her project and her hard work and dedication in this field. Her skills and the diversity of her career are valued greatly here at Surrey, and I am proud to have her in our team.”

Indro Mukerjee, CEO, Innovate UK, the United Kingdom’s innovation agency,

“We are proud to support this group of trailblazing women who are changing the world through the power of their ideas. Their innovations underpin solutions inspired by societal and environment challenges, as well as their own lived experiences. I hope their stories will encourage and inspire others to follow their lead.”

Pay black hole takes £2.2M Epsom Hospital funds

23 March 2023



Epsom and St Helier Trust has set out how it is working to claw back **£2.2million in salary overpayments**. A board meeting of the trust heard that people continuing to be paid after they had left a role was one issue that had led to the

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outstanding money.

The Epsom and St Helier Trust board met on Friday (March 3) heard that there was “angst” against the trust when it was accused of “pushing people into hardship” when reclaiming money.

Meeting documents show that as of November 30, the trust had £2.2m of salary overpayments of which £798,000 had been invoiced for, and £382,000 was being repaid via agreed plans.

There was work being done with a payroll overpayments team and the HR department to look at £823,000 of outstanding overpayment money to make sure it could be recovered from people who were not responding or where the trust did not have a forwarding address.

Andrew Grimshaw, group chief finance officer, told the meeting that where the the trust was seeking contact or had had no contact with people who owed money was invariably people who had left and not been “terminated” on the system. He said the trust did agree an extended repayment plan with a lot of people to get overpayments back.

The “single most effective action” in stopping overpayments was terminating people on the system when they resigned from a role, he told the meeting. But he added: “A lot of the angst we see is when we are accused of pushing people into hardship.”

An active review had been carried out to find out how many people were being paid who shouldn’t be, meaning a lot of new cases had been found. The meeting chair, **Gillian Norton**, said she knew the board was “sensitive” to the issue, and in the past had given “a very clear steer” on it.

She added: “It’s public money so we have a duty to recover it but we have to do it in a way that is compassionate.”
Derek Macallan, a non-executive director on the board, he was conscious of how hard it was to employ people and how many steps there were to new starters. He asked: “At the end of employment is there a black hole people go into and keep being paid?”

The chair of the Audit Committee, **Peter Kane**, responded that there had been improvements made but there was “still some way to go. We will be keeping our eyes on it, we’e not letting go of it despite the fact that improvements have been made.”

Patient nut complaint to protect others

23 March 2023



The **Epsom and St Helier Trust board** heard the complaint of a patient allergic to nuts given nut oil. LDRS reports:

A hospital patient with a peanut allergy and an epipen was given medication for a nosebleed which contained nut oil. The patient at **St Helier hospital** was told before going home that the A&E doctor “didn’t think” the cream contained nut oil, a hospital trust board meeting heard. But on returning home and reading the leaflet, the unnamed patient learned there was in fact arachis oil, or peanut oil, in the medication. The patient had gone to the emergency department after a nosebleed, having started on a medication to help reduce blood clots. The patient had told the nursing team on arrival at the hospital and the doctor who prescribed the cream for the nosebleed about their allergy.

On contacting the emergency department, the patient was told there was not an alternative medicine that could be prescribed.

Members of the Epsom and St Helier Trust board heard at a meeting on Friday (March 3) that the patient then contacted their GP for an alternative before making a complaint to the trust so the issue would not affect other patients.

The board meeting, held at Epsom hospital, heard from a registrar and a consultant in the emergency department what steps had since been taken to learn lessons from the incident. These included a safety alert being sent within the team and the individual doctor being spoken to, while board members also asked what more could be done at trust level to help in what was a “very, very busy” department.

Ruth Charlton, the site chief medical officer, said the emergency department was of the only in the trust to use a paper prescription method rather than electronic. She also said that because the emergency department was operating 24/7, and doing things very quickly, patients were not sent to pharmacy for medications, which would be “an extra checking mechanism in place”. She said an electronic system would flag allergens, such as cows’ milk, in a medication and then allow something else to be prescribed instead.

She added: “We need to take away this case and look at what more we could do to address the systems issues.”
The meeting also heard it was not clear what checks were made by the doctor about what was in the medication, or who

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the patient had spoken to when calling the hospital to ask about alternative medications.

Board chair, **Gillian Norton**, said the board was impressed with the “rigorous approach to learning” shown by the department and thanked the doctors for sharing the experience. She said: “Keep up the great work. “We are very conscious that you have done all this learning and thought about this while you have got this incredibly busy day job.”

After Ronnie Scott’s? Epsom of course!

23 March 2023



Fresh from their ‘Two for the Road’ concert at **Ronnie Scott’s**, internationally renowned virtuoso jazz guitarist visiting from Norway, **Frode Kjekstad** is pairing up with local legend **Nigel Price**. Together with Italian drum sensation **Laura Klain** and the brilliant **Mikele Montolli** on double bass, they will give a special live concert in the heart of Epsom on **Saturday 11th March**.

Epsom Jazz Club, resident in the Oaks Room, Church Street, Epsom has sold out all its regular Tuesday concerts this season. So this is the last chance to enjoy the unique cabaret seated venue until next season starts in May. A real taste of the world famous Ronnie Scott atmosphere and music brought to your own Town.

Frode has wowed audiences whilst playing alongside heavyweight jazz stars such as Dr Lonnie Smith, Mike LeDonne and Eric Alexander.

Epsom Jazz Club advises buy your tickets in advance. Go to www.epsomjazzclub.com for tickets.

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