

# Epsom's Rosebery School has a foundation for students' ambitions

2 July 2026



Rosebery School in Epsom has launched a new charitable foundation aimed at helping pupils pursue their ambitions regardless of their financial or personal circumstances.

The Rosebery Foundation has been established as part of the wider GLF Schools Foundation, supported by donations from former pupils including the family of Dianne Long, who joined Rosebery School in 1953.

Rosebery, which is part of the GLF Schools multi-academy trust, said the Foundation will help remove financial barriers which can prevent pupils from taking part in opportunities outside the classroom.

Its work will focus on five main areas: enrichment and opportunity; wellbeing and belonging; leadership and empowerment; networks and futures; and Rosebery Rewilding, which promotes wellbeing and personal development through nature and outdoor learning.

The Foundation will also seek to draw on the school's wider community of former pupils, parents and partners to create mentoring opportunities, professional connections and new experiences for pupils.

One of its first major projects will be a summer visit to the European Space Centre in Belgium, intended to encourage girls interested in science, technology and maths.

The visit has been funded by Dianne Long and the Di Long family through a bursary established within the Foundation.

Holly Lowe, Assistant Headteacher at Rosebery School, is leading work on the Foundation. She said: "At Rosebery, our students are highly aspirational and achieve exceptionally well. Within school, we expect them to use their voice, take intellectual risks and see themselves as leaders. It is simply part of how we work day to day.

"The reality, however, is that all girls will encounter barriers beyond school. The wider world does not always reflect or reinforce those expectations in the same way. For disadvantaged students, these challenges can be felt more keenly, particularly where there is less access to enrichment, professional networks and the kinds of experiences that open doors and build confidence."

The Foundation has already hosted an alumnae day as part of the school's Student Futures Festival for Year 12 pupils.

Fifteen former Rosebery pupils returned to the school, representing a range of generations and careers. They took part in panel discussions, workshops, talks and an afternoon mentoring session.

The school said such events can help build confidence, widen horizons and raise aspirations, particularly for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Ms Lowe added: "Through the Rosebery Foundation, our focus is on making sure students are not only achieving highly, which they already are here, but are fully prepared for what comes next. Ultimately, it is about ensuring that all our students leave Rosebery ready not just to succeed, but to step into the world with the confidence and the connections to shape it."

Sam Jones - Reporter



Photo of Rosebery's first Foundation event, an alumnae day.

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## Six months of disruption ahead as major gas and traffic works set to hit central Epsom

2 July 2026



### *Businesses and residents voice concerns over diversion routes as SGN and Surrey County Council prepare for large-scale works at the East Street/Hook Road/Upper High Street junction*

Central Epsom is facing up to six months of roadworks and traffic disruption following the announcement of a major joint gas infrastructure and traffic signal project by Southern Gas Networks (SGN) and Surrey County Council (SCC) Highways.

#### **What's happening, and when**

According to letters sent to residents and businesses this month, the works are being carried out to support new housing development in the area and to maintain the safety and reliability of the local gas network. SGN's contractor, JDT Utilities, will lay new gas mains in East Street and Hook Road, while SCC replaces the traffic signal system on High Street, Upper High Street and Church Street.

A clarifying email from SGN, seen by this publication, sets out the works in more detail than the resident letters managed to convey. The project will run in two phases:

- **Phase One** (planned duration: four weeks) will see SCC install a new urban traffic light system, with new light heads on Church Street, High Street and Upper High Street. Within this footprint, SGN will impose a lane closure — not a full closure — on East Street, to allow open-cut installation of two new mains running from outside The Big Yellow Storage on East Street through to Hook Road.
- **Phase Two** will follow, with Hook Road closed between Woodstock Court and East Street while SGN continues its open-cut works down towards the multi-storey car park entrance and Woodstock Court.

The resident letters state that engineering work is scheduled to begin on 18 July, with SCC's signal works starting on 23 July within the same traffic management setup. Go Epsom, the town's Business Improvement District, gives a fuller picture of the timeline, stating that works will run from 23 July through to 24 December — a span of roughly five months, and notably longer than the "completed by the end of the year" assurance given in SGN's own letter.

During the works, the multi-storey car park will remain open and accessible via Hook Road under traffic management, and a signed diversion route will be in place. SGN says access will be maintained for residents and businesses throughout.

#### **Residents question the diversion plan**

The announcement has prompted concern from residents about the adequacy of the traffic management plan. One resident, responding to the letter, said the accompanying diversion map was difficult to interpret and that the colour-coding "does not make a lot of sense," while the flyer gave no indication of where traffic would be diverted to rejoin the A24 on the far side of Epsom, nor any information on bus route changes.

The resident warned that Epsom's narrow residential streets are already prone to rat-running, and questioned whether roads such as Downs Hill Road and Worple Road — both narrow, and in the case of Worple Road affected by potholes — could safely absorb diverted traffic, including HGVs, without vehicles being forced onto pavements. They suggested a 20mph limit should be considered on any residential road used as part of the diversion, particularly given the number of children walking to and from school in the area.

The resident also raised concern about the six-month duration of the works and its potential impact on trade in Epsom High Street, and said they would be unable to attend either of SGN's public drop-in sessions this week.

#### **Businesses seek pause over Christmas trading period**

Go Epsom has echoed concerns about the scale and length of the disruption. In a message to local businesses, it confirmed the works are expected to run from 23 July to 24 December, warning of "knock on effects with diversions, parking bay suspensions and road closures." The BID says it is asking SGN and SCC to pause works over the November/December trading period, recognising the importance of the pre-Christmas period to town centre traders.

Businesses affected by the works may be eligible for support through SGN's small business compensation scheme, details of which are available at [sgn.co.uk](http://sgn.co.uk).

#### **Have your say**

SGN is holding two public drop-in sessions this week for residents and businesses to raise questions directly with the engineering team, at the rear offices of 29 East Street:

- Wednesday 1 July, 4pm-7pm
- Thursday 2 July, 2pm-4pm

Project updates are expected to be published at [sgn.co.uk/our-gas-works/major-planned-projects](https://sgn.co.uk/our-gas-works/major-planned-projects), and anyone with concerns about disabled access or specific needs during the closures is asked to contact SGN's customer service team on 0800 912 1700.

Lionel Blackman

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## Around 100 attend Epsom unity event after April far-right disorder

2 July 2026



Around 100 people gathered in Rosebery Park for a community event intended to promote unity and reject racism following far-right disorder in Epsom earlier this year.

The free event, held on Saturday 27 June and organised by Stand Up to Racism Epsom & Ewell, brought together families, faith representatives, local campaigners and politicians for music, speeches, food, children's activities and a community art project.

It followed events in April when Epsom attracted attention from far-right activists from outside the area after social-media discussion and misinformation surrounding an alleged rape. The subsequent disorder prompted concern among residents and community groups.

Saturday's gathering included speeches by Epsom and Ewell MP Helen Maguire, Reverend Catherine Hutton of Epsom Methodist Church, Labour councillor Kate Chinn and Green councillor Jonathan Essex. Messages of support were also shared on behalf of Epsom Mosque and the local Sikh community.

Those attending heard live music from Canada Hill, with DJ Amalgamation also performing. Children's face painting, food, stalls and a collaborative art activity were among the attractions.

A "Facts Not Fear" stall aimed to challenge misinformation and far-right narratives. The Epsom and Ewell Climate Network was represented, alongside members of Stand Up to Racism and local Green and Labour Party stalls. Organisers said the Conservative Party had been invited but had not responded.

Deborah Fish, of Stand Up to Racism Epsom & Ewell, said: "The response to our Unity Event showed that Epsom and Ewell rejects racism and division.

"There was a real sense of hope and solidarity in the crowd. People from many different backgrounds came together because they want to live in a welcoming, inclusive community and are determined to stand together against racism and the far right."

Reverend Hutton said Epsom Methodist Church would continue to provide "a space of safety and sanctuary for all".

Ms Maguire told the gathering: "We are here today because we choose to stand for something. We choose to say that racism has no home here. Disinformation has no home here and division has no home here.

"As your Member of Parliament, I will continue to stand up to racism."

Event host and organiser Ammo Sandhawaliala said the turnout showed "Epsom and Ewell's true colours" were "warm, welcoming and united".

He added: "To see around a hundred neighbours come together with their families, their faith communities, their councillors and their MP, sharing food, music and art in our park, was simply joyous."

Stand Up to Racism Epsom & Ewell describes itself as a local group campaigning for inclusion, safety and unity across the borough.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Photo: Reverend Catherine Hutton of Epsom Methodist Church

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## Epsom rail passengers urged to travel only if essential as extreme heat disrupts services

2 July 2026



Rail passengers using Epsom station are being urged to avoid all but essential journeys on Wednesday and Thursday as extreme heat is expected to bring disruption across Surrey's rail network.

Southern, which runs services through Epsom towards London Victoria, Sutton and Dorking, has warned that it will operate a reduced timetable as trains are required to run more slowly in the exceptional temperatures.

The warning also applies to South Western Railway services from Epsom towards Wimbledon and London Waterloo. SWR has told passengers to check before travelling on Tuesday and to make journeys on Wednesday and Thursday only where absolutely necessary, warning that services may be altered or cancelled at short notice.

The Met Office has issued a rare Red Extreme Heat Warning covering much of southern and central England. Conditions are expected to be most severe on Wednesday 24 June and Thursday 25 June, with very high daytime temperatures and little overnight relief.

Southern's parent company Govia Thameslink Railway said fewer trains would operate across its Southern, Thameslink and Great Northern networks, with journeys taking longer and trains likely to be busier.

Passengers are being advised to consider postponing trips until later in the week, or to travel earlier or later in the day where possible.

South Western Railway has issued similar advice for its network, including routes serving Surrey. Its current travel notice says that hot weather may lead to short-notice timetable changes and cancellations between Tuesday and Thursday.

The disruption is linked to the effect of extreme heat on railway infrastructure. Steel rails expand in high temperatures and can buckle, while overhead wires, signalling equipment and train systems can also be affected.

Network Rail says rails in direct sunshine can be substantially hotter than the surrounding air temperature. It may therefore impose temporary speed restrictions during the hottest parts of the day to reduce the risk of track damage and keep services operating safely.

Jenny Saunders, Customer Service Director for Southern, Thameslink, Great Northern and Gatwick Express, said passengers should think carefully before travelling.

She said: "With such extreme temperatures forecast, we have to run fewer trains, more slowly to keep services safe.

"I'd really urge our customers to think about what's best for them and to travel only if absolutely necessary on Wednesday and Thursday."

Passengers who do need to use trains are advised to allow extra time, carry plenty of drinking water, use sunscreen and wear a hat. They should also have a backup plan in case their service is delayed or cancelled.

Southern has said that passengers with tickets dated Tuesday 23, Wednesday 24 or Thursday 25 June who decide not to travel may be eligible for a full refund from their point of purchase.

SWR also advises customers to carry water, avoid standing on exposed platforms in the middle of the day where possible, and leave the train at the next station if they feel unwell so that assistance can be arranged.

Epsom passengers should check the Southern and South Western Railway journey planners shortly before setting out, as the position may change during the day.

Southern, Thameslink and Gatwick Express passengers can check updates through the operator's website or National Rail Enquiries. South Western Railway passengers can check its live journey planner and service updates online.

The advice is likely to affect commuters, visitors travelling into London, and passengers heading towards Surrey's towns and leisure destinations during what is expected to be one of the hottest periods of the year.

Sam Jones - Reporter



## Rain, royalty and recovery at Epsom Derby

2 July 2026



**Epsom Derby Day drew its biggest crowd since 2022 as The King and Queen joined more than 28,000 racegoers at Epsom Downs on Saturday 6th June.**

The Jockey Club confirmed that **28,557** people attended Betfred Derby Day, a marked improvement on last year's modern low and part of a two-day Derby Festival attendance of **48,261**.

That total was **10,662 higher than last year**, an increase of **28%**, and will be seen by Epsom Downs Racecourse as evidence that the first year of its five-year revival plan has made a positive start.

However, the Derby Day figure remained below the 40,000-plus crowd that had been hoped for in some pre-meeting reporting and well below the historic crowds once associated with Britain's most famous Flat race.

The 2025 Derby Day crowd had fallen to just **22,312** in the paid enclosures, described by the Racing Post as the lowest number in modern history. This year's figure therefore represents a recovery of more than 6,000 on Derby Day, but not yet a return to the scale of attendance seen in earlier decades.

The Jockey Club said there had been a sold-out Queen Elizabeth II Stand and Grandstand Enclosure, with thousands more across the racecourse, DerbyFest and The Hill.

The presence of Their Majesties gave the day added national profile. The King and Queen arrived after attending the wedding of Peter Phillips and Harriet Sperling in the Cotswolds, and their attendance was widely reported by national racing and news outlets.

The weather was less helpful. Rain fell overnight and for much of Saturday, with the ground officially changing from good-to-soft to soft before the Derby. The Guardian's live coverage described the event as rain-soaked, and images from the day showed racegoers sheltering under umbrellas.

On the track, Christmas Day won the 247th running of the Derby, ridden by Ronan Whelan and trained by Aidan O'Brien. The victory gave O'Brien a record-extending 12th Derby win and his 50th British Classic success.

The race was not without controversy. Favourite Benvenuto Cellini, also trained by O'Brien, finished the race but was later declared a non-runner after a stewards' inquiry found that he had been denied a fair start when his hind leg became caught in the stalls.

For Epsom, however, the wider question was whether the meeting itself could begin to recover its place as one of the great public sporting occasions of the year.

The Jockey Club has embarked on a £6 million, five-year plan to revive the Derby Festival. This year's changes included increased prize money, free admission for under-18s, free parking, the new DerbyFest area on The Hill, entertainment partnerships and efforts to reconnect the event with the local community.

Ahead of the meeting, Epsom Downs general manager Jim Allen said more than 22,000 people had registered for DerbyFest over the two days, and that the racecourse was expecting more than 60,000 people across the Festival.

The final total of 48,261 fell below that aspiration, but still marked a substantial improvement on 2025. The Jockey Club's own post-event assessment was upbeat.

Jim Allen said initial feedback on the changes to the customer experience had been "extremely positive". He said selling out the standside enclosures in advance was testament to the continuing appeal of the race and to the work of the Epsom and wider teams.

He added: "Clearly the weather did not get the memo, but ultimately when you run an outdoor event in this country, you are always slightly in the lap of the gods."

Mr Allen described 2026 as "year one of a five-year journey" and said the racecourse would be guided by customer feedback before making decisions for future years.

The Jockey Club's use of open-top buses and community-facing measures formed part of the attempt to restore the

Derby's traditional local character. At present, however, no published figures appear to isolate the effect of those buses or say how many additional attendees came specifically through local community group involvement.

The fairest conclusion is therefore that the 2026 Derby was neither a full return to former glories nor another year of decline. It was a measurable recovery: helped by royal attendance, a stronger entertainment offer and sold-out principal stands, but held back by rain and still some distance from the crowds Epsom once took for granted.

For a racecourse seeking to rebuild the Derby as both a world-class sporting occasion and a people's festival on the Downs, Saturday was a step forward. The test will be whether that recovery can be sustained — and expanded — in 2027 and whether a change of day in the week should be tested.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Photo: Grandstand and Racecourse at Epsom Derby Day at 14:15pm

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## Crime and Safety Round-Up: April and May 2026

2 July 2026



April and May proved to be unusually busy months for Surrey Police and community safety partners in Epsom and Ewell, with a mixture of high-profile investigations, anti-social behaviour enforcement, retail crime initiatives and public engagement events.

The most significant policing story of the period centred on a reported serious sexual assault in Epsom during the early hours of 11 April. Surrey Police launched a major investigation following a report that a woman in her twenties had been assaulted after leaving a town centre nightclub. Extensive enquiries were carried out, including CCTV examination, witness interviews, forensic work and house-to-house enquiries. By mid-April, Assistant Chief Constable Sarah Grahame stated that investigators had not found evidence to support the offence as originally reported, although enquiries remained ongoing. The case attracted national media attention and prompted public demonstrations in Epsom town centre. Surrey Police repeatedly appealed for witnesses and urged the public not to speculate while investigations continued. (The Guardian)

The incident also led to a substantial police presence in the town as officers dealt with protests and concerns regarding public disorder. Local community leaders and elected representatives called for calm and urged residents to allow the investigation to proceed without interference. (The Guardian)

Away from the headlines, Surrey Police continued its borough-wide campaign against anti-social behaviour and organised criminality under the "Safer Epsom and Ewell" initiative launched earlier this year. The partnership between Surrey Police and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has focused on tackling anti-social behaviour, serious organised crime and repeat offending in known hotspot locations. (Epsom and Ewell Borough Council)

Police teams also continued operations targeting nuisance and criminal use of motorcycles. According to local policing priorities published during the spring, officers have been using specialist teams, covert tactics, anti-social behaviour powers and multi-agency interventions to tackle riders involved in criminality and public nuisance. The strategy includes cooperation with housing providers and the use of borough-wide Public Space Protection Order powers. (Surrey Police)

Retail crime remained a major priority throughout April and May. Surrey Police's Epsom Safer Neighbourhood Team reported that its zero-tolerance approach to shoplifting and offences against retailers was continuing to produce results. The initiative includes rapid investigation of known offenders, direct cooperation with retailers and remote CCTV operators, and proactive arrests aimed at reducing repeat offending in the town centre. (Surrey Police)

The wider "Safer Epsom and Ewell" operation reported notable results during the spring period. Police indicated that the partnership had led to more than 150 arrests, over 90 charges and the closure of ten county-lines drug networks, highlighting the continuing focus on organised criminal activity affecting local communities. (Facebook)

Community engagement remained a significant feature of local policing. Officers held a series of "Meet the Beat" events

during April and May, including sessions in Epsom town centre, Ruxley Lane and at Epsom Hospital, giving residents opportunities to discuss local concerns directly with neighbourhood officers. Police also conducted public engagement work connected with violence against women and girls in the Ashley Centre area. (Surrey Police)

Latest published neighbourhood crime statistics continue to show violence and sexual offences, shoplifting and anti-social behaviour among the most frequently reported categories in parts of the borough. In Epsom & Ewell East, violence and sexual offences and shoplifting remained the most commonly recorded offences during March, the latest month for which detailed neighbourhood figures are available. (Police.uk)

Residents wishing to report crime can contact Surrey Police via 101 for non-emergencies or 999 in an emergency. Information can also be passed anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

*The Epsom and Ewell Times will continue to monitor local crime trends, policing initiatives and community safety developments throughout the summer.*

Sam Jones - Reporter



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## University of Surrey Staff Member Seriously Injured in Alleged Crossbow Attack

2 July 2026



A member of staff at the University of Surrey has been seriously injured following an incident on the University's Manor Park campus in Guildford.

The University confirmed that the incident occurred at approximately 9.50am on Thursday morning. Surrey Police attended the scene and arrested a man shortly afterwards.

In a statement provided to the Epsom and Ewell Times, a University spokesperson said:

"At approximately 9.50 am this morning, an incident took place on our Manor Park campus. Police attended and a man was arrested. A member of our campus safety team was seriously injured and is receiving medical care. The police are not looking for anyone else in connection with this incident. Surrey Police are leading the investigation and we are giving them our full support."

Subsequent statements issued by Surrey Police and national media reports indicate that the injured man, who is in his 50s, is a member of the University's campus safety team. He was taken to hospital with serious injuries following what police describe as a crossbow shooting. A 21-year-old former University of Surrey student was arrested at the scene on suspicion of attempted murder and remains in police custody.

Chief Superintendent Jon Groenen of Surrey Police said officers were not seeking anyone else in connection with the incident and that a full investigation is under way. Police have appealed for witnesses or anyone with relevant information to come forward.

The incident took place at the University's Manor Park campus, which includes student accommodation, teaching facilities and the Surrey Sports Park. Despite a significant emergency services presence, the University campus remained open during the police response.

The condition of the injured staff member has not been updated beyond police confirming that his injuries are serious. The University has said it is providing full support to the police investigation.

Anyone with information is asked to contact Surrey Police quoting reference PR/45260065706 or to contact Crimestoppers anonymously.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Updated release from Surrey University: *We have been informed that our colleague is now in a stable condition and our entire community is relieved to hear this news. We wish him a full and speedy recovery.*

*"We also want to take this opportunity to thank our Campus Safety team. They responded with professionalism and courage to this incident, and their commitment to keeping this community safe is something we are deeply proud of. Our thoughts are with all of them"*

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## LibDem vote kept RA's Dalton in power — but Cllr Freeman faces questions over his own political past

2 July 2026



The two Liberal Democrat councillors at Epsom & Ewell Borough Council appear to have played the decisive role in keeping Residents' Association leader Cllr **Hannah Dalton** in her Council leadership role despite the dramatic collapse of the RA's electoral position in the new East Surrey Unitary Council elections.

At the Borough Council's annual meeting, Dalton survived a leadership challenge from former Residents' Association councillor, now Independent, **Alex Coley**, by the narrowest possible margin — **15 votes to 14**.

The arithmetic of the vote suggests that at least two RA councillors backed Coley against their own group leader. Equally significant, had just one of the two Liberal Democrat councillors voted with the wider opposition bloc, Coley would have been elected leader.

The Liberal Democrat councillors, College Ward councillor **Julian Freeman** and Stamford Ward councillor **Alison Kelly**, backed Dalton.

Their decision has attracted attention because the Residents' Association's dominant local position has been severely weakened following the East Surrey Unitary Council elections, in which the RA was effectively wiped out, retaining only two successful candidates.

Asked by Epsom and Ewell Times why he supported Dalton, Cllr Freeman said he objected to politicians leaving the group under whose banner they were elected.

He stated: *"I do not support people who are elected as a representative of one political group and then decide to turn their back on those that voted for them. This is something that is happening with increasing regularity on the council at present."*

However, that explanation prompted questions about Freeman's own political history.

Material reviewed by Epsom and Ewell Times records that in 2006, while a councillor in the London Borough of Sutton, Freeman resigned from the Liberal Democrat group and sat as an Independent councillor. A published council decision notice recorded: *"Resolved: To note that Councillor Julian Freeman has resigned as a member of the Liberal Democrat Group and will sit as an Independent Councillor."*

When asked to explain the apparent inconsistency, Freeman disputed the comparison.

He replied that there was an "important distinction", stating: *"I was not approved as a candidate at the time due to an internal dispute with a ward colleague and stood as an independent at the following election. At no point did I willingly decide to change parties as this was not my decision."* He added: *"Your facts are wrong as I did not leave during my term of office."*

After EET provided him with evidence of the Sutton council record showing him resigning from the Liberal Democrat group and continuing as an Independent councillor, Freeman refined his position, replying: *"You can see that this was towards the end of my term of office and for just one full council meeting following deselection as a future candidate."*

Freeman also told EET that the decision to support Dalton was taken jointly between himself and Cllr Kelly. Kelly separately confirmed that account, stating that the leadership vote position followed discussions between the two councillors.

In a further explanation of his thinking, Freeman said he felt “*some sympathy for Hannah (Dalton) and Clive (Woodbridge) in losing their seats*” and argued that removing Dalton with just ten months left as leader would amount to “*rubbing salt in the wound and would achieve nothing of substance.*”

The narrow vote leaves unresolved questions about the future direction of politics at EEBC. Since the last Borough Elections there have been seven councillors who have changed their party or group affiliation. The Residents Association losing five councillors and the Liberal Democrats two out of four and those two both having been leaders of the LibDem Group on the Council.

Dalton remains leader — but only just. The voting numbers suggest a council chamber in which party loyalties and traditional group boundaries are under strain, with dissension inside the Residents’ Association itself and two Liberal Democrat votes proving decisive to the survival of an administration whose wider electoral base has been sharply diminished.

Sam Jones - Reporter

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## May’s heat infuses Epsom and Ewell Council Chamber with leadership closely contested

2 July 2026



On one of the hottest days of the year, with councillors and guests in Epsom Town Hall using agenda papers as improvised fans, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council held what was in effect the beginning of its final chapter — the Annual Council meeting that will oversee the borough’s last year before abolition under local government reorganisation.

The evening of 26th May combined civic ceremony, nostalgia, political tension and procedural wrangling, culminating in a knife-edge vote for Council leadership and a heated row over the Council’s constitution.

Councillor **Lucy McIntyre** (RA) was elected Mayor for what will be the borough’s final mayoral year, with veteran Independent councillor **Julie Morris** chosen as Deputy Mayor.

McIntyre, among the younger and longer-serving members of the chamber, described the appointment as “particularly special because this borough really has always been my home”, speaking movingly of family ties, her late brothers, and the borough’s impending disappearance into the new East Surrey Council.

“This will be the final mayoral year of Epsom and Ewell in its current form, as we know it,” she said. “It makes it even more of an honour and a privilege to serve you all.”

Her chosen charities include Fab for Epsom & Ewell, Girlguiding Epsom District and Sunnybank Trust, with ten principal events planned during the roughly ten months remaining before the borough’s end. “The countdown has already begun,” she told the chamber, “because after all, it’s the final countdown — so let’s make it unforgettable.”

Outgoing Mayor Councillor **Robert Leach** offered a characteristically humorous farewell, reflecting on a year that took him from the Derby and Buckingham Palace to community groups, Ukrainian refugees, disability charities and opening Primark.

“It has been a great honour to be the mayor of the borough for the last year,” he said. “This was a position I had not expected and... not one that I sought.” He praised the borough’s “more than 100 charities and voluntary groups”, remarking that a mayoral visit “means so much to the people”, and expressed hope that some civic role might survive local government reorganisation.

But the political temperature rose sharply when councillors turned to the appointment of Council Leader.

Councillor **Hannah Dalton** (RA), the incumbent leader, was nominated by Councillors **Liz Frost** and **Christine Cleveland**. Frost urged members to back continuity in the borough’s final year.

“This... is going to be the last year of the council,” she said. “It is really, really important that we all pull together... and leave the council in a good position.”

Cleveland praised Dalton’s work through “very turbulent times” in local government and added: “It would be really nice to end our time in Epsom with a female leader of the council as well.”

The challenge came from Independent councillor **Alex Coley**, once a prominent Residents’ Association figure before breaking away from the ruling group.

Nominating Coley, Councillor **Kate Chinn** (Labour Court) launched a stinging critique of the outgoing year.

“Last year this council agreed strategic priorities,” she said. “It’s safe to say these did not go according to plan.”

She referred to “a committee meeting where the leader of the council [was] absent from a vote to fund a strategic priority” and another where “an RA CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) bid was proposed and not voted through by the RA members.”

“If the leader stays the same, these priorities will not be worth the paper they are written on,” she argued. “We need a new leader... one who will deliver and work across all political groups... As long as this ship is still afloat, we must look after it. But it’s time for a new captain.”

The most striking intervention came from RA Councillor **Kim Spickett**.

Visibly framing her choice as a painful one, she revealed the intensity of lobbying behind the scenes.

“The choice today... has been very difficult for me,” she said. “I’ve had a lot of calls, I’ve had a lot of messages, and I’ve had a lot of pressure put on me. I’m not happy about it. It’s made me very sad.”

Declaring pride in the borough and its people, she nevertheless backed Coley as the person to steer the authority through its closing months.

“We need the proven leadership of a councillor who’s dedicated to delivery and puts outcomes first... somebody I’m proud to call my friend.”

“Delivery is what we need to set this community up for success... and I believe Alex will deliver.”

The vote that followed demonstrated just how finely balanced the chamber had become.

Dalton survived — but only narrowly.

The official tally: **15 votes for Hannah Dalton, 14 for Alex Coley**.

Having retained the leadership by a single vote, Dalton struck a conciliatory note.

“Being leader is never easy, and you’re not going to take everybody with you all of the time,” she said. “I’d say the last year to 18 months has been the hardest it has ever been.”

She acknowledged the challenge of leading a Residents’ Association group that, she insisted, operates without a formal whip: “Whatever they do say, they do not have a political whip, and they discuss everything.”

In remarks that reflected the strains of both local government reorganisation and evident political divisions inside the chamber, she appealed for unity.

“We’ve got to deliver a lot. We need stability. We need to get to the end of next March in one piece, without ripping each other apart, or leaving this council in a really bad way.”

“We’ve been here for 90 years, we’ve done an incredible job together. Let’s keep it together, just for the last ten months.”

If the leadership contest exposed the chamber’s political fault-lines, the next item — approval of the Council’s constitution — produced a procedural clash that left tempers noticeably frayed in the overheated room.

Mayor McIntyre announced that a late proposal concerning the constitution would not be accepted, ruling that substantive constitutional changes required proper routing through the Standards and Constitution Committee, officers, or a formal motion process.

Councillor **Chris Ames** (Labour) objected fiercely.

“As might have been predicted, the administration has sought to close down debate about this,” he said.

“We’re going to be asked to agree a constitution that we should know is defective.”

Denying that he had proposed a constitutional amendment, Ames said he had merely sought to highlight concerns. “The usual procedural shenanigans that we get here doesn’t surprise me one bit,” he said. “It’s absolutely disgraceful. It’s the typical corruption of this administration.”

Councillor **James Lawrence** (Independent) followed with his own criticism, citing what he said were deficiencies in the complaints process as described across the Council’s constitution, operating framework and website.

He argued that a councillor complaints procedure was either missing or unclear, describing a complaint against him that had remained unresolved for months.

But when Lawrence attempted to continue, the Mayor curtailed him.

“The meeting this evening is for a civic event,” she said, directing him instead toward the processes set out elsewhere in the Council framework.

Lawrence pushed back, asking: “Can you point in the constitution why I can’t speak?”

The exchange carried a certain irony: debate was being restricted on the basis of the meeting’s civic character while the approval of the constitution itself remained a formal agenda item before members.

When the vote finally came, the constitution was approved **15 votes to 9**.

The meeting then moved on to committee appointments and other routine business without further fireworks.

Yet for a council entering its final year of existence, the evening had already revealed much: pride in civic tradition, uncertainty about the future, visible political strains — and a leadership retained by the narrowest of margins in a chamber made short-tempered by heat, history and the approaching end of the borough council era.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Image: Cllr Kim Spickett addresses the Council - Epsom and Ewell Borough Council YouTube

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## Epsom pensioners lost £148,000 in fraud as laundering network sentenced

2 July 2026



Two elderly Epsom siblings lost around £148,000 after being repeatedly pressured into paying for unnecessary home repair work, as members of a criminal money-laundering network were sentenced at Guildford Crown Court.

The Epsom victims were among those targeted in a wider operation spanning Surrey, Essex and London between February and September 2019, according to Trading Standards investigators.

The case concluded this week with sentences being handed down to five defendants following a lengthy investigation involving Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards, Essex Police and the National Trading Standards Regional Investigations Team. Authorities said the network laundered a total of £331,223 taken from victims.

At the centre of the operation was Lee Cross, 54, originally from Romford, who was convicted of fraud and money laundering offences. Prosecutors said Cross provided banking infrastructure used to move and conceal criminal proceeds through numerous business accounts operating under different trading names, including "A-Z Repairs".

Cross was sentenced to eight years and seven months' imprisonment.

Others sentenced were:

- Sorise Richardson, 45, Romford - 12-month community order with rehabilitation activity requirement
- Zoe Hoskyn, 40, Hornchurch - two-year suspended sentence and 12-month rehabilitation order
- Jason Walker, 35, Blackburn - two-year suspended sentence and 180 hours' unpaid work
- Pauline Walker, 70, Romford - 22-month suspended sentence

Trading Standards said victims were commonly approached by unsolicited callers claiming urgent repairs were needed to their properties. Homeowners were allegedly persuaded to pay substantial sums for unnecessary, poorly executed or uncompleted building works. Some were asked to fund equipment such as cranes and scaffolding that investigators said were never needed or supplied.

In Epsom, investigators said two elderly siblings were repeatedly pressured into paying for external works to their home that "didn't need to be done".

Amanda Poole, Buckinghamshire and Surrey Trading Standards Assistant Director, said: "Today's sentencing marks the final step in bringing these fraudsters to justice, and most importantly, means the man at the heart of this operation — Lee Cross — will be behind bars."

She added: "Today's sentences are also a testament to the vital, diligent work undertaken by our Trading Standards officers, and those of our partners, in protecting our residents from harm."

Lord Michael Bichard, Chair of National Trading Standards, said the case showed how organised criminals exploited elderly and vulnerable people, sometimes extracting "life-changing" sums for unnecessary or poor-quality work.

He said: "The harm caused by this type of fraud goes far beyond the money stolen, often leaving victims robbed of their confidence, independence and peace of mind."

Trading Standards advises residents to be cautious of unsolicited traders, avoid agreeing to work on the spot, obtain

multiple written quotations, and avoid paying cash or large sums upfront for building work.

Sam Jones - Reporter



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## Epsom boxer Amelia, 12, wins National Schools title

2 July 2026



A 12-year-old boxer from Epsom has brought home the town's first National Schools boxing title in 15 years after a series of dominant performances at the England Boxing National Schools Championships.

Amelia O'Hagan, of Epsom Boxing Academy, claimed gold in the Class A 44kg category after progressing through Surrey, Southern Counties and the national finals.

Having qualified through the county and regional stages, Amelia faced London champion Davene Asabere of Newham's Fight for Peace club in the quarter-finals.

Coach Joe Harding described Amelia's performance as explosive from the outset. Starting at high tempo, she used fast attacks to head and body to control the bout, before forcing a stoppage early in the second round after a sustained assault left her opponent unable to continue.

The championships then took Amelia north to Newcastle for the semi-finals and finals weekend.

In the semi-final she met Midland Counties champion Hollie Browne of Black Country Boxing Club. Determined to improve on last year's runner-up finish, Amelia produced what her coaches described as a controlled and disciplined display.

Using speed, footwork and sharp combinations, she repeatedly caught the taller opponent with attacks to head and body before moving safely out of range. After three rounds of sustained pressure and tactical boxing, Amelia secured a unanimous 5-0 points victory to reach the final.

There she faced local favourite Imogen Paylor of Felling ABC, champion of Tyne, Tees and Wear and a boxer with significantly more competitive experience.

According to Epsom Boxing Academy, Amelia again began strongly, attacking with body-to-head combinations and forcing her taller opponent backwards. The second round saw more sustained exchanges, with Amelia's footwork and ring movement proving key.

Knowing the final round would bring an all-out response from her opponent, Amelia maintained the pace, countering effectively and finishing strongly. The judges awarded her a second unanimous 5-0 victory, crowning her National Schools Champion for 2026.

The success marks Epsom's first National Schools "Golden Gloves" champion since Charlie Eastwood, who won the title 15 years ago and later added further national honours.

The victory also secures Amelia a place on the England Boxing National Development Pathway.

Joe Harding, head coach at Epsom Boxing Academy, said: "This girl is an amazing talent and at 12 years old this is only the start. She is hard-working and determined and I'm certain she will go on to represent her country.

"We have come close several times since starting our new Epsom club four years ago, with several silver and bronze medals, so bringing home the Golden Gloves with Amelia was a little emotional, to say the least."

# Epsom councillors handed key roles on East Surrey's new Shadow Council

2 July 2026



The newly elected East Surrey Shadow Authority met for the first time on Wednesday 20 May, taking another formal step towards the creation of the new East Surrey Council due to replace existing county, borough and district councils on 1 April 2027.

The meeting marked the transition from the former East Surrey Joint Committee arrangements to the newly elected “shadow authority”, following this month’s elections to the new unitary council covering Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead and Tandridge.

With the Liberal Democrats holding a working majority on the 72-member authority after the May elections, councillors confirmed leadership and cabinet appointments that will oversee the transition year.

Councillor Steve Wotton was confirmed as Leader of the East Surrey Shadow Authority, with Councillor Kirsty Hewens appointed Deputy Leader.

Of particular local interest, two councillors representing Epsom & Ewell secured places in the shadow cabinet.

Councillor **David Buxton**, a Liberal Democrat councillor from Epsom & Ewell, was appointed Cabinet Executive Member for Adult Social Care and Health — one of the most substantial service portfolios in local government, covering responsibilities that currently account for major areas of county council expenditure and public concern.

Councillor **Julian Freeman**, LibDem also from Epsom & Ewell, was appointed Cabinet Executive Member for Housing. The appointment places an Epsom representative at the centre of housing policy discussions as the new authority prepares to assume responsibilities from existing councils amid continuing pressures around affordability, development and future planning arrangements across East Surrey.

The full cabinet allocation agreed by the authority included:

- Steve Wotton - Transformation, Digital and People
- Kirsty Hewens - Economy and Regeneration
- Andrew Burton - Finance and Resources
- Ashley Tilling - Children’s Services and Education
- David Buxton - Adult Social Care and Health
- Andrew Matthews - Transport, Highways and Infrastructure
- Bradley Nelson - Strategic Planning and Growth
- Julian Freeman - Housing
- Abhiram Magesh - Leisure, Culture and Communities
- Claire Malcomson - Climate, Environment and Waste

The cabinet roles are presently shadow positions linked to the local government reorganisation programme and will operate in that form until the new authority formally assumes full powers in April 2027.

The meeting also approved governance arrangements for the shadow council, endorsed initial transition priorities, and designated interim statutory officers to steer the authority through its establishment phase.

Among the appointments, Adam Chalmers, currently Chief Executive of Elmbridge Borough Council, was designated Interim Head of Paid Service. Nikki O’Connor, Assistant Director of Finance (Corporate) at Surrey County Council, was appointed Interim Chief Finance Officer, while Daniel Bainbridge, Head of Legal and Governance (Monitoring Officer) at Elmbridge, became Interim Monitoring Officer.

Speaking after his appointment, Cllr Steve Wotton said: “This is a significant moment as we work to bring services together under a single organisation. Our priority is to ensure residents see the benefits of the new East Surrey Council - one that is responsive, well run and able to deliver high-quality services from April 2027.”

He added: “We recognise the scale of the task ahead, but also the opportunity for a fresh start to shape a council that

reflects and serves our communities.”

The new East Surrey Council forms part of Surrey’s wider local government reorganisation, under which the county’s existing councils are to be abolished and replaced by two large unitary authorities - East Surrey and West Surrey.

Until April 2027, existing county, borough and district councils will continue running day-to-day services. The shadow authority’s role is to prepare the structures, governance and leadership arrangements for the incoming council.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Photo right to left: Julian Freeman and David Buxton