

Kerbing car pollution trial in Surrey

15 June 2023



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

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

The two products being trialled are cable gullies and Trojan AON chargers. Cable gullies are channels installed in the pavement that can be used to safely trail an EV charging cable, and AON chargers are installed on the pavement near the kerb with a cable laid underneath the pavement connecting it directly to a property’s own electrical supply.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Surrey’s do-re-me for solar to do

15 June 2023



Surrey residents can boost local renewable energy generation, cut carbon emissions and save on their energy bills with a new community led initiative to install solar panels for less.

As part of a group-buying scheme, residents are now able to come together to invest in renewables for solar panels and battery storage, confident in the knowledge that they are paying the right price for a high-quality installation from pre-approved installers.

This innovative scheme builds on six years of a highly successful Solar Together programme run across the UK. To date Solar Together has delivered over 17,000 installations and over 350,000 tonnes of avoided lifetime carbon emissions.

Surrey residents can join the group-buying scheme which offers solar panels with optional battery storage and EV charge points, as well as retrofit battery storage for residents who have already invested in solar panels and are looking to get more from the renewable energy they generate as well as increase their independence from the grid.

It is free to register and there is no obligation to go ahead with an installation. Surrey County Council is working in partnership with all district and boroughs, independent experts iChoosr, to make the transition to clean energy as cost effective and hassle-free as possible.

Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Environment said: *“Our target is to be carbon net zero as a county by 2050, and to achieve this we all need to make changes and play our part. There is lots that residents and the county council can do and are already doing, but installing solar panels will make a huge difference.*

“I am pleased we are working with iChoosr on the Solar Together scheme to support our residents to install solar panels, by giving them the reassurance they are doing so in a cost effective way. We know that the cost of living plays a huge part in this, but I would urge those who are able to invest in solar panels, to really consider getting involved in the scheme.”

How does it work?

- Householders can register online to become part of the group for free and without obligation.
- Pre-approved UK solar PV suppliers participate in a reverse auction. They are able to offer competitive pricing as the volume and geographic concentration makes it possible for them to realise greater efficiencies, which they pass on with lower prices for installations.
- After the auction, registered households will be emailed a personal recommendation which is specific to the details they submitted in their registration.
- If they choose to accept their recommendation, the specifics of their installation will be confirmed with a technical survey after which a date can be set for the installation of their solar PV system.
- Telephone and email helpdesks are on-hand throughout the whole process which, together with information sessions, will allow households to make an informed decision in a safe and hassle-free environment.

Marie-Louise Abretti, iChoosr UK Solar Manager added: *“With energy prices continuing to increase, residents of Surrey are looking for opportunities to reduce their carbon emissions, save on energy bills and increase their independence from the grid. The Solar Together group-buying scheme offers a straightforward way to make an informed decision and to access a competitive offer from a trusted, vetted provider.”*

iChoosr has a strong track record of delivering group purchase schemes for local authorities. It has worked with 210 UK local authorities on its collective energy switching schemes. Furthermore, in 2018 UK councils, in collaboration with iChoosr, initiated their collective purchase schemes for solar PV systems. iChoosr’s schemes have been delivered in partnership with local authorities in five countries. Over 116 schemes led to 157,000 residents installing solar PV systems.

Find out more and register your interest at solartogether.co.uk/surrey.

Make way for Epsom Derby visitors?

15 June 2023



Rail strikes will reduce services to Epsom, Epsom Downs and Tattenham Corner stations Friday – Oaks Day and Saturday – Derby Day. With over 100,000 spectators anticipated to attend the annual great flat race, held in Epsom for over 240 years, abandoning trains for cars, local roads can be expected to be jammed.

Maybe give that trek to the DIY store a miss this Saturday?

A Department for Transport spokesperson said: “These strikes have been coordinated by union leaders to disrupt passengers in a week which will see major events such as the first-ever all-Manchester FA Cup final, the **Epsom Derby** and a number of concerts and festivals across the UK.

“Not content with impacting the hundreds of thousands of people who have looked forward to these events all year round, unions are also targeting their own members’ pockets by forcing them to miss out on pay every time they strike.

“The government has facilitated a fair and reasonable pay offer, now union leaders must do the right thing and put this to their members.”

The unions say they have not been given a pay offer they can recommend to their members. Aslef rejected the government’s 4% offer, which they described as “risible” since train drivers have not had a pay rise for four years.

A special meeting of **The Epsom and Walton Downs Conservators** was convened last night in the Town Hall to discuss arrangements for the Derby. It went into secret session and we can only speculate that the impact of the rail strikes was likely to have been discussed. Cllr **Steven McCormick** was confirmed as chair and was joined on the podium by **Simon Durrant** of **The Jockey Club**, owners of Epsom Downs and the racecourse.

Challenge to ULEZ gaining grounds

15 June 2023



The High Court has today (26 May 2023) announced it will allow further grounds for challenge as part of a Judicial Review by a coalition of councils into the proposed expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

At today’s hearing, the coalition comprising the London boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Hillingdon and Harrow, along with Surrey County Council was successful in its appeal, getting two additional grounds for challenge – out of three previously refused in April – added to the Judicial Review.

Those were:

- unfair and unlawful consultation in relation to expected compliance rates in outer London

- scrappage scheme – irrationality due to uncertainty and inadequate consultation.

On 12 April 2023 the High Court granted permission for the coalition to challenge the legality of Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor of London’s plans to expand the ULEZ to outer London from August 2023.

The permission then was granted on the following grounds:

- failure to comply with relevant statutory requirements
- whether the Mayor properly considered the previous “buffer zone” approach as a material consideration in relation to the scrappage scheme.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth at Surrey County Council said: *“Today’s decision is another step forward in our legal challenge to the Mayor of London, as we continue to highlight the significant financial and social impacts expansion of the ULEZ scheme would have on many of our residents and businesses.*

“Our consultation response back in July 2022 clearly highlighted that the Mayor’s decision not to include Surrey residents in any scrappage scheme was unacceptable, and proposed a number of other recommendations to help mitigate the impacts of the expansion. Our concerns have still not been addressed by The Mayor, forcing these legal proceedings to have the voice of our residents heard.

“We remain committed to delivering a greener future, but it must be done in a practical and sustainable way. We will now await the findings of the Judicial Review in July.”

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Future of the Planet in Surrey hands?

15 June 2023



A Cumbrian coal mining firm is intervening in a landmark legal hearing to determine whether oil drilling should be allowed in **Surrey**. **The Horse Hill** drilling case is set for the **Supreme Court** in June with protesters hoping for a ruling that could severely restrict fossil fuel exploration in the UK.

West Cumbria Mining Ltd, the company behind Britain’s first new prospective coal mine for decades has been given permission to intervene in the case over plans for oil drilling at Horse Hill, Surrey according to a Supreme Court order published earlier this month.

In law, an intervention is when a non-party joins ongoing litigation, as the case may affect their rights and they should have the right to be heard. The other intervening parties are Friends of the Earth, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) and Greenpeace.

The case is being brought by Redhill resident **Sarah Finch** on behalf of the **Weald Action Group**, which represents communities opposing onshore oil and gas projects.

Ms Finch is challenging **Surrey County Council’s** 2019 decision to grant **UK Oil and Gas (UKOG)** planning permission for drilling – on the grounds that environmental impact assessments must take into account downstream emissions caused by burning extracted oil.



Horse Hill protest outside Surrey County Hall when planning application was being considered in September 2019. Credit Rebecca Curley.

Her fight has now reached the country’s highest court after three judges were split over the lawfulness of the county council’s decision to grant permission for 25 years of oil drilling and production – in the same year the county declared a climate emergency.

Carbon emissions from burning the extracted fossil fuels were not included in either the Horse Hill or Cumbrian coal mine’s environmental impact assessments.

Ms Finch said: “The fact that **West Cumbria Mining** wants to have its say in a case about a small onshore oil development 370 miles from their proposed coal

mine shows the national importance of this case. I hope that the **Supreme Court** will confirm that no fossil fuel development – coal, oil or gas – should be allowed without consideration of its full climate impact.”

According to UKOG the Horse Hill site in **Reigate and Banstead** has so far produced about 185,000 barrels of oil. Approximately 1.362 million remain.

Friends of the Earth campaigner, **Tony Bosworth**, said: “The biggest climate impact from gas, coal and oil projects occurs when the fuel they produce is eventually burned – it’s unbelievable that this is effectively ignored when planning decisions are made. This landmark legal challenge could have huge implications for fossil fuel developments across the country, including the new coal mine in West Cumbria. West Cumbria Mining are clearly concerned, which is why they have intervened.

“West Cumbria Mining boast that they will build the world’s first zero carbon mine, which is a complete contradiction in terms. Their calculations also ignore emissions from when the coal produced is actually used – that’s like saying that we should ignore the health impacts of smoking cigarettes and just look at how they are produced.

“We need to stop burying our heads in the sand. Sarah Finch’s legal case could play a huge role in building a net zero future.”

OEP general counsel, **Peter Ashford**, said: “Environmental impact assessment is so important for integrating the environment into planning decision-making. We are interested in this case because of the opportunity to clarify the law here to ensure proper decision-making that enhances environmental protection. We hope that the Supreme Court will take this opportunity, and will develop principles for determining the proper approach to the assessment of indirect effects under the EIA legislation.”

The hearing is scheduled for **June 21**.

The coal firm is now battling on two legal fronts after a judge ruled on Friday May 19 to grant Friends of the Earth and South Lakes Action on Climate Change a hearing to challenge the UK Government’s decision to approve West Cumbria Mining’s deep coal plans.

That hearing is expected to last for three days when it is heard later this year.

A spokesperson for West Cumbria Mining Limited said it would be inappropriate to comment on a live legal case. UKOG have been approached for comment.

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Oiling the wheels of justice on Surrey Hills

Image credits: NASA’s Earth Observatory and Rainer Lesniewski Getty Images

It’s Walk to School Week in Surrey

15 June 2023



May is the month to talk about walking, more walking and even more walking. The weather is brighter, dryer and warmer and is the best time to get outdoors as a family.

We know how important walking to school is for children’s health and the environment. It reduces congestion, improves road safety at the school gates and instils lifelong healthy habits. It’s been proven that children who do some form of exercise, especially a walk before school, do better in class because they arrive refreshed, fit and ready to learn.

The school run alone is responsible for generating half a million tonnes of CO2 nationally per year

Not everyone is able to walk to school, but there might be part of the journey you could walk. This Walk to School Week (15 to 19 May), could you think about turning rides into strides which can really make a difference? Take a look on our active travel webpage for inspiration.

Making it safe for Surrey’s children

It’s important for parents to know that their children are safe when walking along a road. This is where our Feet First: Walking Training comes in – a programme that provides school children aged 7 to 8 years old (Year 3) with the road safety skills to enable them to safely walk to and from school with their parents and carers, whilst also preparing children to travel independently in the future. The training is done in the classroom as well as using online resources, at home activities and taking children outside on Surrey’s streets for them to practice what they’ve learned in a real-world environment. It includes teaching:

- The Green Cross Code and how to cross the road safely
- Road signs and pedestrian crossings
- Recognising safe and unsafe places to cross
- Dealing with distractions and rushing
- How to cross between parked cars
- Understanding vehicle lights and sounds
- Crossing driveways
- The benefits of active travel

Last term, our Feet First: Walking Training instructors taught 3,500 pupils across 65 schools the skills they need to stay safe on Surrey’s roads. By the end of this academic year our instructors will have taught over 5,500 pupils at nearly 100 primary schools in the county.

For more information on the training visit the Walking training for schools webpage or speak to your school to see if they’re signed up.

A Surrey Borough funds legal fight to stop oil drilling

15 June 2023



The June 8th judicial review against the Government’s decision to allow fossil fuel drilling near an **Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** will go ahead. Waverley Borough Council held a special meeting of its executive committee to approve the £82,500 in funding to proceed – £32,500 for legal costs with a further £50,000 set aside in case it is liable for the oil driller’s costs.

According to the published papers, the executive considered “it a moral imperative to continue its legal challenge”. The money was approved on Thursday, May 11, as the council continues its four-year battle to stop UK Oil and Gas from drilling at Loxeley Well in Dunsfold – and means the judicial review into the exploratory drilling of £123 million of oil by UK Oil and Gas (UKOG) can proceed.

Addressing the meeting was Councillor Steve Williams, Green Party member and portfolio holder for environment and sustainability. He said: “In July 2019, we held a listening panel where we could listen to the views of residents on this proposal that was in the air to undertake on-shore drilling in Waverley, in Dunsfold. We listened and we listened to the concern after concern in terms of the local environment as well as to the planet and the people of Dunsfold. The impact was absolutely clear and from that point on Waverley Borough Council saw it as its mission to do exactly that, to protect Dunsfold and to stop the drilling. It was consistent in terms of our position in declaring a climate emergency and committing ourselves to carbon neutrality.”

The original planning applications were rejected by Surrey County Council’s planning committee members in 2020. UKCOG then mounted an appeal which was eventually called in for review by the Secretary of State, Michael Gove. Mr Gove recused himself due to possible conflicts of interest, but former Housing Minister, Stuart Andrew ruled in favour of the plans.

Cllr Williams added: “Now is the opportunity for Waverley executive to follow this through. We would, if we did not do so, be inconsistent with our previous clear commitment on this issue. We would be neglecting our duty to the people of Dunsfold, we would be flying in the face of our climate emergency. It is imperative, for if we are to be successful in this, and I very much hope we shall be, but we should be putting our money where our mouth is, for the people of Dunsfold, for the natural environment, and for the planet.” He said the council must “take the next step and secure that judicial review in the anticipation of the outcome we’ve been working for four years”.

Cllr Liz Townsend, Lib Dem member and portfolio holder for planning and economic development, said the application had “wide implications”, not just for the borough, but the country as a whole. She said: “It’s difficult to believe that the UK already has 509 fossil fuel sites specifically in protected areas. More than any other country in the world. South Downs national park already holds nine oil and gas sites. If the Loxley well site is successful how many other sites will be allowed?”

She added, while some may view this as a David versus Goliath battle we “should remember who was the winner of that conflict”.

The committee heard that the cost to residents would work out to about 65p per person but had the potential to set a national precedent.

The committee also called on Dunsfold and Alfold Parish Councils to offer their “substantive” and vocal support.

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Surrey’s £12 million fund open for your home energy improvements

15 June 2023



Over £12m of grant funding is now available for Surrey residents whose homes are not heated by gas, to make their homes more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Residents living in hard to heat homes and on lower incomes could receive up to £38,000 to fund measures that; improve a range of insulation including wall, loft and underfloor; install solar PV, solar thermal and air source heat pumps and ensure ventilation meets the industry standards.

Eligible properties must have an EPC rating of D-G, the primary form of heating must not be mains gas and applicants will need to meet the financial eligibility criteria. Funding is limited and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. Residents can check if they are eligible by visiting contacting Action Surrey via the website – **www.actionsurrey.org** or calling 0800 783 2503.

Marisa Heath, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Environment said: *“It is still a challenging time for many households who are struggling in this cost of living crisis which we are all facing, which is why it’s so important we reach out and help those who need us the most.”*

“I’m sure there are many residents who do not realise they are eligible for this funding, which is a great opportunity to reduce their energy bills whilst reducing their carbon footprint. I’d like to encourage all residents living in homes not heated by gas to check if they are eligible and help us achieve our goal to be a net zero county by 2050.”

Lord Callanan, Minister for Energy Efficiency and Green Finance, said: *“This investment will help thousands of households to heat their homes for less, keep them warm for longer and could save hundreds on their annual energy bill.”*

“The green energy sector is growing, and this funding will support green jobs and provide the training needed to deliver these vital upgrades to homes.”

Surrey County Council has been awarded Government funding through a second phase of the Home Upgrade Grant. The project will be delivered by Action Surrey – an energy efficiency advice service set up in partnership with Surrey local authorities.

Sign up to the Greener Matters newsletter to keep up to date on Surrey County Council’s progress towards its target of making Surrey net zero by 2050 and find out what you can do to help.

Grayling’s fishy business

15 June 2023



Earlier today Epsom and Ewell MP Chris Grayling called upon the Government to ban industrial fishing boats from “scalping our sea beds and hoovering up marine life regardless of what gets trapped in their nets, especially in the UK’s marine protected areas”. Secondly, he called for the creation of “‘Highly Protected Marine areas’ around our shores, as recommended by the Benyon Review. Where no extractive activity is permitted. Where nature can be left to its own devices.”

Thirdly, he has asked the Government to “provide both regulatory and financial support to those looking to restore sea grass beds.”

Photo: Chris Grayling MP argues his points in Tuesday’s Marine Protection Areas Debate in Westminster. Parliament TV.

Rounding off his contribution in a special debate on the marine environment Mr Grayling referred to all the worldwide illegal fishing that goes on with impunity. He suggested the Government works on international accords that will “require every fishing vessel around the world to have proper satellite monitoring devices on board.”

He also called for improved sustainable fishing food labelling.

Mr Grayling addressed the meeting in Westminster on Tuesday 2nd May in the afternoon.

Many Surrey motorists will be paying the ULEZ charge.

15 June 2023



There could be more than 250,000 cars on Surrey’s roads that do not meet ULEZ complaint standards. That figure climbs to 335,584 cars when counting those with Statutory Off Road Notifications (SORN), according to a Freedom of Information request by the LDRS.

The figures are based on collective postcode data supplied by the DVLA and include some crossover, for example with Chipstead and Coulsden in London, and on the border with East Grimstead in West Sussex.

According to Transport for London “petrol cars that meet the ULEZ standards are generally those first registered with the DVLA after 2005, although cars that meet the standards have been available since 2001. Diesel cars that meet the standards are generally those first registered with the DVLA after September 2015.”

In Surrey postcodes, recorded information held by the DVLA shows there were 71,892 petrol engine cars first registered before January 1 2005, with a further 50,655 classed as SORN. The figures are worse for non-compliant diesel cars, with 190,026 licensed and 23,011 SORN first registered before September 1 2015. Combined that means there are 261,918 non ULEZ compliant taxed cars registered to Surrey postcodes and a further 73,666 off road.

The figures were from a snapshot census of the DVLA vehicle record which is taken quarterly and is up to date to February 2023.

The ULEZ boundary is expected to be expanded to the Surrey border in August and would mean that those driving with petrol vehicles registered before 2005 or diesels users before 2015 will need to pay a £12.50 daily charge.

In February, **Surrey County Council** joined forces with four London boroughs to launch a High Court legal challenge against Transport for London (TfL) and the Mayor of London’s decision to expand the zone.

In April a judge ruled there was a case to be heard on two grounds – the legal basis for the scheme and the rollout of the scrappage scheme. It is expected to be heard in July.

Among the things Surrey County Council is calling on the Mayor of London provide are more data on the impact to residents, extend car scrappage and the Zone 6 Oyster Card scheme and to provide corridors to NHS facilities that are on the border,

Key workers, who regularly have to travel to London, should also be exempt, the county argues.

The Local Democracy Service has also requested that these figures be broken down by individual postcode.

The full list of postcodes included in the data is: CR3, CR5, CR6, GU1, GU10, GU12, GU15, GU16, GU18, GU19, GU2, GU20, GU21, GU22, GU23, GU24, GU25, GU26, GU27, GU3, GU4, GU5, GU6, GU7, GU8, GU9, KT10, KT11, KT12, KT13, KT14, KT15, KT16, KT17, KT18, KT20, KT21, KT22, KT23, KT24, KT7, KT8, RH1, RH10, RH12, RH19, RH2, RH3, RH4, RH5, RH6, RH7, RH8, RH9, SM7, TN16, TN8, TW15, TW16, TW17, TW18, TW19, TW20

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