

A sign of no signs to come on ULEZ?

2 February 2023



Surrey councillors say they could stop TfL (Transport for London) putting signs on the county's roads ahead of the planned ULEZ (Ultra Low Emissions Zone) expansion. **Surrey County Council's** leader said the authority would "stand its corner" on the expansion "blindly going ahead" as he called for more conversation between the London Mayor's office and the authority.

The ULEZ sees drivers of certain cars charged £12.50 per day to enter it, and is currently in place in central London where Transport for London (TfL) claims there has been a reduction in nitrogen dioxide pollution by nearly half.

The zone is set to cover all of greater London from August, meaning it will border Surrey in council areas such as Elmbridge, **Epsom and Ewell**, and Spelthorne.

But Councillor **Matt Furniss** (Conservative, Shalford), the county council's cabinet member for transport, infrastructure and growth, told a cabinet meeting on Tuesday (January 31) that TfL would need a legal agreement with the council to put anything on the county's roads.

Cllr Furniss said he had written to the Mayor of London and TfL, setting out the council's "absolute disappointment" that the plan would go ahead without "meaningful conversation" on how Surrey residents would be affected. He said he had told officers to stop any discussions on the location of signs on the county's roads until "a grown up conversation has happened between the two authorities on mitigating the disruption and the financial cost to Surrey residents."

The council's leader, Cllr **Tim Oliver** (Conservative, Weybridge), said "any conversation would be a good start" claiming there had been "no dialogue at all". He told the meeting: "We do have the legal opportunity to prevent the Mayor of London putting signage on our highways and we will forcefully make that point to them. We will stand our corner on this."

Surrey's councils were given the chance to respond to a consultation on the ULEZ expansion in 2022, with Elmbridge, Tandridge and Spelthorne, among others, submitting responses. They called variously for a delay to the expansion, an expansion of the scrappage scheme offered to London residents to include Surrey car owners and the expansion of the zone 6 Oyster card zone.

Cllr Furniss said the county council had put forward ten points to TfL that should be considered if the scheme were to go ahead. These included exemptions for taxis and key workers, corridors to NHS facilities near the border and extensions to public transport into Surrey, among others.

The expansion is due to come into place from August 29 this year.

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Gladiator light-man on demand bus

2 February 2023



It's not every day you meet an Emmy award winner on a bus in rural Surrey. And it's not every day the said Emmy award winner would be driving that bus either. But that's what passengers in the north of Mole Valley may find if they book one of the on-demand, electric buses that have been running in the area since last year.

Tim Hall worked in TV for 40 years, including on the iconic **Gladiators** early in his career, and told the LDRS he took home Emmys for his work as a lighting director on Olympic ceremonies in Russia and Rio. Having done his last job in early 2022, he found himself in retirement, at the end of his working life and thinking: "Is this it?" He came out of retirement to drive the buses, which launched in June last year.

The LDRS* took a trip on the bus, where passengers, both regular and new, praised the service for being reliable and good value, and for the care and attention shown by the drivers as well.

*(Epsom and Ewell Times news partner the BBC Local Democracy Reporting Service)

As well as more than £600,000 of central government funding for better rural transport links in Surrey, the county council has put in more than £200,000 to the Mole Valley service, and hopes to expand the scheme further. Tim admitted there is often a lot of chat to be had on the buses. "You can start a conversation off and before you know it you have been excluded from it," he said.

The buses can be booked on an app, via a website or on the phone, and have no fixed route. Would-be passengers can check the availability at the time they want to travel, and can book in advance or on the day, a minimum of half an hour ahead. The service is also part of the capped bus fares scheme, meaning that until the end of March all journeys will cost £2, though those over five miles would normally cost £3.

Mother and daughter Beryl and Alison Wood had booked the bus from Cobham Sainsbury's, one of the extra places passengers can travel to outside of the designated area, back to Beryl's Bookham home with their shopping. It was Beryl's first time using the service, which she described as "wonderful" but Alison said she uses the bus a few times a month, whether for visiting her mum or for other reasons.

Alison said the drivers always made sure passengers got on and off safely, including helping with their shopping, which was particularly important for elderly people or those who are less mobile. She added: "You feel like you're being taken care of. [The drivers make] sure that you're out of the bus safely."

Other out-of-area stops that passengers can travel to include Effingham Junction station and the Dorking stations, as well as Cobham's Waitrose and Epsom hospital. Tim said the bus was very important to the people who use it, especially for those with reduced mobility as well as those using wheelchairs or other aids

to get around. He added: “[Walking] more than 100 yards is too much for them. This is great. We pull up right outside their front door.”

[Ed: Do you think Epsom and Ewell needs these on-demand bus services? Let us know at admin@epsomandewelltimes.com.]

Surrey Council stretches Epsom & Ewell Council resources

2 February 2023



At Thursday 26th January meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee of Epsom and Ewell Borough Council eagle-eyed financial expert Cllr **David Gulland** (Lib Dem, College Ward) spotted a loss of £250,000 in the borough council’s on-street parking income.

A council officer explained that , although highways are Surrey County Council’s (SCC) responsibility, they had previously contracted Epsom & Ewell Borough Council (EEBC) to do the enforcement of on-street parking. EEBC already had their own enforcement officers managing the off-street car parks, so economies of scale could be realised by doing them both together. EEBC used to collect nearly £400K from on-street parking permits and enforcement notices.

But now SCC has unilaterally decided to end that contract and put it back out to a private sector contractor, so EEBC can no longer benefit from the on-street parking income or the economies of scale. Officers are doing all they can to reduce the cost and minimise the loss of income, he insisted.

Cllr Gulland was unimpressed with SCC’s actions. “I think we should note that for possible action at county council election time,” he suggested.

Related Stories:

[Local Parking \(enforcement\) Wars opinion piece by Cllr Eber Kingston](#)

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Grants to save energy.... time running out

2 February 2023



Surrey residents have just three weeks left to apply for a grant to help make their home warmer and more energy efficient, ahead of applications closing on Friday 17 February 2023.

People living in hard to heat homes and on lower incomes, could receive grants between £10,000 and £25,000 to improve insulation and install renewable technology - helping to save energy, reduce emissions and combat rising energy prices. Improvement measures include loft insulation, cavity and external wall insulation, underfloor insulation, and renewables, such as solar electricity panels.

Residents can check if they are eligible by visiting the Action Surrey website - www.actionsurrey.org, or by calling them on 0800 783 2503.

Marisa Heath, (Englefield Green, Conservative) **Cabinet Member for Environment at Surrey County Council said:** “We know this is a challenging time for many and we’re really pleased to be offering this funding to our residents who need our support the most.

“Improving the energy efficiency of homes in Surrey will also help us achieve our goal to be a net zero county by 2050. “I encourage residents to check if they are eligible as soon as possible.”

So far, over £1.5m has been allocated across the county to fully fund over 250 energy efficiency improvements. Funding has been awarded through central Government to Surrey County Council, leading on behalf of the local authorities across the county. The project will be delivered and managed by Action Surrey - an energy efficiency advice service set up in partnership with all Surrey local authorities.

Keep up to date on progress towards our target of making Surrey net zero by 2050 and find out what you can do to help. Sign up to our Greener Matters newsletter to get updates here: [Our climate change newsletter - Surrey County Council \(surreycc.gov.uk\)](#)

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Local Parking (enforcement) Wars

2 February 2023



An opinion piece from **Cllr Eber Kington**: This week SCC announced a seven-year contract worth £96.5 million, with private company Marston Holdings Ltd, for parking and traffic enforcement. In April, SCC will be centralising parking enforcement, a service which currently is managed by Surrey’s Borough and District on behalf of the County.

Image: Cllr Eber Kington on patrol

The accompanying comments to the announcement, made by the Kevin Deanus, Cabinet member for Highways and Community Resilience, promise much. But residents need to be aware, SCC does not have a great track record when it comes to taking back decision making and centralising services previously provided by the Borough Council on behalf of the County.

When SCC took back the maintenance of highway verge trees the policy became one of no maintenance unless a tree is diseased, dying or dead. And no longer will SCC automatically replace a tree lost to our urban streets. Instead, our residents have to pay £25 just to get a location looked at. £25 which is not refundable and, as often is the case, ends with the site being declared as unsuitable for a tree.

In April, SCC is also taking back the cutting of verges. The 6 to 8 seasonal cuts by the Borough Council, recognising seasonal weather conditions, will be reduced a standard county-wide cut of 4. Hardly an upgrade on what has gone before. And will SCC be pro-actively managing overhanging branches in our urban alleyways? My concern is that SCC does not even realise it’s a job to be done.

And the abolition of Local Committees and centralisation of highway decisions. Now residents have no public meeting to ask questions of Highway Officers, petitions are determined at SCC’s HQ in Reigate by council officials or a SCC Cabinet Member, and road safety schemes are decided by a Cabinet Member rather than local County Councillors.

So, what will this £96.5 million contract mean? Kevin Deanus, Cabinet member for Highways and Community Resilience, said: “The new contract will mean that Surrey County Council can more directly and consistently manage on street parking enforcement across the county, helping to tackle inconsiderate parking and make parking restrictions more effective.”

We all want safe and considerate parking, and there has to be a penalty for those who do neither. But that £96.5 million contract has to be paid for somehow. Will we see parking meters introduced where currently there are 1 hour or 2 hour waiting limits? Will additional yellow lines, designed to push drivers into paid for parking spaces, be introduced. Will the new system be flexible enough to ensure that our local primary schools are visited regularly to manage dangerous parking and idling cars? And will Residents Parking Zone Permit charges go up once again.

Personally, I’m not sure that SCC’s desire for consistency and effectiveness in parking enforcement also equates to fairness in delivery and a recognition of local needs, and it won’t be just another way to make our residents pay.

County Councillor Eber Kington

Eber Kington is a former Mayor of Epsom and Ewell. He represents the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council Ward of Ewell Court Ward and on the County Council of Surrey he serves the ward of Ewell Court, Auriol & Cuddington.

Related stories from Epsom and Ewell Times:

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A Greener Future in Partial Sight As Verges To Be Left Unmown

Going potty about pot-holes?

2 February 2023



Who knew that 15th January was **National Pothole Day**? Earlier this month I drove around a bend in Woodcote Green Road in **Epsom** at night to be faced with a traffic cone placed a few feet into the road. Was that dangerous or was I lucky? The cone was placed in a large pothole and if the car had hit the pothole it might have been damaged. The Autocar website recently reported that a single pothole in Surrey had caused wheel and tyre damage to at least twelve cars on the evening of the 17th January. Whilst both the pothole that caused the damage to the 12 cars and the pothole in Woodcote Green Road were repaired by Surrey County Council, the surface on Woodcote Green Road leaves a lot to be desired and has done so for a number of years.

This incident reminded me of a report made to the Council via their porthole reporting web page in October of last year. It reported potholes and commented on the general poor state of the road surface of Woodcote Green Road that runs behind Epsom Hospital and is a route used by many cyclists. A reply was received. “We have visited the site and on closer inspection the problem does not need immediate work. We will continue to monitor and consider it when planning future works.”



Cable exposed by pothole

Although Surrey County Council sends teams out to repair potholes they consider dangerous, the general surface of the road continues to deteriorate. On a stretch of Woodcote Green Road between Sunnybank and Pine Hill, about 450 metres long, more than 60 defects in the road surface are apparent. Some of these are no more than 2 cm wide and 10 cm long. One varied in width from a few centimetres to about 15cms, was 17 meters long and entirely in a cycle lane. Another was about a square meter in area and had cable exposed arising from and disappearing back into the road surface. Reporting a pothole shallower than 3cms or other road surface issues results in the message: “This issue is likely to be assessed as a low priority when inspected. We will probably wait to repair it as part of future improvement works.”

Walking along the road it’s noticeable that a number of defects are immediately adjacent to previous repairs, others are repairs that are beginning to break up and some are surfaces that have been reinstated after work by utilities and are sinking. Are the quality of repairs or reinstatements monitored and who is responsible for any substandard work?

It is also noticeable that when a team is sent out to repair a pothole, that is exactly what they do. There may be defects very close to the pothole being repaired but these are ignored. In wet and cold weather, even small holes in the road surface will fill with water, the water freezes and expands and the hole gets bigger. Would it not make sense, and maybe save money if once a team was on site they fixed not only the hole they were sent to fix but also other defects nearby?

The link to a map of planned improvements mentioned above indicates that no resurfacing work is planned for Woodcote Green Road. The map indicates that very little road resurfacing is planned for Epsom with only a little more in Ewell and Stoneleigh.

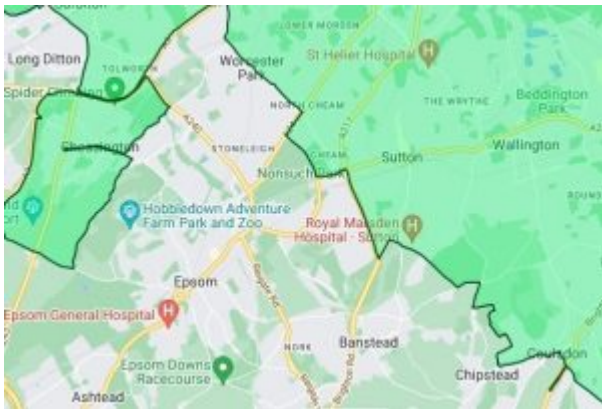
The wait goes on for better quality road surfaces in Epsom.

An Epsom and Ewell Times Special Correspondent.

Is your road potted with potholes? Are you going potty about these potholes? Send us photos of your potted street. Epsom and Ewell Times admin@epsomandewelltimes.com

ULEZ will come to Epsom and Ewell borders

2 February 2023



London has an air quality problem. That’s why the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is expanding across all London boroughs from 29 August 2023 to help clear London’s air.

Poor air quality is not just a central London problem. In fact, the greatest number of deaths related to air pollution occur in outer London areas. The ULEZ has already made a significant difference, helping to reduce harmful nitrogen dioxide pollution by nearly half in central London. But we need to act now to help give the five million Londoners in outer boroughs clearer air to breathe too.

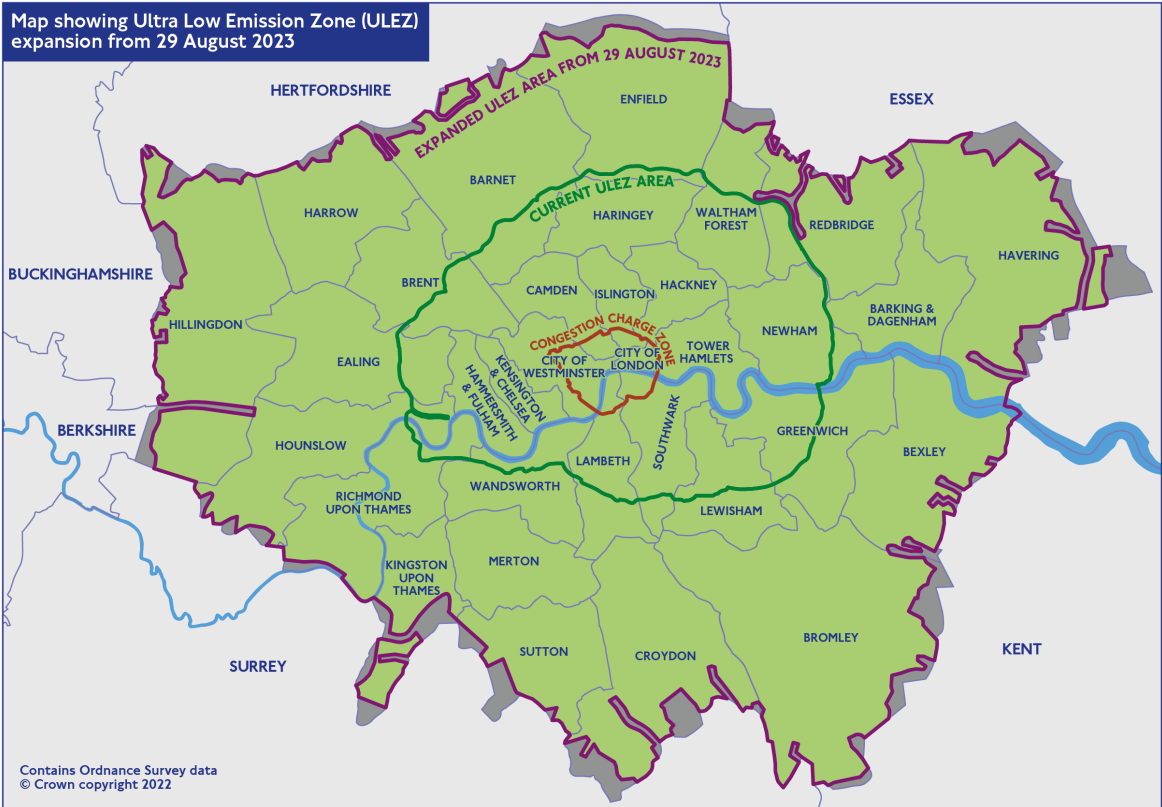
Cars, motorcycles, vans and other specialist vehicles (up to and including 3.5 tonnes) and minibuses (up to and including 5 tonnes) will need to meet the ULEZ emissions standards or pay a daily charge of £12.50 when driving within the zone, including the expanded area from 29 August.

More than four out of five vehicles already meet the standards. But, if you drive a petrol vehicle over 16 years old or a diesel vehicle over 6 years old, you need to check in case you’re affected. Use our simple online vehicle checker.

Check your vehicle now To support Londoners through the expansion, the Mayor of London’s scrappage scheme is providing financial assistance for those on certain low income or disability benefits. There is also help for London based sole traders, businesses with up to 10 employees and registered charities. The scheme opens on 30 January 2023. For more information on the scrappage scheme and other support, visit our website.

The ULEZ will continue to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year except Christmas Day (25 December).

Any money received from the scheme is reinvested into running and improving London’s transport network, such as expanding bus routes in outer London.



Visit the interactive map to see if a postcode, location or landmark is in the expanded area. Check your postcode If you drive within the Congestion Charge zone in central London, you will also need to pay the daily Congestion Charge unless your vehicle has an exemption or is registered for a 100% discount. The Congestion Charge zone won’t be expanding.

Transport for London 19.01.2023



Chris Grayling MP for Epsom and Ewell has written to constituents to say:

“I am strongly opposed to the change at this time because of its impact on our area, on pensioners and people on low incomes with older cars and most significantly those seeking treatment at St Helier or the Marsden. I have asked him to reconsider this aspect of the scheme in particular.....

... the plan does not include extending the zone right to the London boundary everywhere. For us the outline ULEZ map says it will not cover the route from Epsom to the M25 via Malden Rushett or from Ewell to Tolworth and the A3 going southwards. There has been some confusion over the status of Rushett Lane and I am checking that with TfL. It will also not include the north end of Stoneleigh and parts of Worcester Park.

.... The target date for the launch is August 29th, though that may slip as some councils are refusing to work with the Mayor to install the cameras that will be needed to make it operational.”

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Young tree advocates sought

2 February 2023



The creators of Epsom’s **Centenary Wood** at **Langley Vale** will award youth projects to tackle climate change.

Young people across the UK have been given an exciting opportunity to win funding to help tackle climate change as part of a ground-breaking initiative from the **Woodland Trust**. The **Youth Innovation Competition** offers young people the chance to secure part of a £20,000 prize to support their own environmental

projects.

The competition comes against the backdrop of an alarming Met Office announcement that 2022 was the warmest year in the UK on record, highlighting the desperate need for climate change action.

Nine individuals or small groups (aged between 16-25) will win up to £5,000 project funding each, along with mentorship from leading industry experts to deliver projects which directly fight the climate crises.

The projects will need to fit into three categories: inspire, protect and create. This could include anything from tree planting projects and championing ancient trees to innovative ideas that aid farming and the protection of UK rivers and wildlife.

Woodland Trust chief executive **Dr Darren Moorcroft** said: “Young people can often feel very anxious and helpless about climate change but want the opportunity to make a difference. We know trees are one of our best defences against the climate crisis – and getting more trees in the ground is vital if we are to see a positive future for people and wildlife.

“As the UK’s largest woodland conservation charity, who has been planting and protecting trees and woods for more than 50 years, we are perfectly placed to provide this opportunity. The next generation will inherit the impacts of climate change, so it is crucial they are given the chance to bring their energy and innovation to the fight in tackling it now.”

The top 18 applications will be invited to take part in workshops that will teach them how to professionally pitch their project idea and the finalist will go on to present their environmental innovations to a panel of celebrity judges and experts.

Grace Howourth, Head of Youth Re-imagined at the Woodland Trust said: “We need more young people to become advocates for woods and trees and we are excited to be able to open this opportunity to help fund important projects which will directly address the climate and nature crisis. You don’t have to be from an experienced environmental or conservation background or have academic qualifications to enter, as we are looking for people from all backgrounds and walks of life to enter with a great idea that can impact woods, wildlife and people.”

Applications are now open and will close on 7th February 2023 at 4pm.

For more information on how to apply, please visit www.woodlandtrust.org.uk or email youth@woodlandtrust.org.uk.

Surrey gets cycling boost from Government

2 February 2023



Out of a central Government pot of £32.9 million Surrey County Council has won £863,000 for new and improved cycling and walking facilities. With at least 80 or so County or equivalent local authorities in England, Surrey has got a decent share.

The investment will see more cycle and walking routes being created across the county, cycle training expanded to include adults, business groups and children who aren’t in education, and the development of ‘Liveable neighbourhoods’. Liveable neighbourhoods are areas that are improved to be more people-centred with infrastructure and schemes such as 20mph zones that make it easier and safer to walk and cycle.

Cycle maps will also be produced for key routes around the county as well as personalised travel plans for organisations to lessen the need to travel by car.

Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Transport, Infrastructure and Growth said, “We’re delighted that the government has awarded us this funding so we can continue to transform how residents and visitors travel around our county and give them the confidence to walk and cycle safely.

“With 41% of Surrey’s carbon emissions coming from transport, choosing to travel more sustainably will also mean we can all play our part to become a net zero county by 2050.

“This funding will complement a range of other schemes we’ve already implemented to improve walking and cycling facilities across Surrey. These include active travel schemes on the A23 in Redhill and Park Road in Stanwell, local cycling and walking plans in Woking, Reigate and Banstead, Spelthorne, Runnymede, Elmbridge, Mole Valley and Waverley, as well as a £50m investment to improve bus services and help grow user numbers.”

Surrey County Council was awarded £863,224.00 from Active Travel England’s Capability and Ambition fund which helps councils to develop better designed walking and cycling schemes.

For more details about active travel in Surrey see www.surreycc.gov.uk/activejourneys.

HM Government states: “Local councils will benefit from skills training and a boost to green jobs thanks to a £32.9 million scheme launched 2 January 2023, which will enable them to develop thousands of well thought-through local walking and cycling schemes, co-created by the communities that will use them.”

Womens’ safety is a concern: “The measures aim to get more people of all groups walking and cycling and help to address the barriers that exist. Surveys show the number one issue putting women off cycling is how safe they feel on the roads with 79% of women supporting more protected cycle lanes being built. Safety will therefore be the major focus for the new designs and routes.”

National Active Travel Commissioner, **Chris Boardman**, said: “If we want to enable hundreds of thousands more people to walk, wheel and cycle for everyday trips then we need to deliver high-quality schemes that make it feel easy, fun and safe.”

Xavier Brice, Chief Executive Officer of Sustrans, the charity that makes it easier for people to walk, wheel and cycle, said: “Sustrans is pleased to see this investment in training and community engagement which will ultimately lead to high-quality infrastructure developments across England that help people choose to use their cars less.”

Surrey farmer piping-mad with Esso

2 February 2023



The destruction of farmland and countryside caused by a Heathrow Airport fuel pipeline would ‘make HS2 look like a picnic in the park’, an angry farmer has claimed. Farmer **Colin Rayner** has vented his frustration after fuel company Esso “wrecked” his farmland. Contractors came to Mr Rayner’s farm, in Laleham, Surrey, in October to dig up and replace part of the existing 90km fuel pipeline.

The pipeline, which has been in place since 1972, stretches from Southampton to Heathrow Airport but because inspection and maintenance are increasing, Esso decided to replace it. However, this major work requires contractors to go to several landlords and farmers’ land. Esso reportedly must agree to several conditions to avoid damage to their land, the countryside, and to wildlife, and to restore the land once finished.

Mr Rayner accused Esso of “empty promises” after “wrecking” and leaving “horrendous damage” at his farm when their contractors turned up in October. Speaking to the Local Democracy Reporting Service, Mr Rayner said: “It’s all rather upsetting. They just wrecked our farm and they come along and make lots of promises. We had a meeting with them [Esso], and they made lots of promises, and nothing ever happened since and the damage they are doing to the countryside would make HS2 look like a picnic in the park.”

Mr Rayner also claimed other farmers have experienced the same and when he raised his issues to Esso, he was reportedly met with silence. He added: “As farmers, we tried to accommodate Esso and Heathrow Airport but what is the point of us working with them if they just come a long and make lots of empty promises and then just damage and wreck the countryside.” Some of the damage Mr Rayner outlined was Esso blocking his drainage system with water from the “mud bath” the contractors caused. Security is also something Mr Rayner is concerned about, saying not enough has been done to deter trespasser or flytipping.

Project executive of the Southampton to London pipeline project **Tim Sunderland** said: “The project is replacing an existing aviation fuel pipeline that has been in place since 1972. It currently carries the equivalent of 100 road tankers of fuel every day. Without the replacement pipeline, the fuel would need to be transported by truck on local roads. Periods of extreme wet weather experienced at the end of 2022 have made construction challenging.

“We have met with the tenant and their land agent and acknowledge that our contractor could have done a better job in this area. We regret the concern this has caused. Following our meeting we have implemented the agreed actions as recorded by the tenant’s agent. We will be reinstating the land on a like-for-like basis, in compliance with the legal agreement we have with the landowner.”

Heathrow Airport declined to comment.

[Ed. adds - there is also an aviation fuel pipeline that branches off from Walton on Thames to Gatwick that runs through Epsom.]